

Introduction

This is Monmouthshire's third Children's Services overview report but it will be my first report as the new Head of Service responsible for Children's services. Therefore this report will reflect my overview during the last six months of the whole year. The report's purpose is to give an accurate and honest appraisal of current services in Monmouthshire and outline the priorities for improvement over the next year.

The comments and judgements in the report are based on a number of sources of information including hard statistical information, feedback from service users, feedback from staff and other partners.

In summary then, how are Children's Services doing in Monmouthshire?

My overall view is that our services are mainly good but some areas require improvement. This reflects the fact that we have delivered services to children and families against a background of increased demand upon services in relation to child protection and safeguarding even though the overall referral rate has remained stable.

Some aspects of the previously identified service improvements have not been as successful as expected for example the use of the One Stop shop's, the centralization of the services in one location and certain areas of joint work with some of our partners.

In 2011-12 we have been the subject of Inspections of our Children's services and within this of our Fostering and our Adoption services.

Throughout 2011-12

- We have ensured that all of our children and young people are safe and that their needs are being met within the context of their families and carers.
- We have improved our fostering services and we have recruited more foster carers.
- We have managed to deliver services within the agreed budget.
- We have developed and jointly delivered a joint adoption service with Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent.
- We have strengthened our quality assurance processes through the introduction of an audit tool.
- We have delivered significant improvements in reducing offending through the use of the restorative justice model through our multi professional Youth Offending service¹.

- We have remained actively involved in the All Wales agenda to improve the delivery of social services through a collaborative approach with other providers.
- We have implemented agile working.

We need to improve in the following areas:

- We need to improve how we deliver qualitative outcomes for all of our children, young people and families through strengthening our assessment process within statutory timescales.
- We need to implement the recommendations made within the Children's Inspection reports.
- We need to strengthen our permanency planning to ensure that children who are looked after are adopted or are made subject to a Special Guardianship order.
- We need to review the service structure and its accommodation to ensure that it is delivering the optimum outcomes for all children, young people and their families.
- We need to deliver the Joint Assessment Framework/Team around the Family model across Monmouthshire.
- We need to strengthen our partnerships with our Schools, the Youth service, adult services and the Police to improve strengthen and sustain communities.
- We need to begin the process now of considering a new ICS system that is able to meet the needs of the service when the current ICS contract finishes in 2014.

These are my views and I would like to hear what your views are about what we are delivering and what you would like to see improved.

Vanessa Glenn
Head of Children's Services.
vanessaglenn@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Overview

There are four Service areas:

Referral and Support Services.

This includes the Duty team, the Family support service and the Disability team. These teams provide an initial assessment service from which they then provide a service or they may refer to another more appropriate provider. The teams work with children and families who are considered to be in need; who may be on the Child protection register or who may be looked after by Monmouthshire County Council either on a voluntary basis or because they are subject to Care proceedings.

Through Care, Fostering and Adoption Services.

These teams provide a service to children who are looked after and through into adult hood, up to the age of 24 years. The Fostering service recruit, assess and support foster carers who care for Monmouthshire looked after children. The adoption service is now part of a joint service with Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen which is managed by Blaenau Gwent.

The Youth Offending Service

This is a joint service with Torfaen but managed by Monmouthshire on behalf of both partners. The focus of the service is to prevent offending and re-offending. It is delivered through three teams who work within a multi professional model. It is funded by a range of agencies including Social Services, the Police, Health, Probation and the Youth Justice Board.

Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

This small team provides a senior lead on all matters relating to safeguarding both in respect of Social Services but also across other departments such as education. There is an independent reviewing officer who reviews the care plans of looked after children and there are child protection coordinators who manage the child protection conference process. The Principal safeguarding officer and the LSCB business support worker work directly with Monmouthshire's Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

Over the last twelve months, the Referral and Assessment team, the Family support team, the Through Care team, the Fostering team and the Children's Disability team have all moved to be located on one site in Chepstow. The adoption service is delivered from Blaenau Gwent whilst the safeguarding and quality assurance officers are now based at Magor.

The Youth Justice Service is delivered on the border of Torfaen and Monmouthshire. There is a Gwent wide emergency duty service delivered from Caerphilly.

Many of these accommodation changes have been driven by Monmouthshire County Council's need to move out of the old County Hall at Cwmbran and the new corporate strategy of agile working. This effectively means that staff can work anywhere across Monmouthshire as long as the establishment has wi-fi. Furthermore, there is an increased use of teleconferencing and video conferencing to enable everyone to use the time more effectively given the geographical distances that they would need to travel to attend meetings.

Referral and Support Services

There has been progress in certain areas of service delivery since last year. A permanent team manager was recruited for the Referral and Assessment team in October 2011. One of our social workers was named as the National social worker of the year. The introduction of a contact worker has delivered a more effective service improving the outcomes for children and their families.

A new working partnership on Domestic Violence with Gwent Police was introduced in June 2011. In practice this introduced a daily information sharing conference call on domestic violence incidents in which children were known to be present.

Over the last year our referral rates have decreased significantly from 1343 in 2010-2011 to 728 in 2011-12. These figures reflect that since last year, there has been a return to the figure of referrals in 2010-11 of 739. However, they are still demonstrating a sustained increase compared to 2008-2009, when the referral rate stood at 471. At this moment it is difficult to predict whether this rate of referral will remain stable due to the fact that over the next year there are a number of new initiatives that will take place when the Joint Assessment Framework and the team around the child are introduced. It should be noted that 2% of initial assessments are carried out on unborn children and their parents, while 98% of the remaining assessments relate to young people, children and their families.

A decision was made within one day on 97% of referrals. (SCC/006)

It is important to recognise that Wales has seen an overall increase in children on the child protection register and in children coming into care over the last few years due to the impact of the serious case review in England of the Baby P case. In Monmouthshire the impact of this effect has been slightly slower but it is clear that we are now observing an increase in the number of children and young people who are being placed on the Child Protection Register or who have come into care. This increase has been attributed to the rise in perception of the wider public and other professionals due to recent media interest in national child abuse cases, but also because of the closer working partnership with Gwent police. Overall, there is an increase in the level of complexity of the cases that are being accepted as referrals. The main child protection concerns relate to substance misuse and poor parenting due to emotional and physical neglect.

The percentage of Initial Assessments completed within 7 working days has improved marginally over the course of the year. Challenges earlier in 2011, when there was an increase in the number of referrals and issues relating to staffing led to a substantial increase in case loads. This meant that the percentage of assessments being completed within statutory timescales did not improve by as much as we would have hoped.

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of initial assessments carried out within 7 working days | 66.7 | 74.8 | 76.4 | 77.0 |

Source (SCC/042a)

In order to address this issue, additional agency staff were recruited and a new Team leader came into post in October 2011. Further change took place in February 2012 and substantial piece of work has now been completed which has resulted in a significant reduction in the individual caseloads in the team. However, regardless of the pressures throughout the last 12 months all children and young people have been safeguarded appropriately.

We have increased the percentage of Core Assessments that have been carried out within 35 working days.

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of core assessments carried out within 35 working days | 42.9 | 53.9 | 58.1 | 72.7 |

Source (SCC/043a)

There have been a number of further challenges which have impacted upon service delivery

- The evidence that One Stop shops are limited in their use due to the need to maintain confidentiality for families within their communities.
- The centralisation of the service has made it less effective due to its location and the accommodation's limitations in meeting the needs of access for service users.
- The introduction by Gwent police of a managed system for strategy meetings which has not been as effective as the previous system.
- The management structure within the team has been under significant pressure due to lack of capacity.

Judgement

Overall, the service has managed to continue to deliver some progress at a time of increased pressure from the wider professional network and the public becoming more knowledgeable about the impact of parental behaviour upon children. The service has maintained keeping children and their families safe. However, there is now a need to review our structure and our policies and procedures to ensure that we continue to improve the quality of our interventions and deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

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| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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Priorities for Action

- Review and Deliver service structure to improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- Introduction of the multi professional Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) and the Team around the Family (TAF) model for children and families in September 2012 under the Families First agenda.
- Review and implement new accommodation strategy for operational services.
- Improve the outcomes for children, young people and their families through the review of the Initial and core assessments operational procedures and deliver through training.
- Improve the qualitative outcomes for children and families who are subject to a child in need plan; child protection plan, care plan or a pathway plan.
- Improve the outcomes for children; young people and their families through improving multiagency working with health, education and other partners.
- Deliver the recommendations that have been made in the inspection of Children's Social Care in October 2011 and in the Fostering Inspection 2011.
- Develop training and develop portfolio for all aspects of children's services with an emphasis upon joint training with other professionals including foster carers.

Safeguarding

This service has made considerable progress over the last twelve months with a number of new initiatives having to be implemented or considered. All children with a child protection plan have an allocated social worker and all children have a child protection plan. The serious case review was completed on time (July 2011) and sent to the Welsh Government.

The conclusion of the independent overview author was that the tragedy could not have been predicted or prevented. There were three recommendations and an Action plan was drawn up and implemented.

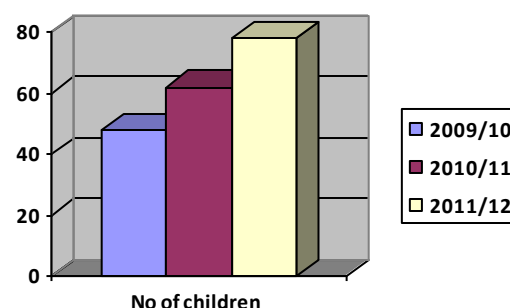
There have been positive developments in collaborative working through the Local Children's Safeguarding Board in particular with the 0-3 year age group with the health authority. There has been an exciting use of new technology using i-pads to engage children and young people in their views about whether they feel safe. This initiative was provided independently of Social Care through the Youth Services Roving Reporters.

The action plan that arose from the Pembrokeshire Serious case review has been implemented and regularly reviewed. There has been active involvement in the Gwent wide Local Children's Safeguarding Boards response to the All Wales Missing Persons strategy and the All Wales Children at Risk of Trafficking strategy.

There has been active involvement in the All Wales agenda to improve the delivery of social services. This includes the development of an agreed Gwent Wide Local Children's Safeguarding Board in April 2013, which will effectively mean that Monmouthshire's Local Children's Safeguarding Board will cease to exist from this point.

This figure shown in this graph represents Monmouthshire children, but there are a further 8 children who are placed on the Register but are the responsibility of other local authorities.

It is clear that there has been an annual increase in children who are placed onto the Child Protection Register and the figure is currently higher than in 2009-10. Within this figure are a number of children who have been re-registered following an earlier period of registration. This figure remains slightly higher than the national Welsh average of 16%, with the Monmouthshire figure being 21%.



Consequently there is currently a review of this process which will include looking at decision making. This is being undertaken by the Local Children's Safeguarding Board. Overall the increase in registrations has led to pressure being experienced in the Family Support team and within the capacity of the current provision of independent Child Protection chairs.

"Overall we found that children and young people were appropriately safeguarded in Monmouthshire"
(CSSIW, March 2012)

In 2010-2011, we achieved 99% of case conferences held within statutory timescales, over the past year this has fallen back to 92%².

Judgement

The Safeguarding arrangements in Monmouthshire have continued to be under pressure due to the increase in the number of referrals. There has also been a considerable amount of service activity in respect of the wider safeguarding agenda across Wales and the organisational requirements to move towards a larger Local Children's Safeguarding Board. Against these challenges the Safeguarding team have overall maintained their performance over the last year but the team structure now needs to be strengthened.

| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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Priorities for Action

- Establishment of a Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit.
- Manage the process of change on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council through the transition from a Local Children's Safeguarding Board to a Gwent wide Local Children's Safeguarding Board.
- To review and deliver an operational structure which sustains and delivers the outcomes for children and their families who are subject to Child Protection processes.
- Develop and deliver an annual Audit plan to improve the quantitative and the qualitative outcomes for children, young people and their families through a quality assurance framework.
- Strengthen and deliver Corporate parenting strategy.
- Review, develop and deliver a staff induction programme. Deliver an induction programme for Members and ensure that the robust scrutiny process is maintained place for Members.

Children with Disabilities

The overall figure for open cases for 2011-12, is 279. The current figure is 189, within which there are a small number of children who are looked after or who are on the Child Protection Register and 161 who receive a child in need support service.

The service deliver a large number of support packages through a number of provider's including Action for Children. There is an Occupational therapist in the team who provides assessments relating to the needs of disabled children.

The Serrena Centre which delivers services for disabled children in south Gwent opened in June 2011 and this provides services to Monmouthshire's children who are in the south of the county. The youth service has just opened a sensory room in Usk and disability health provision in the north of the county is delivered in Abergavenny.

There have been a number of challenges over the last year with an increase in the number of child protection investigations and care proceedings. Furthermore there has been increased demand for both support packages and direct payments to families.

Judgement

Overall, the team have continued to deliver a service but there have been pressures due to both the increase in the demand and due the level of case complexity that the team are managing.

In this context there is a need to review and improve our current use of the assessment process. There is a need to improve our analysis of the children's disability population and of the current level of service provision that there is across both Monmouthshire and Gwent. This process has not commenced and therefore the disability service will need to urgently address this issue in the next year.

| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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Priorities for Action

- Strengthening the partnership working with adult services through the co-location of the disability team with the adult's transition team.
- Review of the Action for Children contract in respect of the current level and type of support services provided to families and their children/young people.
- Carry out a multi-disciplinary mapping exercise of the level of need and the services that are available.
- Review the disability policy and procedures with a view to strengthening the assessment process.
- Develop advocacy service for service users.

Children Looked After and Leaving Care

The looked after children's figures reflect that there has continued to be a steady increase in the numbers of children coming into care. The analysis of the reasons for this increase have been stated earlier in this report, but they refer to an increase in referrals from the general public, education and from the police due to increased multiagency working and as a result of a growing public awareness of child protection matters.

The provision of services to looked after children is divided between four teams, with initial care proceedings and permanency planning being carried out predominately in the Referral and Assessment team and the Family support team. Both of these teams have been under significant pressures in the last year due to both the increase in child protection cases, court proceedings and the increase in the number of looked after children.

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Number of children Looked After | 83 | 81 | 111 |

Furthermore, throughout 2011-12, staffing issues have remained a concern due to vacancies and sickness. However we continued to ensure that all reviews were held on time³.

Caseloads in both teams have remained high against this increased workload. All vacancies have now been recruited and agency staff are put in place to support the work pressures.

"The excellent progress made on recruiting and retaining staff could be undermined if demand [for services] consistently outstrips capacity." (CSSIW, March 2012)

Throughout the last year this increasing work pressure has led to the focus on permanency planning being reduced at the same time that the new adoption service was being formed. Furthermore, the increased demand for looked after children's Reviews has placed significant pressure upon the single independent reviewing officer.

The Through care team who work with young people and those who have left care have continued to deliver a qualitative service primarily due to a consistent and stable staff group. All of their young people have a pathway plan and they work with Action for children providing advocacy and personal advisors to those who are post 18 years of age. The number of adults who have left care is 44. This latter figure includes a small number of asylum seekers, who are currently now involved in seeking to secure their legal status as adults. The advocacy service and some provision for personal

advisors for post 18 year olds are currently provided by Action for children but it is recognised that both of these roles need to be reviewed to ensure that social work capacity is improved.

“The children are all comfortable and happy with the arrangements in place for them which is brilliant.... it has left me able to concentrate on getting better and back to a place where I am able to look after them myself again.”
(Parent)

Multi-professional working with health and education has remained a challenge over the last year. Due to staffing difficulties the attendance at the multi-agency meetings was not maintained throughout the year with the four comprehensives. Additionally, with Gwent health authority re configuring how it delivers its services.

There has been a reduced level of service to children who need therapeutic services. Some of this provision has been provided through Monmouthshire paying the health authority to provide a psychologist. However it is clear that an assessment of need has to be carried out and a stronger Health procurement/commissioning framework put in place for Monmouthshire.

| | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 |
|--|---------|---------|---------|
| The percentage of looked after children who have a personal education plan in place within 20 days | 60 | 35 | 100 |

(Source: SCC/024)

A review will take place with education in 2012 about the current level of provision to carry out this process as further improvements need to be delivered to ensure that children’s educational outcomes are improved and that the Personal Education Plan takes place within statutory guidelines.

On the positive side, two of our young people have commenced apprenticeships with Monmouth county council and there are currently three young adults at university.

Judgement

There have been significant challenges to each of the individual teams’ ability to deliver qualitative outcomes for children and young people over the last 12 months due to the increase in the number of looked after children and the complexity of the individual cases. However, it is important to recognise that the reasons for the children coming into care was evidentially based and as a result of good decision making. The current structures for delivering qualitative outcomes for looked after children need to be strengthened.

| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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Priorities for Action

- Development and implementation of a service for Looked After Children and young people.
- Improve permanency outcomes for children and young people through adoption; Special Guardianship; Long term fostering and Kinship.
- Improve educational outcomes through the delivery of qualitative and a quantitative approach to the completion of personal educational plans.
- Improve health outcomes including emotional wellbeing through the delivery of a strong working partnership with health and CAHMS.
- Improve placement outcomes through the delivery of a multi-disciplinary children's commissioning strategy.
- Improve educational and training outcomes through working with a wide range of partner agencies to reduce the number of NEETS and economically inactive 18-24 year olds.
- Deliver a strategy for adult asylum seekers.
- Corporate parenting strategy to be developed and delivered.

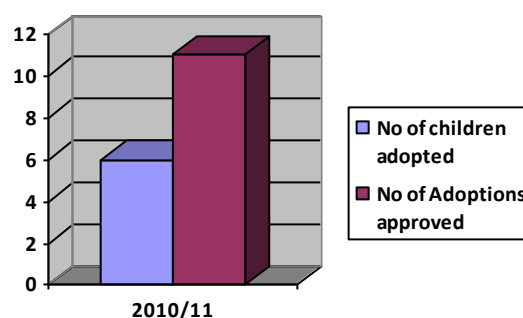
Adoption

The adoption service moved to be a joint adoption service with Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent in April 2011. The impact of this change has only recently been evaluated through a joint adoption inspection which took place in January.

However it is clear that there are a number of development issues which need to be addressed which look at both the roles and responsibilities of the adoption service and those that continue to sit within the children's teams in Monmouthshire.

The adoption service has participated in the All Wales Adoption strategy which will see the delivery of a National Adoption Service whose role will be raise the profile of adoption, to recruit and assess adopters. However it is recognised that the national service will not be able to offer adoption support services or be able to work directly with children's services in enabling children's social workers to deliver permanency outcomes for looked after children-this will remain at a regional or local level.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of children adopted or with a permanency plan for adoption. The reasons for this are currently subject to a review of the current children's service teams whose role it is to deliver permanency through adoption. There has been an increase in care proceedings over the last 12 months and an increase in the number of children who have come into care and the independent reviewing officer is closely monitoring the permanency plans for these children.



It is significant that Monmouthshire is a net provider of adopters for the other authorities. The impact of this fact is that for the wider Monmouthshire community partnerships, there is an increased need for adoption support provision over and above that provided to our own adoptive families of Monmouthshire's children.

There is significant need to map support provision for adopters in Monmouthshire against the expected level of demand from adopters that are known to the service.

Judgement

The adoption service has been subject to an Inspection in January 2012 and the overview was positive in terms of the progress that had been achieved

since March 2011, in forming a three authority adoption service. However, adoption outcomes are more complex and they are not just based on the provision of an adoption service, the children's permanency planning sits within the child care teams who are responsible for looked after children and their care plans.

The challenge is how to strengthen both the new adoption service and to ensure that permanency outcomes for looked after children in Monmouthshire are improved.

I would therefore split my judgement to reflect the fact that the new adoption service has made a good start but has some gaps, whilst my judgement in respect of permanency outcomes for looked after children is that it requires substantial improvement and is currently inconsistent.

| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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| | ✓ | ✓ | |

Priorities for Action

- Continue to develop and support the current tri partite arrangements Adoption agency arrangements with a view that this may become a given wide adoption agency.
- Implement new service for looked after children with an emphasis upon strengthening permanency planning and outcomes.
- Geographic development of multi professional adoption support services including CAHMS and education.
- Develop and implement permanency policy and procedures in partnership with children's looked after team.
- Develop and implement training programme across children's services in relation to permanency planning through improving outcomes for looked after children.
- Develop jointly with CAHMS an adoption support model for children and their families in relation to attachment and loss/ the impact of neglect and substance misuse upon outcomes for looked after children.

Fostering Service

Over the last year the Fostering service has experienced considerable change with the loss of two Team leaders within the first six months of the year, with the third and final Team leader coming into the post in August 2011.

The impact of this lack of consistency impacted upon last years identified improvements. However, the new Team leader is a highly skilled Fostering manager and considerable progress has been made since her arrival.

“Although ‘early days’, it appears that the recent appointment of permanent team manager has already begun to have a positive impact on the morale of the team and the service itself.”
(CSSIW, March 2012)

In November 2011, the Fostering service was inspected and improvements since the previous inspection in 2010 were noted. However a further five requirements were made, some of which refer to actions that need to be addressed by the child’s social worker.

There are currently 43 approved foster carers, 56 children are placed with in house carers. There are 7 Kinship carers within this overall figure.

However it is important to state that children’s needs are both individual and complex and it may not always be the case that an internal fostering placement is suitable.

There are 11 Special Guardianships but the provision of support services has yet to be developed. The emphasis in Monmouthshire is to work with our partner in health and education to support children and young people to remain living in their communities rather than being sent outside of the county boundary.

There has been significant improvement in the following areas

- Increase in supervision and support to foster carers. This has been facilitated by changes in the way the teams deliver the service by splitting the assessment and support processes.
- The number of completed assessments of prospective foster carers has increased and timescales for completion have been reduced.
- The yammer site for carers is being used effectively by carers as a social networking site.
- Short breaks residential service now fully implemented.
- Increase in social work staff.
- Implementation of joint recruitment campaign through SEWAC
- Completion of the planning for the introduction of Payment for Skills from April 2012.
- The inspectors have reported that foster carers are producing positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Foster carers have now established their own association.

- The independent fostering agency and the residential placement budget are being robustly managed but children's overall needs are being prioritised in relation to the matching process of children to carers.

Judgement

It is clear that from the arrival of the new team leader, the fostering service have begun to make effective changes in the way that the service is delivered to both carers and to children.

The challenge for the service is to sustain the pace of the change and ensure that the outcomes for the service are qualitative in relation to the support for carers and the outcomes for children and young people. Furthermore they need to continue to secure an increase in the foster carer population thus ensuring that children continue to be placed in Monmouthshire.

| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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Priorities for Action

- Implement the Action plan from the 2011 Inspection which includes the five requirements.
- Development and implementation of Training programme for foster carers delivered by the Fostering service. This includes induction training and the development of multi professional training with other partners. Budget for this development to be devolved from central training.
- Recruitment of foster carers – increase the number of foster carers in order to reduce the number of IFAs and increase placement choice and matching.
- Foster carer's annual reviews must take place within statutory timescales and the outcome must be clearly recorded and understood.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures that are relevant to the national minimum standards.
- Review all current Kinship/family and friends, carers/Special guardianship/residence order placements within the context set out in the relevant statutory guidelines and legislation. Support services for carers other than foster carers must be developed through either the fostering service or the adoption service.
- The fostering team to become part of the proposed Supporting children and Young people's Service. This service will deliver a social work service in partnership with partner agencies to children and young people who are looked after or who have left care.

Youth Offending Service

The last 12 months have seen the Youth Offending Service reduce its management structure through the loss of one management post as part of its review of the service. This has enabled the service to continue to provide a qualitative service within the constraints of a reduced budget. It is anticipated that within the context of all partner agencies being affected by budget pressures that matters relating to the joint funding of the Youth Offending Service will need to be continuously monitored.

In terms of achievements against previously identified priorities for improvement the Youth Offending Service has:

- Utilised the Youth Justice Board to analyse re-offending performance data in order to highlight areas for development to reduce re-offending rates within the LA. This has led to development of in house workshops and further additional work in relation to in house APIS training.
- The Youth Offending Service has been chosen, by Youth Justice Board Wales to examine re-offending data in order to aid with local and national planning. This will commence in February 2012.
- There have been continued reductions of numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system.
- The YOS has enhanced its in-house preventative capacity and improved referral processes in order to enable referrals for parenting support from Children Services.
- There is a joint working partnership with the Youth Service. There are a number of preventative workshops throughout the year and at key times such as half terms, Halloween etc. We are currently developing with the outreach provision provided through the Youth Service aimed at targeting identified hot spots within the authority.
- The Youth Offending management team have developed an in house rolling APIS (assessment, planning, intervention and supervision) training programme. This focuses upon assessment, including risk of harm to others and now incorporates monthly workshops, which include Quality Assurance processes.
- The Youth Offending management team have recently undergone training to develop consistency of chairing risk management meetings.
- The case recording policy has been reviewed and expectations in terms of timeliness of completion clearly stated. Additionally the Youth Offending information officer now tracks their completion.
- The Youth Offending service now has new policies and procedures in place for the reviewing and planning process.
- The promotion and publicity of the Youth Offending service has not been fully implemented. A start has been made with the service promoting itself in terms of preventative referral processes with Children Services and

Youth Service within the local authority but this has not yet been extended to the wider community.

- This year the service has participated in the FIT (Family Intervention Project) which was led by a Housing Association. Its purpose was to provide multi professional response to those families who are risk of the loss of their homes due to their offending behaviour.

Judgement

| Requires significant improvement | Inconsistent | Mainly good with some gaps | Well established and effective across the board |
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The youth offending service has made significant progress over the last year even though there have been budget reductions.

The staff group are committed and competent and this is reflected in the outcomes that the service has achieved.

Priorities for Action

- Develop a community campaign that seeks to improve the knowledge of the wider community about the positive outcomes that the Youth Justice Service delivers.
- Continue to improve the review process that utilise our resources more effectively.
- To continue to deliver the Assessment Planning Intervention and Supervision (APIS) and Assessment training working tool. This seeks to improve quality.
- Focus on reduction of re-offending and risk.
- To strengthen our preventative services and to prioritise the delivery of the restorative justice model.
- To continue to improve links with partners and in particular the youth service.

References

¹ FTE rate in Monmouthshire Reduced from 75 in 2010/11 to 53 in 2011/12.

² SCC/014

³ SCC/021 – 100% of LAC reviews were held on time in 2010/11 and 2011/12