

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	20 SEPTEMBER 2023
Report Title:	SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>The Director of Social Services Annual report 2022/23 is a statutory requirement providing citizens, regulators and key partners with an overview of how the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate has performed over the past year.</p> <p>The report reflects on 2022/23, highlighting key achievements and challenges whilst also outlining the Directorate's key priorities for 2023/24.</p> <p>In line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, performance is reported against six quality standards highlighting key actions completed in the year, how we have performed against these standards during the year and the key actions for 2023/24 to enable us to achieve our priorities.</p> <p>Whilst the cover report highlights our key priorities for 2023/24 the Director's introduction of the annual report notes the key thematic areas for improvement for 2023/24:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing and acting on the voice of children and families, adults and carers • Securing a stable, well-supported, motivated and permanent workforce • Improving practice • Maximising the impact of our services and interventions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more effective response to children and families, adult and carers, with complex needs • Seamless working with partners • Better intelligence and information systems <p>Engagement and consultation are a key aspect of the report and how we undertake these activities as well as an overview of feedback is included. The report also highlights how feedback links to our key actions.</p> <p>A summary of key regulatory activity undertaken in the year is included in the report and focusses on inspections of regulated services; the Performance Evaluation Inspection of Children’s Social Care in May 2022 and the November 2023 Improvement Check of Children’s Social Care. The summary includes key findings and how we will respond.</p> <p>The report also outlines how we support our workforce and notes our key partnership arrangements both within the Council, as well as with partner agencies and third sector organisations.</p> <p>Finally, the report highlights our financial resources noting the key challenges and pressures that the Directorate and Council face in order to deliver statutory services.</p>
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Director of Social Services’ Annual Report for 2022/23 and request that Members endorse the report, the analysis therein of the strengths and areas for improvement in Bridgend social services, and the next steps set out.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA), Welsh Government developed a performance framework which aimed to ensure that authorities report, on and performance evaluated against, the well-being outcomes of the SSWBA. The overarching objective of the SSWBA is to improve the well-being outcomes for people who need care and support.

The Act seeks to do this by:

- transforming the way in which social services are delivered, primarily through promoting people’s independence and giving them a stronger voice and control;
- promoting partnership working in social care;
- and, enhancing the preventative role of social care and health, setting out overarching well-being duties to reduce or delay the need for care and support.

- 2.2 The performance framework provides the foundations of the Council's duty to appoint a Statutory Director of Social Services who must report annually to full Council on the effectiveness of social services and well-being in the local authority area.
- 2.3 The methodology for the format of the Annual Report is prescribed under the Code of Practice issued under section 145 of the SSWBWA, to measure social services' performance which sets standards which must be reported on. These standards, in turn, reflect the national outcomes framework. The approach to inspection, engagement and performance review is similarly focused on outcomes, with an emphasis on engaging with people to learn about their experiences and listen to their views.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The SSWBA, places strong emphasis on promoting the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support. It is important that the views and voices of people and their carers are heard.
- 3.2 The aim of the Annual Report (**Appendix 1**) is to provide the Council and people living in Bridgend County Borough with an overview of social care. It aims to highlight the progress made over 2022/23, being clear about strengths as well as areas for improvement, and identify priorities for 2023/24.
- 3.3 The preparation of the report involved an analysis, based on evidence of effectiveness. Workforce across the services have contributed to the development of this report and there is evidence within the report of feedback from people who use social services together with feedback from third sector partners.
- 3.4 The guidance for the report sets out the sections in relation to the six national quality standards for well-being:
1. Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people want to achieve;
 2. Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
 3. Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm;
 4. Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society;
 5. Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships;
 6. Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, to have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.
- 3.5 The report provides a summary of the main achievements in 2022/23 considering the challenges faced and highlights the priorities for the Directorate in 2022/23. The analysis draws on progress against the Social Services and Wellbeing Business Plan, performance data for each service area in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care, the views of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as the regulatory and inspection body for social services and social care in Wales and feedback from people who have experienced social services and well-being and their carers.

- 3.6 The report evidences key service developments and improvements made during 2022/23 whilst recognising those areas where improvements and change are required. The report also identifies the significant risks and challenges faced as the Council moves forward. This information has informed our key priorities for 2023/24.
- 3.7 This report acknowledges the support of the whole Council, our partners in Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB), the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, our cultural and leisure partners; Halo and Awen, and the whole social care sector. It pays tribute to the exceptional commitment to the most vulnerable people in society of the social care, prevention and well-being and social work workforce.

Inspection of Local Authority Social Services

- 3.8 CIW completed a performance evaluation inspection (PEI) of Children's Social Care in May 2022, with the report and associated action plan being presented to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on 15th September 2022.
- 3.9 In November 2022, the CIW completed an improvement check of children's social care which focused on progress made in areas identified for improvement during the PEI. A summary of the improvement check is included in the report and key areas noted include:
- Workforce fragility.
 - Increase in numbers of children subject to the child protection register, care experienced children and children receiving care and support.
 - Leader and Senior Management commitment to continuing improvement.
 - Strengthened managerial oversight and quality assurance.
- 3.10 In response to the improvement check, and to ensure continued improvement, the Directorate reviewed and updated its action plan with progress reported to the Outcomes for Children Board, Member Advisory Panel and the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.11 The Directorate is also in the process of refreshing the strategic plan for children and families in Bridgend. The refreshed plan will focus on developing a sustainability plan outlining a service, workforce and financial strategy on how the Council works with children and families at risk in Bridgend. The plan will be considered by Cabinet in Autumn 2023.
- 3.12 As indicated in the November 2022 improvement check, CIW continue to closely monitor our performance and progress and in June 2023, a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) led by CIW in partnership with Estyn, Heath Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) was undertaken. It is anticipated that the findings of this report will be published in Autumn 2023.

Priorities for 2023/24

- 3.13 The priorities consist of Council wide priorities and those specifically for Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, and Prevention and Wellbeing. The Directorate will

implement the actions as set out in the 2023/24 Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate Business Plan. The key priorities for Social Services and Wellbeing in Bridgend are:

Children's Social Care

As noted in 3.12, Children's Social Care are developing a sustainability plan to be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn and will cover the following themes which align with the overall Directorate themes:

- The voice of children and families
- Our workforce
- Our practice
- The impact of our services and interventions
- Our response to families with complex needs
- Our work with partners
- Our intelligence and information systems

The priorities for Children's Social Care in 2023-24 are:

- Implement new residential provision and operating model which meets the needs of children and young people who will be accommodated there;
- Enhance in house foster care capacity and implement therapeutic support service for foster carers;
- Reduce variability in the quality of practice through implementing Signs of Safety model of practice, supported by a quality assurance framework;
- Embed learning from child practice reviews;
- Progress the children's social worker workforce plan including International social work recruitment; 'Grow our own' initiatives; focus on workforce wellbeing; and enhanced recruitment campaigns and marketing;
- Fit for purpose operating models/ structures across children's social care ensuring resourced establishments with good practice level caseloads across teams;
- Finalise and implement the commissioning strategy including how we support children and families with disabilities and targeted prevention at the edge of statutory intervention.

Delivery of the plan will enable us to address the following key challenges:

- Reducing the number and proportion of children and young people who need to experience care and safeguarding in Bridgend.
- Helping more families in Bridgend stay together and bring their children up to be resilient and successful adults.
- Working with our partners to make sure families get the right help at the right time.
- Re-focusing our resources on more cost-effective support for families with complex needs rather than expensive substitute care experiences.

Adult Social Care

The key priorities within Adult Social Care for 2023-24 are:

- Resetting reablement.
- Transformation of Learning Disabilities.
- Working with regional partners to remodel community services (and grant funding) in accordance with the Welsh Government 'Further Faster' policy.
- Implement an improvement plan to address waiting lists for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard assessments and renewals.
- Implement a new operating model following a social work review.
- Continue to modernise the organisation of care and support at home including elimination of split shifts and use of electric vehicles.
- Increase the number of assessments offered to unpaid carers.

Prevention & Wellbeing

The key priorities within our prevention and wellbeing service for 2023-24 are:

- Implement a leisure strategy and option appraisal of contract.
- Roll out local community co-ordination across the County Borough.
- Work with partners to continue to focus on the most vulnerable.
- Work corporately to understand options to address energy financial risks.

There are additional specific priorities identified at the end of each of the 6 quality standards within the Annual Report.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 Within the County Borough of Bridgend, the implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the SSWBA, supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their circumstances, the well-being goals of a Healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.

- 5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver well-being outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:

- **Long Term:** Social Services is demand led and the SSWBA focusses on sustainable prevention and well-being outcomes for the future. There is a requirement to meet the needs of people in the longer term and, due to

increased contacts, rising demographics and increasing complexity, the continued improvement and transformation of services remains a priority.

- **Prevention:** The report highlights developments by the Directorate in line with the SSWBA. For example, we worked in partnership with Edge of Care services to support family resilience via an early intervention and prevention model and worked collaboratively with BAVO to support them in co-ordinating a range of community representative networks to support the prevention and wellbeing agenda.
- **Integration:** The implementation of the SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. A key example of integration can be found within our Prevention and Wellbeing Service who work with third sector partners HALO and AWEN to deliver cultural, leisure and wellbeing services across the borough.
- **Collaboration:** The collaborative approaches noted in the report, are managed and monitored through various regional collaborative boards. These include, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTMSB). Working regionally enables the Directorate to strategically plan and deliver local services by optimising available resources. At a local level the Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) is co-located with agencies including South Wales Police, social landlords and the third sector to provide a collaborative approach to safeguarding and our Integrated Network Cluster Teams work with CTMUHB in the delivery of services.
- **Involvement:** Our key stakeholders are the people who use our services and it is important their voice is heard and acted upon. During the year we have undertaken engagement and consultation activity via a number of channels including surveys, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, feedback forms and the social services complaints and compliments process. An analysis of a number of engagement activities is highlighted within the report.

5.3 The priorities outlined within the Annual Report are reflected within the Directorate's Business Plan and are aligned to the appropriate Corporate Wellbeing objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There is no impact or link to Bridgend County Borough Council's climate change aspirations as a result of this report. The Annual Report does illustrate work within the directorate to reduce the social care carbon footprint such as the securing of electric vehicles for homecare workers.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 How we support and continue to improve and strengthen our safeguarding arrangements is a key theme throughout the Annual Report and remains a key priority for 2023/24.

7.2 Key actions are noted under quality standard 3, "Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm". Examples include:

- We worked in partnership with CTMSB and the Cwm Taf Workforce Development Team to deliver a programme of safeguarding workshops focussed on improving practice in areas identified within Child and Adult Practice Reviews.
- Bridgend Locality Safeguarding and Community Safety group (BLSCSG) meetings are held quarterly with wider partners including third sector, community safety and public protection.

7.3 Key safeguarding priorities for 2023/24 are also noted under quality standard 6 and examples include:

- ensuring learning from reviews and other in-depth analysis is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review.
- working with partners to implement the integrated safeguarding GOSS system to enhance the sharing of information in relation to safeguarding individuals.

7.3 The Directorate is the Corporate Parent for all care experienced children. During 2022/23 the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer engaged with key staff, multi-agency partners, elected members, care experienced children and care leavers through a variety of events and focused groups to develop and launch the Corporate Parenting Strategy resulting in a co-produced strategic document.

7.4 During 2023/24 the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer will facilitate an action planning engagement event for the Corporate Parenting Board to set out how the strategy will be implemented and its impact measured.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report, the medium and long term sustainability of social services, well-being and prevention presents growing challenges on the Council to meet these responsibilities and deliver a balanced budget.

8.2 The report highlights the significant issues in respect of the Directorate's budget to meet the need for social care services in Bridgend. Although the Directorate was able to drawdown £3.809 million from earmarked reserves the financial position at year-end 2022/23 was an overspend of £10.868 million.

8.3 The annual report highlights the key areas of overspend which are linked to ensuring we have the services and workforce required to deliver our statutory responsibilities against a backdrop of:

- an exponential increase in demand in children's social care;
- an increase in the number of independent residential placements in children's social care;
- and pressures in learning disabilities and older persons residential placements.

8.4 A whole Council approach to systematically progressing service reviews and a detailed understanding of their budgets is essential in preventing escalation of care need. This required further support from sustainable, aligned service and financial plans. As noted in 3.11, a sustainability plan for children and families will be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn, followed by a detailed review of practice and commissioning in learning disabilities.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Council endorse the 2022-23 Director of Social Services Annual Report.

Background documents

None