



MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL

Annual Council Reporting
Framework (ACRF)

**Consultation
Feedback and
Recommendations
2014 / 2015**

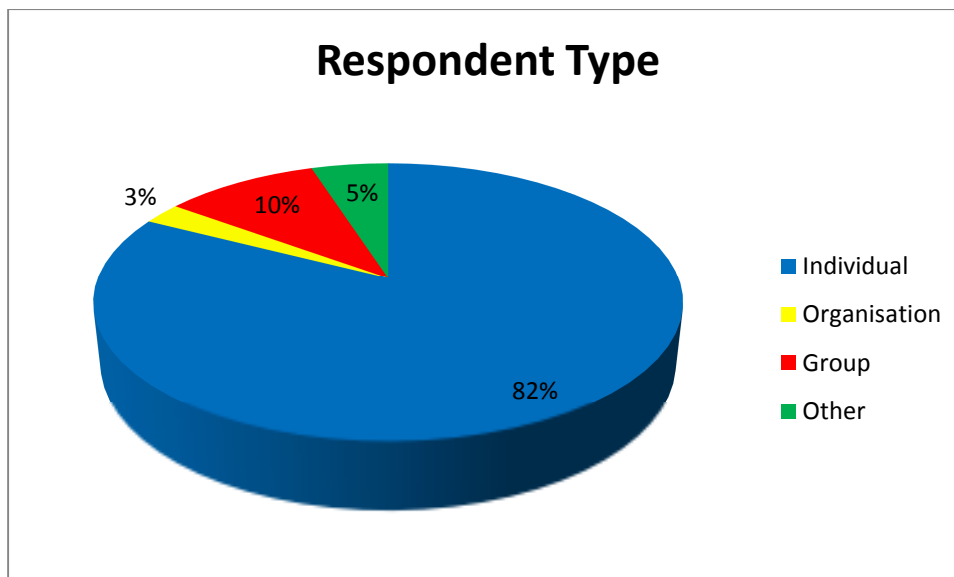
SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

As part of the consultation planning process for 2014 / 2015, a review of methods previously used and their effectiveness was undertaken. It was agreed that as our response rate to the consultation on the Annual Report was extremely low; a change of approach was therefore required. In addition to the methods traditionally used, such as: website, posters, press release etc., (all of which have been refreshed) – this year we have also carried out workshops with a number of key groups in order to gather their views on the accuracy of the content and accessibility of the Annual Report. The revised approach has proved to be successful and we have seen a considerable increase in the volume and range of feedback received.

In addition to the feedback received from young people via questionnaires; a separate exercise was carried out by the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum, which provided us with a range of supplementary information.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those people who responded so enthusiastically.

As can be seen from the chart below, the majority of responses to the consultation were from individuals (82.5%). Of those who participated in the consultation, 30% were currently receiving a service or had received services in the past. Of those who had not received a service, 72% of the consultees stated that they would know how to contact us or find information about our services. The most popular methods of accessing information was noted to be via the council website (62%) or via telephone (27%).



KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following tables set out key messages from the consultation, recommended actions and other general amendments.

All feedback has been gratefully received and given careful consideration, however; it has not been possible to include all comments in the report as they refer to very specific issues or individuals. Where this is the case, comments have been shared with the relevant service areas for consideration and action as necessary.

Key Messages	Recommended Action
Format and accessibility of report	
<p>Overall, the majority of respondents found the report to be of interest, informative, clear / somewhat clear and easy to read.</p> <p>Please find below examples of comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report clearly explains what is happening for children and adults. • The report was very informative and relevant to young people. • I think the report was helpful to me and the people here. • It was very informative and relevant to young people. • Really good and understanding. • The report was easy to read and understand. Although I have not had any personal experiences of social services, I found the report interesting, and now know how to access things should I need to. • The report contains lots of information and would answer any questions I may have had. • The subjects were quite difficult to understand but I understand them and agreed with the presentation. • Make the question more young people friendly. • Report to be more age appropriate for young people. 	<p>Note</p> <p>In consultation with the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum (MTBWYF) to develop a young person's version of the final report. Additionally, when planning the development of future ACRF Reports for consultation purposes; consider producing a young person friendly version of the draft report and questionnaire. <u>Note</u>: Received a suggestion as part of the additional work with MTBWYF to produce a young person's version of the report.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-presented and easy to understand and follow. Does not contain enough detailed info. Needs to be far more depth rather than carefully worded stock statements. Only one line referred to dementia. 	<p>Note.</p> <p>This is not a technical report but rather a document designed to be picked up, read and understood by anyone with an interest in social services. Therefore, it does not contain a great deal of detailed information. However, we are quite happy to provide this upon request and have noted the perceived lack of information regarding dementia.</p>
Feedback on personal experience of quality of service	
<p>As a support worker I have experienced exceptional work from some of the social workers in Merthyr. There have been a few incidents where families have not been seen for numerous months on C in N. This causes issues for them accessing services on a MIA basis. There is definitely more work needed on transitions between plans and efficiency of closing cases. Many cases drag.</p>	<p>This raises important issues for us with regard to capacity to respond in lower level cases. This will be shared with the service area and addressed.</p>
<p>Husband very delayed (3 months) in hospital due to time to organise his needs at home. 1 month for one thing another month for another. Couldn't see to two things at once, wait til next month. Must have cost NHS to keep him in hospital.</p>	<p>Although it is difficult to tell in this case, not all delayed discharges from hospital are due to problems with providing a care package. Some relate to other things like adaptations to the home and community support from other services. However, this will be shared with the relevant service area for action as appropriate.</p>
<p>My son attends Keir Hardie Health park and the staff are wonderful and care for him as if he were a family member, however the unit is a bit small, compared to Sandbrook.</p>	<p>This raises an important point which is being considered by the service.</p>
<p>My son's social worker is good she is very supportive.</p>	
<p>Our social worker is excellent but unfortunately the management is appalling. I get 1.15 hrs per week direct payments for my disabled son with no other family support!</p>	<p>Share with relevant service area for consideration and action as appropriate.</p>
<p>Social services have a fair understanding of what young people need but however not always in the best interests. Also they don't really listen to young people.</p>	<p>We always do our best to listen to and hear what children and young people say and we are continuing to look at ways to improve this.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary services take more action quicker than social services. Long process for the services to be carried out. Too many different social workers (not consistent) Pathways are more pro-active and work quicker and get things done. I don't think there are enough foundations and help for certain age groups. 	<p>All of these important points will be looked at as part of the ongoing discussions with the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes too long for action to be taken. • Not family friendly – don't listen to both sides. • Information isn't given in enough detail. • More varied opportunities for young people are needed. • Education service needs to listen to those who know about education. Good education not tertiary. • Community safety needs to be improved • Inside facilities for young people when it rains (not sports). • Good quality housing is needed within Merthyr. • More one bed houses for young single (homeless and leaving care). 	
Does the report reflect personal experience	
<p>When asked if the report reflected personal experience of social services, of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18% felt the report did reflect their experience of social services; • 64% stated that they neither agreed or disagreed; • 14% either disagreed / strongly disagreed. 	<p>For information.</p>
<p>Elderly people, well at the moment, do not know what help is available for them and how to get it when necessary. A pamphlet pointing out what is available and how to get it would be invaluable.</p>	<p>Comments to be shared with relevant services for consideration. There are a couple of information / access related comments in the feedback received. This will be picked up as part of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 implementation plan.</p>
<p>Under serviced by social services.</p>	<p>Note.</p>
<p>Very supportive and caring people who listen to the help required.</p>	<p>Note.</p>
<p>Not good when first involved in Social Services but improved considerably in recent years.</p>	<p>Note.</p>
<p>I found the service I received very good. Everything was done to make my life easier. I really appreciated all that was done.</p>	<p>Note.</p>
Feedback on the strengths / weaknesses set out in the report.	
<p>I agree with the weaknesses. I feel S&W's need to be quicker at closing C in N cases as these cases are often badly managed. Many families are not seen regularly and are left in limbo with little / no support for SS yet with their family still with social services.</p>	<p>This raises important issues for us with regard to capacity to respond in lower level cases. This will be shared with the service area and addressed.</p>
Feedback on priorities for 2015 / 2016	
<p>Disagree: I think that discharging elderly people from hospital shouldn't be so easy and should be given thorough checks to ensure they are able to be admitted to hospital and maybe given</p>	<p>We work very closely with our health colleagues to ensure that when somebody is discharged from hospital they have the proper package of support. No older person is discharged from hospital without</p>

relative's permission before being admitted from hospital or discharged.	very careful consideration of their needs. We need to be very careful to ensure that the older person's wishes are followed wherever possible; even when they are not the same as their family's. We do know that this can cause some difficulties.
Disagree: I think that the priorities should be that discharging people whether young or old shouldn't be allowed. I feel a full search should be carried out as something may be a problem which you're unaware about.	Please see above.
Not only assessment but provision for carers needs to be a priority. It would be good to state specific ways in which care for carers will be available. In the long run keeping Carers well will save the Council money. There needs to be a serious intention to provide for needs of Carers and to listen to them and respect their situation. Definition of Carers needs to envelope ALL Carers. While specific organisations rightly supply services to particular Carers, the needs of the majority of Carers are being ignored. The report mentioned 900 Carers - there are many more unaccounted for.	We recognise the vital role carers play in supporting vulnerable people and the Council helps fund a wide range of support services. This social services report only focuses on those people whose relatives we have an involvement with and therefore only represents a fraction of the carers out there. We will consider how to better explain the wider work of the Carers Network in future reports.
Other comments	
An acknowledgement that there are few services for carers apart from the organisations dealing with carers of people with specific conditions. There needs to be a list kept of unmet needs of carers.	This is something that we are currently working on as part of the implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act.
Encouraging YP to engage with meetings (CP + C in N). Tap in to services who are already working with the young people to act as an advocate. Eg in D.A situation YP may not want to be in the same room as perp yet want to have their say - Use DART / CREA8 / Rockets & Comets at SMT to gain their views. If they already work with our services it is likely we will already know their views but aren't always asked. Eg maybe meeting with S.W / Y.P. & Crea8 worker meet for views to share views to support YP.	These are valuable points which have been passed to the relevant service for consideration and action.
Enjoyed the session. Have increased my awareness and knowledge of the availability of the various services provided.	Note.
Good to see that Merthyr are reaching targets and above targets in most areas, except in the case of individual service reviews and glad to see that it will be one of the areas that needs to be improved upon. Concerned to see that number of vulnerable adults have increased 100% in the last 3 years but glad to see that Merthyr have increased the member of staff who work in the Adults at Risk section.	Note.

The overall presentation and report indicates that the social services are continuing to make progress and help those who needs to be helped. However I would suggest that to get more people pro-active in the social service process, would be to make yourselves look more approachable and not all doom and gloom. Do this more by communicating in a fun way with the community. Eg fundraising events in schools.	Note and share with relevant service areas for future consideration as part of any developments relating to communication.
The report appears to contain lots of information and would answer any questions I may have had	Note.
The report was good and informative but would have liked to know more about what is happening with young carers.	Note.
Enjoyed the session. Have increased me awareness of knowledge of the availability of the various services provided.	Note.
We need to focus on the voice of children and young people - the recent presentation to MTBWYF is a great start, but we must now build on this.	This is an important point and will be looked at as part of the ongoing discussions with the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum.
More interactive.	Note.
Young people should be heard.	As previous comments.
I would have liked to have known about what happened to the homeless.	We will consider whether we should include this in our report next time.
In the report I would like to see why the statistics may be low and how you can work around them.	We will consider how we can better explain some of the statistics we use in the report next time.
My overall opinion of social services is that they do not really know what young people want and they don't really understand them. I think they need more training how to be careful of how they treat people, they need to realise that they have been through enough without social services adding to the pressure.	This is an important point and will be looked at as part of the ongoing discussions with the Merthyr Tydfil Borough Wide Youth Forum.
Need to attract more foster carers in MT, where practicable. Ensure C&YP are involved within appropriate meetings / child conferences etc.	Whilst the increase in Merthyr foster carers is reflected in the report; need to ensure that we make it clear that this is an ongoing campaign. As previous comments, share with relevant services and ensure reflected in report i.e. listening and participation.
The impact on vulnerable people of a complete change around of home carers would make the report more honest.	To be noted.
Would like to have seen more information in the report about hospital discharge.	Noted.
Would like to see in the report how to contact the service about any worries we have.	Consider adding key contact numbers in the 'Getting in Touch' section i.e. adult / children duty, safeguarding and emergency duty.
The services received are limited but do help and are carried out with professionalism. However, too much emphasis on voluntary services allows the authority to pass its responsibilities to others.	Note.

<p>Voluntary services are excellent but can only stretch so far. There has to be a lot more input from professional people to oversee improvements.</p>	<p>Note and share comment as appropriate.</p>
<p>Page 4 (para 2) “We will have a number of challenges to maintain or improve our performance and make savings”. This statement makes no sense unless it involved cutting services. Maintaining performance whilst making savings is not viable; improving whilst making savings is impossible. The type of services being dealt with need to be increased just as the number of people requiring them has increased. Priority!!</p>	<p>This is a critical point, we are continuously looking at ways to be more efficient however; we are also expected to maintain or improve the quality of services we provide. The Council is committed to supporting the most vulnerable in our community and to work in partnership with the full range of service providers. So far it has been possible to achieve both, however; it will be challenging in the future.</p>
<p>The introduction warns of financial restrictions and a renewed emphasis on service provision only for the most vulnerable / in need. However, the report refers at various points of the preference for council to intervene at an early stage to prevent escalation of family problems. Whilst I accept that both are major themes of the new Act and the current financial situation, the Director may wish to reflect if this is adequately explained in the report.</p>	<p>Director considered feedback and amend report accordingly.</p>

Summary

Overall, feedback received demonstrates that our report is fair and balanced, of interest to many and has been clearly written for most audiences. Feedback from young people on the accessibility / content of the report was mixed. Whilst a number found it relevant and easy to understand; feedback from the additional group workshop carried out with the MTBWYF highlighted that this was not the case for all. It is our intention to make the report and the consultation process as accessible as possible to a wide range of audiences. We therefore need to further improve by making the report reader friendly and of interest to a greater number of young people.

There was very little challenge to the strengths / weaknesses and areas for improvement detailed in the report and the majority were in agreement with our priorities.

The majority of additional supporting comments came from young people and anonymous sources. Whilst we had responses from a number of carers; very few shared their experiences or views.

NEXT STEPS

- Discuss feedback and recommendations received with the Director and other key officers. Agree changes to the report and update accordingly.
- Final review and approval by Director.
- Submit report to Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) by no later than 30th June 2015.
- Publish report on website along with this document early August 2015.