

## Executive Summary

In 2021, in response to a number of concerning patient experience indicators, Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) commissioned an External Review of the Childrens Community Nursing Service (CCNS). A final External Review Report with 34 Recommendations was submitted to the Health Board (HB) in October 2021.

One year on from the initial Report, the reviewers were asked to consider progress on delivering the Recommendations and the implementation of the HB Improvement Plan.

### Governance and Leadership

There is now a clear governance and assurance structure in place that provides a continuous flow of information and a communication pathway between the CCNS, the Service Group, and the Board. Increased resourcing of the Governance team to support the work has been helpful. The meeting Minutes reviewed confirmed regular and appropriate reporting of progress against the requirements of the 2021 Report.

The Risk Register had been actively updated over time to include progress reports relating to the staffing establishment and relevant expertise. The level of resource required has been considered and a Business Case process was evident to address this. There continues to be some level of short term risk related to the substantial turnover of staff and some posts still vacant at the point of reporting. Incidents reflecting the range of service provision are now consistently reported, with cancellation of care being the primary issue reported via Datix. The incident reports are subject to senior level oversight through the governance structure demonstrating a clear learning focus.

The senior level leadership model has changed since the 2021 Review, with a Deputy Head of Nursing post with a wider portfolio of responsibilities replacing the previous Matron post. The HB will need to carefully monitor this to ensure the CCNS has access to appropriate senior operational leadership. At the Team Manager level there is short term instability, with the interim Team Manager leaving for a post in another HB and the role being covered temporarily by the Clinical Educator. This has led to a short term limitation on the ability to deliver on all training and development requirements. Whilst governance training appears to have been well embedded, the roll out of Compassionate Leadership training has been limited to date due in part to staffing changes.

A key issue in the External Review Report was that staff felt they were isolated from other services working with children and families within the community; a review of where this service is best sited was recommended. There appears to have been limited progress to date to consider where the CCNS best sits within the HB structures, they interact with a number of services that sit within different Service Groups and different geographical locations. It is hoped there will be further work undertaken to ensure the services that collectively form the care pathways for the same group of

children are able to communicate and interact effectively so that families and partner agencies can engage easily with them.

## **Staffing, Skill Mix and Demand**

Significant staff changes have taken place since late 2021, with most of the CCNS registrants in post at the time of the External Review having left to take up posts elsewhere. These posts have now been recruited to, with additional posts being added to provide registrant cover into the evening/twilight hours. Two Nurse Assessors have also been appointed; this represents a significant step forward in supporting the team to undertake its role effectively and also ensuring compliance with the WG policy requirements for Children and Young People's Continuing Care.

The Registered Nurses (RNs) are enthusiastic and motivated, the new RNs recognise they have limited experience in both community nursing and Continuing Care and will require ongoing support and guidance as they develop and settle into their new roles.

The Team Manager in post during 2021/23 was pivotal in taking the team through the turbulence of the past year, seeking to change the team culture and the way services were provided whilst also coping with a period of significant staff turnover following the Review. The Clinical Educator has also made a significant contribution to supporting the Service and developing the new team of registrants.

The HCSW establishment continues to be calculated based upon the number of Continuing Care children and the amount of hours required to put in place the package allocated to each child. This does not reflect the role of HCSWs in providing support for the acute and chronic cohorts of children also supported by the Team or in building some resource into the establishment to allow for training and development to take place. This increases the risk of cancellation to care or delay in providing care packages. A new nurse bank model has been introduced but this will need to be monitored until the Board is assured that there is no increase in care cancellation or delays to care package provision. The staffing establishment and skill mix has fluctuated over the past year as the HB sought to appoint new members of staff and maintain the service. The HB will need to monitor this to ensure there is sufficient senior level leadership and guidance for the Service as a whole.

In 2021 the inability of the CCNS to capture and monitor activity and trends in both referrals and demand was identified as a risk. There has been progress in that some activity is now entered onto PIMS+ but the system is still relatively new to the team and there is at this point limited ability to interrogate PIMS+ to extract activity and trend data. Further work will be required to develop effective dashboards and reporting processes.

## **Stakeholder Views and Perspectives**

The views of parents and the CCNS staff were fundamental to the 2021 External Review and remained a key focus for the One Year on Report. Without the CCN Service, it is difficult to see how children with such high levels of care could be maintained and cared for at home. It is therefore positive to find that both families and

the CCNS team report a major change in culture. There is now a partnership approach, with evidence of trusting relationships between the families and the CCNS that can withstand individual concerns that may occur over time.

#### **Culture:**

There is a clear view from the parents that the culture had changed since the Review, with:

- Improved relationships and no acrimony: this was viewed to be welcome and positive. The relationships between families and the CCNS team were described as much improved and there had been no mention or consideration of withdrawal of care.
- Issues reported by families are now being dealt with effectively and in a professional manner, with timely feedback, giving more confidence in the service.

#### **Communication:**

Communication related issues formed a key theme of the 2021 External Review but significantly different views were expressed this time, with families reporting:

- Improved communication and contact from office based staff. This included more visibility of senior managers, which was welcomed.
- Improved processes to inform families of cancelled care and a reduction in the incidents of cancelled care.
- New routes to communicate introduced including: a QR code to support ease of feedback from families; the production of a monthly newsletter; and consideration of events that could bring families together for mutual support.

Staff also reported improved communication within the Service, with a weekly *huddle* and *lunch and learn* sessions now in place. There is also evidence that operational staff are more involved in the Governance processes with team leads attending the local quality, safety and risk meetings.

#### **The Service Model:**

The service model has developed over the past year and the families appreciated efforts made to maintain the 'team around the child' approach adopted during the COVID-19 restrictions.

#### **Leadership:**

Discussions with the CCNS team clearly identified and recognised the support provided by Service Group leads. In summary, it was clear from discussions with both families and the CCNS Team that this is a service that has seen a fundamental change to its culture and its approach to delivering care; there is a much more positive approach, with recognition that care is delivered in partnership.

There has been less progress in joint working with partners; the Regional Partnership Board transformation work does not appear to have progressed as expected and will need to be advanced. The reviewers were informed of the recent commencement of

a series of Vanguard workshops, it is hoped that this work will support partners to address improved inter-agency working in order to provide co-ordinated care services for this small but complex group of children and their families.

## Progress in Implementing the Improvement Plan

Only three of the 34 recommendations were judged to remain RAG rated as red, indicating less progress than would have been expected at this stage. They relate to multiagency working and compliance with WG policy requirements. With regards to multiagency working, the Vanguard workshops underway would be expected to lead to improved multiagency service delivery. The HB needs to ensure an ongoing commitment to address these issues.

Regarding compliance with WG policy requirements, there were three main issues identified where the service had moved away from policy:

- The removal of the Nurse Assessor posts;
- The use of the Adult Panel to consider cases;
- The long period of time following confirmation of eligibility before a package of care was implemented.

Actions and improvements have been progressed in all these areas meaning the HB can now review the assessed progress and score accordingly.

In relation to the remaining recommendations, the reviewers have noted significant progress and a drive to improving service delivery. Ongoing work is necessary to ensure the progress is maintained.

## Conclusions

Almost two years since the External Review work commenced and four years since the experiences of parents led to the concerning patient indicators that initiated the commissioning of the External Review, the CCNS has developed and is now in a very different place.

Having reviewed the Improvement Plan in detail the reviewers can confirm there has been significant progress made. The culture within the CCNS team is now one of compassion and professionalism, with a 'can do' attitude. There is more visibility and proactive communication between the managers and families and there have been no circumstances where withdrawal of care has been considered since the 2021 Report. The leaders of the service and Health Board leads have made it very clear to the reviewers that this would now only ever be considered with executive level oversight and a full risk assessment of the case.

The families now speak of a caring and compassionate service delivering excellent care in the community and the CCNS team has created an environment where change is welcomed and can take place. With adequate access to leadership and expertise this bodes well for the future service provision of Children and Young People's Continuing Care in the community.

The CCNS team provide an invaluable service to those families with children who have highly complex health needs. Without this service families would struggle to keep their children at home in the family environment. This One Year on Review has demonstrated how much families appreciate the service. There remain some ongoing issues to resolve as part of the Improvement Plan to allow the CCNS to achieve its full potential but from the progress made to date, the Reviewers are confident that continued progress in implementing the findings and Recommendations of the 2021 External Review will ensure a CCNS that can thrive and is fit for purpose.

The CCNS provides a service that when functioning well is virtually invisible, but should it fail the consequences would be far reaching and very visible. Over the past two years the service has undergone a transformation, with a mostly new team of staff and a culture that is open and seeks to engage positively with the families of children with very complex needs. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to see the CCNS overcome the initial turbulence that followed the External Review Report and develop and change to the extent it has.