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Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
Bridgend County Borough Council



Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont, CF31 4WB / Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg.
Rhowch wybod i ni os mai Cymraeg yw eich
dewis iaith.*

*We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please
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**Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief
Executive's Directorate**

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 /
643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 30 November 2023

Dear Councillor,

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SUBJECT COMMITTEE 2

An Extraordinary Meeting of Subject Overview and Subject Committee 2 meeting will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / Remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 6 December 2023 at 15:00**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008 (including whipping declarations)
3. Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2022/23 3 - 24
Invitees

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Jacqueline Davies - Head of Adult Social Care
Laura Kinsey - Head of Children's Social Care
Raeanna Grainger – Group Manager, IAA & Safeguarding
Louise Morgan – Team Manager - Older People Mental Health
4. The Learning Disability Transformation Programme 25 - 38
Invitees

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Health

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Jacqueline Davies - Head of Adult Social Care
Shagufta Khan - Group Manager - Commissioning
Mark Wilkinson - Head of Children's Social Care

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5. Conclusions and Recommendations

6. Urgent Items

To consider any item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should by reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Note: This will be a Hybrid meeting and Members and Officers will be attending in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Angel Street Bridgend / Remotely via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be recorded for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you have any queries regarding this, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643696

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy

Councillors:

S Aspey
F D Bletsoe
E L P Caparros
P Davies

Councillors

P Ford
D T Harrison
D M Hughes
M Lewis

Councillors

J Llewellyn-Hopkins
RL Penhale-Thomas
A Wathan
R Williams

Agenda Item 3

Meeting of:	EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2
Date of Meeting:	6 DECEMBER 2023
Report Title:	ANNUAL CORPORATE SAFEGUARDING 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:	This report provides details of the corporate safeguarding activity undertaken for the year 2022-23 including data on the number of safeguarding referrals to both adults and children's services. It outlines the way in which Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has worked collaboratively with the regional safeguarding board, the implementation of new models of practice and provides details of Education Safeguarding activity including audit information.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 with the 2022-23 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report for consideration and comments.

2. Background

- 2.1 Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It is a corporate responsibility for BCBC to safeguard vulnerable individuals from harm, abuse, and neglect.

2.2 Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Section 7 refers to safeguarding and created new legislation against which the Council is required to function regarding safeguarding. It provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report attached as **Appendix 1** provides details as to how the Council has performed against those statutory duties.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report includes details on:

- Safeguarding (Adults & Children)
- Regional Safeguarding Boards
- Bridgend Corporate Safeguarding Policy
- Exploitation
- Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS)
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- Children and Adult Practice Reviews
- Education and family support
- Partnership and community safety
- Workforce
- Housing
- Out of country placements and Operating Without Registration placements

3.2 The report highlights the increase in demand on both Adult and Children's Social Care. Referrals have increased in both areas, which has resulted in higher caseloads of work and pressures placed upon social work teams. However, this increased demand continues to be processed and managed successfully within compliance targets.

3.3 The report details information regarding the number of safeguarding referrals made to both adults and children's teams, including those where thresholds were not met. It provides information relating to the number of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) that have been applied for, as well as detailing information regarding children that have been required to be deprived of their liberty. This can be for a number of reasons such as if they are in a residential setting requiring high staff ratios or if they are unable to access the community without constant supervision.

3.4 Provided in the report is information as to how many children have been placed on the Child Protection Register (CPR) throughout this time period, as

well as providing information relating to how Public Law Outline (PLO) and Care Proceedings (CP) have been processed and supported.

- 3.5 The report contains details as to how the new model of practice, Signs of Safety, has been adopted and implemented into Children’s services.
- 3.6 The report outlines the process that was required relating to the review of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy which has been updated and strengthened the approach to self-evaluation, management of risk and governance arrangements.

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 because of this report.

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

- 5.1 The Act provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with 5 ways of working to guide how public services should work to deliver for people. The following is a summary to show how the 5 ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been used to formulate the recommendations within this report.

Involvement	Colleagues from across the Directorate from both adults and children’s services and safeguarding teams have fed into the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report.
Long term	This Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report provides an overview of the safeguarding activity from the previous year. This allows the Council to project what future safeguarding activity and requirements may be required of the Social Services and Wellbeing (SSWB) Directorate and thus provide additional safety to our most vulnerable individuals in Bridgend.
Prevention	The report highlights developments by the Directorate in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. These developments help the Council improve its safeguarding processes and responses to safeguarding matters and thus

	preventing the likelihood of additional harm coming to vulnerable individuals.
Integration	The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and updated to provide all staff with up-to-date information relating to their safeguarding requirements. In addition to this safeguarding is a mandatory corporate training module for all to complete and to integrate the learning and understanding across the Council.
Collaboration	Work continues in collaboration with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTMSB), as well as multi-agency working with South Wales Police, social landlords, health colleagues, and the third sector.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 Details provided within the Annual Report on how staff are supported and continue to improve and strengthen safeguarding arrangements is a key theme throughout the Annual Report and remains a key priority for 2023/24. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all Council Directorates. With a view to promoting awareness of this and raising the profile of Safeguarding across the whole of the Council, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed and reimplemented.

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.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the 2022-23 Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report and provide any comments as necessary.

Background documents

None

**Bridgend County Borough Council
Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report – 2022/23**

The purpose of this Annual Report is to provide information on Bridgend County Borough Council’s (the Council) performance in respect of safeguarding adults and children at risk. The report covers the following areas:

Content	Page
Safeguarding Legislation and Wales Safeguarding Procedures	1
Safeguarding Adults at Risk	2
Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DOLS)	4
Safeguarding Children	5
Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board	8
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Education and family support	12
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Safeguarding:

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding Legislation and Wales Safeguarding Procedures:

The key legislation relating to safeguarding children and adults at risk are the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) and the Children Act 1989.

Part 7 of the SSWBA relates to Safeguarding. Part 7 includes:

- Definitions of an ‘adult and child at risk’;
- A duty on relevant partners to report adults and children at risk;
- A requirement on a local authority to investigate where they suspect that an adult with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- The introduction of an Adult Protection and Support Order (APSO);
- The requirement on the local authority to consider undertaking an investigation when there has been a report that a child is at risk and then carry this out in line with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989;
- The establishment of a National Safeguarding Board;

- The functions and procedures of Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Boards.

Safeguarding duties under the SSWBA apply to adult protection, as safeguarding is preventative as well as protective. Safeguarding is wider than the essential focus on those most at risk or needing protection from abuse, neglect and harm. Safeguarding includes ensuring the provision of safe and effective care; protecting from abuse, neglect and harm; optimising well-being, voice, choice and control, and preventing impairment of health and development.

Safeguarding is everyone’s business. However, the SSWBA sets out particular duties for Local Authorities and relevant partner agencies to work together to safeguard and protect children and adults at risk.

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 sets out the duty on a local authority, with the help of other organisations as appropriate, to make enquires if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering harm, to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP) were launched in November 2019 and provide a detailed framework for safeguarding adults and children at risk.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk

The SSWBA placed a new duty to report an “adult at risk”. There was also a new duty for a Local Authority to make enquiries if it has reasonable cause to suspect that a person within its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) is an adult at risk. Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect the Local Authority has a duty to undertake section safeguarding enquiries which are known as section 126 enquiries. These enquiries should normally be completed within seven days and enquiries should be made to determine what actions may be required to support the adult at risk and any ongoing protection planning that may be required.

These enquiries should be person centred and ensure that the adult is consulted and spoken with to determine their understanding of the situation and any support needs they may have as well as considering potential risks. The duties placed on the Local Authority by the SSWBA, have resulted in a significant increase in the number of safeguarding enquiries being undertaken. This has resulted in increased numbers of citizens coming to the attention of Social Services.

Table 1 below shows the number of adults at risk referrals received from 01/10/2022 until 30/9/2023 and also shows the number that met the threshold for Adult Safeguarding procedures:

Number of Safeguarding Referrals

	01/10/2022 to 30/09/2023
Number of Safeguarding Referrals	593
Met threshold for Adult Protection Procedure	74

The number of Adult at Risk referrals that section 126 enquiries were completed	555
The number of Adult at Risk referrals that progressed to a strategy meeting	75

Table 1

36 cases did not progress as an adult at risk. This can be for a variety of reasons, but one example is as follows:

Mr A declined consent to progress this safeguarding referral and has been deemed to have capacity to do so. There is no wider public interest in overriding his consent. Additional advice has been provided to him and this will continue.

Some referrals are received where there is no abuse/neglect, but care needs are identified – these are then passed on to the Common Access Point which is the ‘front door’ of adult social care, providing information, advice and assistance and proportionate assessment of needs.

Table 2 below shows the category of abuse recorded for adult at risk referrals between 1/10/2022 to 30/9/2023: Table 2

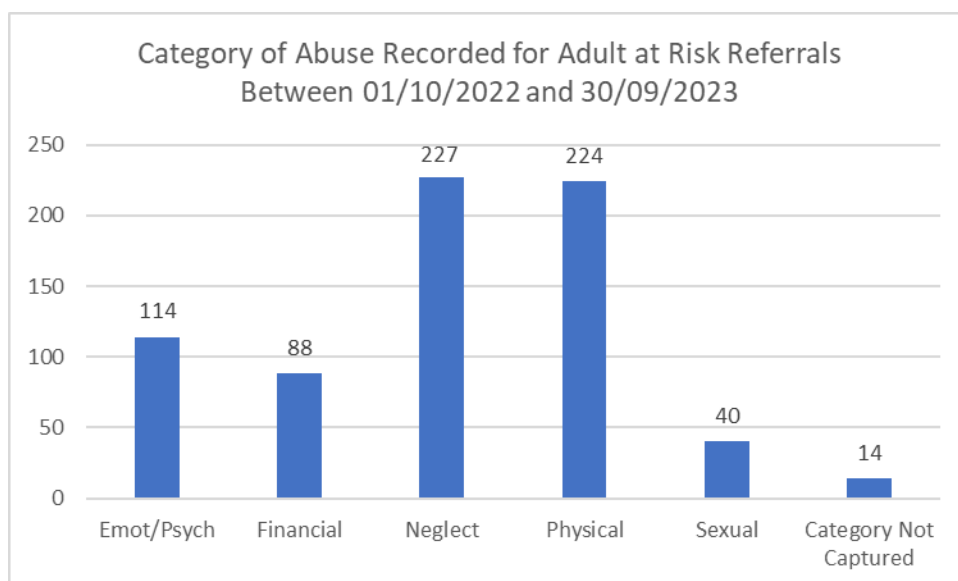


Table 2

The Adult Safeguarding team joined Bridgend’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in July 2018. The MASH remained operational throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The co-location of all teams in the MASH has allowed for instant information sharing between agencies which in turn results in a timelier, focused, response to safeguarding concerns. The Adult Safeguarding & Secure Estate Service Manager is also a representative on the joint MASH Quality Assurance Group, which is attended by colleagues from Bridgend MASH and Pontypridd MASH.

Table 3 shows the number of initial professional concern strategy meetings for practitioners and those in positions of trust working with adults. The number of

referrals between 1/10/2022 – 30/09/23 amount to 153 referrals (68 Initial Strategy meetings held):



Table 3

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a statutory framework for making decisions on behalf of individuals who lack mental capacity to do so for themselves. People can be deprived of their liberty wherever they live, but in broad terms this is divided between a Care Home / Hospital setting and a Community setting.

On 6 April 2023 Local Authorities in Wales received a letter from Welsh Government stating, following the announcement by the UK Government that Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) would not be introduced in this parliament, and the Welsh Government cannot bring forward its own regulations to implement the LPS in Wales. The letter stated that there is a need to consider how to strengthen the current Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) system in Wales, and to continue to protect and promote the human rights of those people who lack mental capacity. Welsh Government remains committed to providing funding to protect the rights of those who lack mental capacity under the current DoLS system. Welsh Government will therefore continue to provide funding at a comparable level to 2022/23 levels, to ensure that these rights are protected ahead of any future implementation of the LPS.

In 2023-24, the Council received £133,392 grant funding from Welsh Government. The Council used part of the grant funding to employ an agency for a two-month period to assist to clear a small backlog of 150 cases leaving a total of 34 cases to allocate.

The data in **Table 4** below shows the numbers of DoLS referrals received into Bridgend adult services from 1/10/2022 to 30/09/2023:

	01/10/2022 to 30/09/2023
Number of DoLS Referrals Received	563

Table 4

Children Deprived of their Liberty

The data in **Table 5** below shows the numbers of DoLS referrals received into Bridgend children services from 1/03/23 to 30/09/2023:

The number of DoLS applications for children are shown below.

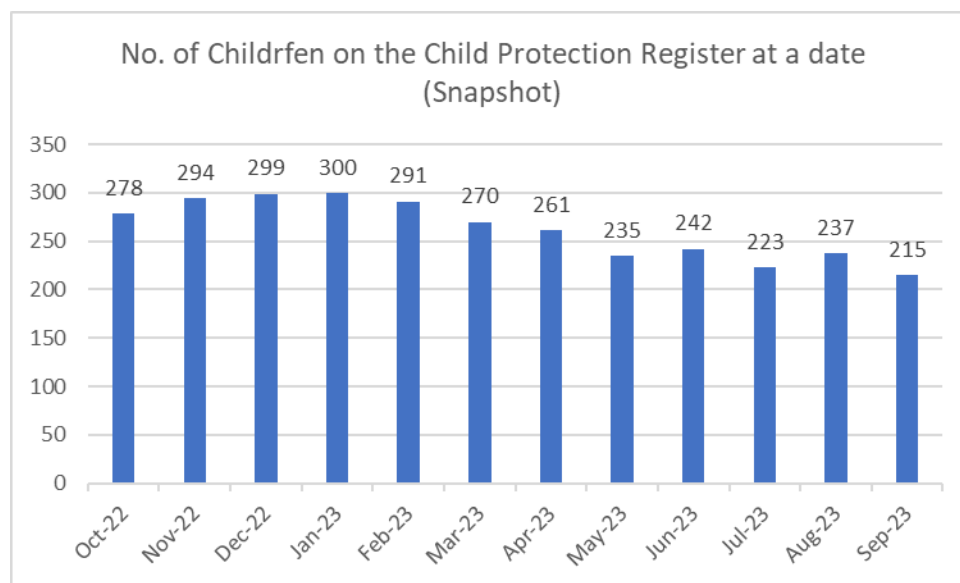
	01/03/23 to 30/09/23
Number of DoLS Referrals Received	8

Table 5

During the reporting period we have identified 8 cases where the Local Authority has applied for DoLS for looked after children in the 2 years up to 1st March 2023. Colleagues in Legal Services deal with DoLS applications as well and they also deal with any applications from the Childrens Disability and Transition Team for looked after children who are 16/17.

Safeguarding children

The Child Protection Register (CPR) figures for this period are set out below:



Graph 1

Table 6 below table shows the categories and ages of the children subject to the CPR as of the 30/09/23:

Category of Abuse	Age Group					Total
	Under 1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16-18	
Emotional Abuse	3	10	24	17	0	54
Neglect	6	8	13	16	4	47
Neglect and Physical Abuse	2	8	12	13	0	35
Neglect and sexual abuse	0	2	0	4	1	7
Neglect, Physical and Sexual Abuse	0	0	0	1	0	1
Physical abuse	3	21	13	18	2	57
Physical and Sexual Abuse	0	0	0	3	0	3
Physical and Sexual Abuse and Financial Abuse	0	0	0	2	0	2
Sexual abuse	0	3	1	5	0	9
Total	14	52	63	79	7	215

Table 6

The numbers of children subject to the Child Protection Register is steadily declining during the reporting period. Targeted work has been undertaken to progress cases, including case consultation and improved management oversight to ensure drift does not occur. The category trends above follow the same trends as the previous year. Contributory factors for this are the rise of awareness of child protection factors in the media, the MASH strengthening processes which leads to greater numbers of assessments being undertaken, improved training and recognition of child abuse, covid-19 related social challenges and professional awareness of the importance of the duty to report following the tragic deaths of children in Bridgend. The current figures show a steady reduction in CPR figures.

The highest figure we have seen in BCBC of children subject to the CPR was in January 2023 with a figure of 306. Since this time we have seen improvements in our recruitment and retention rates which has created greater stability in our safeguarding locality hubs. As such targeted work has been undertaken with children and their families to reduce our CPR numbers. We have also strengthened management oversight processes which has assisted in less drift in cases. It is pleasing to see this steady reduction and we envisage this will continue.

The level of work has increased in the MASH and Information Advice and Assistance Service. **Table 7** below shows the distribution of this work.

Mash and IAA continue to work diligently to meet their statutory functions. The demands on this service have increased significantly in the last year, however the service is meeting its compliance targets.

1st Oct 2022- to 30th Sept 2023	Total
Number of Safeguarding Contacts	10539
No of new assessments completed	2495
No of strategy meetings held	2248
No of section 47s investigations	1678
No Initial child protection conferences	363
No of Review child Protection Conferences	792

Table 7

The number of referrals received in this period has increased by 4024, however our level of assessments has decreased by 179 as a result of improved screening and decision making. This figure also evidences an increase in referrals that do not meet the threshold for statutory services. As such we are undertaking workshops with safeguarding partners to agree a common threshold policy. This is currently in draft and consultation is taking place with Police and Health partners. Our rate of Section 47 Child Protection Investigations has increased by 457.

The core business of the Council's Children's social care department is safeguarding and protection of children from harm. The Council approved a 3 year strategic plan in September 2023 to deliver sustainable improvements in outcomes for children and families. An excerpt from [Bridgend Children's Social Care Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Improving Outcomes for Children and Families in our County Borough](#) relating to safeguarding is as follows:

This plan sets out Children's social care's purpose will have a clear purpose. This purpose will be achieved through culture and values which are inclusive and support everyone within the service and we the people we work with to feel part of the 'family firm'. Our culture will be open and transparent, celebrate our strengths and commit to learning and development and continuous improvement; High standards of safeguarding and child protection practice, recognizing that whilst safeguarding children is an inherently multi-agency endeavor children's social care play a leading role in ensuring Bridgend children are protected from harm.

Bridgend ensures to create a way of working which is 'proactive' rather than 'reactive', with interventions focused on preventing escalation of needs because needs are met effectively at the earliest opportunity, preventing the need for children and young people to become care experienced unless this is evidently the right outcome in which case plans for permanence and stability will be timely and support children to achieve their potential.

Public Law Outline (PLO)

The PLO is a legal process which was introduced in April 2014. The PLO sets out streamlined case management procedures for dealing with public law children's cases. The aim is to avoid care proceedings if possible and for those cases where proceedings are necessary, identify and focus on the key issues for the child, with the aim of making the best decisions for the child within the timetable set by the Court (26 weeks), and avoiding the need for unnecessary evidence or hearings. Under the PLO, the 'pre proceedings process' is considered when the above has not been effective with a family and the legal threshold is met i.e. when the child/ren is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

This process is followed when the Local Authority has assessed that the risks are able to be managed safely whilst the children remain in the care of their parents/primary carers. The process allows the parents to obtain legal advice and a legal meeting takes place with the parents and lawyers. In this meeting the Authority sets out clearly its concerns, its plan to help the family, and the consequences if no progress is made. The process is set for a realistic period of time for families to engage in the necessary services to ensure that the child/ren's needs are met and they are kept safe from harm.

In this reporting period 71 cases entered the PLO process.

Care Proceedings

This is a last resort situation for the Local Authority and will only be issued when the Local Authority has attempted to do all it can to work with and support the family but there has been no change and the child/ren are suffering or are at risk of suffering significant harm should they remain in the care of parents or primary carers. In Bridgend there are currently 24 cases subject to proceedings.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board (CTMRSB) is a statutory partnership comprising the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area. The Board ensures that agencies in the region have effective arrangements in place to ensure that people of all ages, living in the region, are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

The CTMRSB operates within the statutory guidance set out under Part 7 of the SSWBA. Membership of Safeguarding Boards is prescribed within the Act. The RSB is a multi-agency, statutory partnership whose main objective is to ensure that local safeguarding arrangements and partners act to help and protect vulnerable people at risk of abuse and neglect across the region.

The Safeguarding Board has published an Annual Report into its activities. The Annual Report for 2022-23 is accessible via the following link: [Annual report 2022/23](#)

The Board also publishes an outcome focused Annual Plan. The Annual Plan for 2023-2024 is in **Appendix 2** to this report. The Annual Plan for 2023/2024 is accessible via the following link: [Annual Plan 2023/2024](#)

There is a committee and sub-group structure sitting under the Board to support the delivery of the Annual Plan on behalf of the Board. Each Sub-group uses performance measures to report on a quarterly basis to the Board, via the Joint Operational Committee, and to escalate any risks and issues against the delivery of the plan and for decision and action from the Board. This enables the Board to take ownership of its work at strategic level and to provide leadership to subgroups.

The sub-groups of the Safeguarding Board are:

- Children's Quality Assurance Sub-group
- Adults Quality Assurance Sub-group

- Joint Adult child Review Group
- Protocols and Procedures Group
- Training and Learning Group
- Engagement, Communications and Participation Group

The RSB is required to raise awareness with the public of the need to protect and prevent children, young people and adults from becoming at risk of abuse, neglect and other forms of harm, and provide information about how this can be achieved. As part of developing a positive culture of learning the Board also needs to ensure that information is widely disseminated within the workforce to inform them about best practice and learning arising from reviews, audits and other Board activities. The Board has an established group whose aim is to ensure that there are clear processes in place for the identification of engagement and participation needs and to capture the activities of partner agencies in meeting these needs.

Child and Adult Practice Reviews

In 2013, Child Practice Reviews replaced what were known as Serious Case Reviews (SCRs). This process stems from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales report published in October 2009 - *Improving Practice to Protect Children in Wales: An Examination of the Role of Serious Case Reviews*. This work was pivotal to where we are today and concluded that action was required to replace the SCR process which had become ineffective in improving practice and inter-agency working.

The overall purpose of reform of the review system is to promote a positive culture of multi-agency child protection learning and reviewing in local areas, for which the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and partner agencies hold responsibility.

The purpose of the review is to identify learning for future practice and involve practitioners, managers and senior officers in exploring the detail and context of agencies' work with the child(ren) and family. The review is intended to generate professional and organisational learning and promote improvement in future practice.

The following Child Practice Reviews were published between October 2022 and September 2023 relating to Bridgend children.

There are 4 Child Practice Reviews being undertaken in relation to Bridgend children that will be published during the next reporting period.

The themes from the Learning Events that have taken place have identified the need for strengthened processes for sharing information, the importance of embedding a quality assurance framework, further development of multiagency training and the need for the Local Authority to adopt a clear model of practice.

As a result, processes have been strengthened, including improved multiagency working practises, the involvement of fathers and extended family in child protection processes. A mandatory training program has been implemented with a focus on the importance of professional curiosity and recognising coercive controlling behaviours. Bridgend Children's Social Care has implemented the Signs of Safety Practice Model. A Supervision Policy has been embedded throughout the service and this is providing greater management oversight.

Signs of Safety implementation

Following the Leadership Team agreeing the Organisational and Practice Goals they expected to achieve through the implementation of Signs of Safety with Signs of Safety Consultant Bev Edwards, two Signs of Safety Launch days were held in March 2023. The aim of the Launch days were to introduce Signs of Safety to the Children's Social Care Workforce and share the implementation plan alongside the Leadership Promise.

Following this, as part of the implementation plan, four workstreams were developed, these included; System Alignment, Meaningful Measures, Leadership and Learning and Development.

Between April and July all Social Care Workforce were offered and attended two day Signs of Safety training, introducing them to the Risk Assessment and Next Steps. Following this training all Childrens Social Care Teams spent time with the Signs of Safety Consultant as part of practice intensive sessions within their individual teams. Partner Agency briefings were also facilitated by the Signs of Safety Consultant. They also facilitated a session with the Joint operational Group, which included partners from MASH, Education and Health. Quarterly partner agencies briefings have continued to be facilitated by the Principal Officer for Signs of Safety, who has also facilitated introduction briefings with the Designated Safeguarding Leads within Schools, Early Help staff and Foster Carers.

As part of System Alignment significant work is underway to embed Signs of Safety within all forms used by Children's Social Care on Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS). This has required a whole system review and process map to ensure all forms are captured. Interim arrangements have been applied to support the Childrens Social Care are able to begin using the skills and knowledge learnt on training while they await for WCCIS to be aligned. This will ensure consistent practice across teams and framework being embedded.

All Childrens Social Care Staff are now undertaking five day training between September and January to learn and understand how to use Signs of Safety to work with parents/carers and create family safety plans. The aim of the Meaningful Measures Workstream is to understand in a timely way, the progress being made with the implementation, to evidence our improvement and the good difference it makes for children and families so we can ensure improved service consistency, quality, and impact.

Adult Practice Reviews

The RSB has completed one adult practice review for a Bridgend resident during the reporting period. Adult R (pseudonym) of this review had complex needs arising from past trauma, mental illness and poor physical health. The death was unexpected, and the review considered the multi-agency response to the circumstance and made recommendations for learning which will be monitored via the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Joint Practice Review subgroup.

There is currently one new adult practice reviews for a Bridgend resident being undertaken by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

Following a child or adult practice review, the learning is disseminated in a number of ways, including specific briefings for workforce. 7 minute briefings which summarise the learning are widely disseminated. The learning informs individual, team, service and

organisational learning and development plans. Where necessary, policies, procedures and practice guidance are developed. Detailed action plans are developed which are robustly monitored through the RSB practice review sub-group.

Bridgend Safeguarding Partners Joint Operational Group

In the last 2 years local safeguarding partnerships have been developed through the establishment of a Bridgend Safeguarding Partners Joint Operational Group (JOG) which is chaired by the Deputy Head of Children's Social Care and reports through the RSB.

The JOG was established at a time of increased demand and has continued to enable Bridgend safeguarding partners to exercise real time situational awareness of operational safeguarding performance across partner agencies to ensure children and adults are effectively safeguarded from risk and harm. The JOG also considers and agree actions to address, at a thematic level of operational escalations via the RSBs process to resolve professional differences (the CRISP process).

Bridgend Corporate Safeguarding Policy

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all Council Directorates. With a view to promoting awareness of this and raising the profile of Safeguarding across the whole of the Council, the Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been reviewed, developed and reimplemented. This sets out the Council's duty and commitment to safeguard and promote the health, well-being and human rights of adults and children at risk and to ensure that effective practices are in place throughout the Council and its commissioned services such that individuals can live their life free from harm, abuse and neglect. This policy has been updated to strengthen the approach to self-evaluation, management of risk and governance arrangements.

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Well-being chairs a monthly Corporate Safeguarding Group which includes representatives from across the Council. The group oversees a corporate safeguarding dashboard which includes information on safeguarding performance from all parts of the Council and which is reported to the Cabinet Corporate Management Board (CCMB).

Exploitation

The Council is committed to provide a coordinated, multi-agency response to children, young people and vulnerable adults who are currently at risk, or likely to be at risk of, Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, County Lines activity and gang affiliation. We aim to provide a range of services and forums whereby violence, vulnerabilities and exploitation is discussed and addressed from a multi-agency perspective.

To progress the multi-agency management of exploitation a panel has been established. The first full panel took place in June 2023. The impact of the exploitation screening tools and multi-agency collaboration is already evident. Two senior social workers have been appointed to lead on exploitation within Mash/IAA and the Locality Teams. The safeguarding exploitation senior social workers undertake a range of safety mapping tasks as well as developing the relationships between the multi-agency partners and in particular

the development of the missing protocol and continues to support frontline practitioners in completing the exploitation screening tools.

Nearly all secondary schools have participated in the Exploitation Panel. As part of this a mapping exercise is being developed to identify potential links between and across young people schools in the county.

The number of young people presented to EPP Panel since June 2023 is 42. That includes 18 females and 24 males from the range 8-17. The nature of exploitation in these cases has included sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, trafficking and periods of missing. Between 1 October 2022 and 30 September 2023 there were 121 criminal and sexual exploitation concerns for 82 children/young people.

Safeguarding in Education

Within the Education and Family Support Directorate the Education Engagement Team (EET) was established in 2018 and its remit includes the 'safeguarding in education' role.

EET support children from groups identified by Estyn as being vulnerable or potentially vulnerable such as: excluded pupils, care-experienced children, those known to Youth Justice Services, those with English as an Additional Language and Home Educated Learners. This "joined up" approach means that the team are able to offer schools ongoing advice and guidance around a range of areas and have knowledge and skills in safeguarding, child protection as well as education. The EET team are co-located within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

EET deliver Designated Safeguarding Lead training to schools. They facilitate whole school safeguarding training to individual schools and Flying Start provisions. Within the remit of EET they also facilitate and coordinate twice yearly Designated Lead Forums. These meetings are for both Designated Safeguarding Leads and Designated Leads for Looked After Children. The meetings cover regular safeguarding information and training sessions and speakers from partner agencies and internal teams. This year the forum has included speakers from Children's Services, Signs of Safety information, Fostering Wales and Police colleagues covering topics such as Care Experienced Children placements, updates on services in Bridgend, Child Practice Review 7-minute briefings and County Lines.

Schools in Bridgend continue to undertake audits of their safeguarding approaches. Utilising an audit tool developed by Estyn schools are able to satisfy themselves that their approaches to safeguarding are robust. All school audits are reviewed and quality assured by EET annually. Findings from these audits have highlighted good practices and demonstrate schools have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. Areas for development have included the role of the school governing body in safeguarding and their understanding of their responsibilities for safeguarding issues within their school. Additional opportunities for governors to access safeguarding training have been offered this year to respond to this need.

To date for this academic Year 23-24, the Education Engagement Team have delivered 16 whole school Child Protection Training sessions as well as 1 Designated Lead Training session with 65 staff in attendance and 1 Designated Lead Forum with 45 school and Early Years staff in attendance.

The Current number of electively home educated learners is 214.

School safeguarding audits

Welsh Government statutory guidance “Keeping Learners Safe” states clearly that the responsibilities of schools, governing bodies and local authorities, voluntary-aided and foundation schools, and further education institutions, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and independent schools under section 157 of the 2002 Act. The guidance states that all staff in those education settings must have an understanding of their responsibilities linked to safeguarding. Education settings must ensure that there are systems in place to support staff to understand and discharge these responsibilities effectively. The guidance also provides schools with an audit tool that can be used to evaluate their safeguarding approach and to assure themselves of their compliance in this key area.

In the Summer and Autumn term of 2022, schools were asked to complete this initial audit tool to consider how they are discharging their responsibilities linked to safeguarding. The local authority, specifically the education engagement team acted as a “critical friend” as part of this process and in subsequent years have supported schools via annual quality assurance visits during the Autumn Term.

VAWDASV

Table 8 sets out the referrals received by the Assia Domestic abuse service between September 2022 and October 2023.

September 2022 – October 2023	
2820	referrals were received during the time period
2103	referrals accepted support
1325	referrals received were for female victims
310	referrals received were for male victims
2	referrals were for non binary victims

Table 8

During the period between September 2022 and October 2023, Assia Domestic Abuse Services received 2820 referrals, of these referrals 2103 accepted support. This means 561 referrals didn’t accept support, some of these would have been repeat referrals and would have already been active within the service. All referrals would have been contacted directly, where contact was made, full safety planning would have been discussed but ongoing support would have been declined. Where contact was not directly made with the victim, a letter and safety plan would have been sent out where safe to do so. We would also let the referrer know of any outcome. 286 referrals were male, we are currently receiving higher numbers of male victims since having our dedicated male victim IDVA (Independent domestic violence advisors) which is a positive.

The VAWDASV Manager participates in child and adult practise reviews as well as DHRs (Domestic homicide reviews) as required. All of which ensure learning can be sought and shared. In the last year we have delivered training across the region on Coercive Control,

Domestic abuse awareness and Exploitation. In addition to this we are continuing to raise awareness in the community with the Police, PCSOS, the Community Safety Partnership Team and Midwives.

As indicated above, we have recruited a dedicated older persons IDVA, we also have a dedicated Male Victim IDVA. In addition to this we also have a secondees from New Pathways who a role that offers SV (Sexual Violence) support work / stabilisation work to identified victims that need ongoing trauma work around the SV whilst the IDVA stays in situ to continue with the specialised DV work. The trauma from SV can often derail a victim from engagement with an IDVA so this stabilisation work should prove effective. We have a dedicated Substance use worker from BAROD working with High risk victims of DA and perpetrators.

We have also developed a Male victim focus group to ascertain what is working well and where we can improve the service going forward, this is proving very popular with the victims and will hopefully develop more as the year progresses. We are currently going through a Leading Lights accreditation which is due to be assessed fully by the end of the financial year.

There are six objectives within the National Strategy that Bridgend also follows:

Objective 1: Increase awareness and challenge attitudes of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence across the Welsh Population

Objective 2: Increased awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong

Objective 3: Increased focus on holding perpetrators to account and provide opportunities to change their behaviour based around victim safety

Objective 4: Make early intervention and prevention a priority

Objective 5: Relevant professionals are trained to provide effective, timely and appropriate responses to victims and survivors

Objective 6: Provide victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Wales

Partnership and community safety

Bridgend Community Safety Partnership (CSP) involves various agencies from the public, private and voluntary sector that work together to reduce crime, disorder and fear of crime locally, in order to improve the quality of life and to create a safer living and working environment.

Following the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, the decision was taken by Bridgend Public Services Board (PSB) to embed the activities of the Bridgend CSP into its own, and this practice continues now that the PSB has merged with Cwm Taf PSB to create one public services board for Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The two current CSPs operating in the region have also stated their intention to merge and have gone through an external review to scope the required work. The remainder of this financial year will see a task and finish group take forward the recommendations from this review with a view to being one merged CSP in spring 2024.

Statutory membership for the CSP includes Bridgend County Borough Council, South Wales Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and National Probation Service. Other partners have chosen to be involved, including the

Police and Crime Commissioner, Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, registered social landlords, Department of Work and Pensions and Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO).

This has been a busy year for the CSP. Key areas of work have been around delivering the Safer Streets Home Office grant which was secured in partnership with South Wales Police. The focus for cycle four of the grant was on improving feelings of community safety and reducing violence against women and girls, and the Council utilised the 'Safer Streets' fund to carry out a broad scope of activity employ health and well-being co-ordinators, undertake youth diversionary activities, work with Welsh Women's Aid to deliver 'Don't be a bystander' training and work with Valleys to Coast to undertake visual improvements.

The biggest area of spend was providing improved CCTV coverage across the county borough. New cameras were installed in key locations as a measure of improving feelings of community safety particularly for women and girls, reducing the risk of crime and addressing ASB concerns.

One of the most successful areas of spend for this grant was in the 'Street Art' project which saw areas across the County Borough be transformed from unwelcoming spaces often featuring hateful or discriminatory messages into bright, vibrant areas for communities and improve feelings of safety. The street artists worked with local groups to transform underpasses, subways and walls and drew on local inspiration to give each project a distinct identity, such as the Mari Lwyd design near Maesteg Bus Station and the aquarium in Porthcawl. The community response to these has been very positive, both in person and social media. South Wales Police delivered elements of the Safer Streets grant, with activities that complemented those being delivered by the Council, such as target hardening, developing new Neighbourhood Watch schemes and also very popular self-defence classes specifically for women and girls aged over 16 living in Bridgend County Borough. These were held at a variety of locations to ensure more women were able to attend.

The funding for 'Safer Streets' came to an end in September 2023. Round five of the grant is awarded on a regional basis, i.e. to Cwm Taf Morgannwg, and the Community Safety Manager for South Wales Police has led on the application. The amount available is significantly lower than received in round four but remains focused on improving feelings of safety, particularly for women and girls.

Anti Social Behaviour town centre management groups for Maesteg and Bridgend have resumed to act as a multi-agency problem solving fora for these areas. Attendance is from a broad range of partners and there is a good level of engagement. Reports of ASB are generally reducing which is positive, but we continue to encourage communities and residents to report their concerns to the Police through online reporting, email and 101. Our activities are undertaken using ASB as an evidence base so this reporting is vital for us understanding and addressing the challenges seen in our communities and supporting these communities to feel safe and inclusive.

Acquisitive crime continues to be a challenge, and likely linked to the cost-of-living crisis. Bridgend's Community Cohesion officer is currently seconded to Swansea and acting as the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator. Whilst the post is currently vacant, we are still actively working to create and improve feelings of cohesion. One of the ways we are working innovatively is through our SMART partnership with Welsh Government and Swansea University to develop an app that can capture and report hateful images and

graffiti. 'StreetSnap' is being developed and piloted in Bridgend and has already generated significant interest, and is identified in the Crime and Justice element of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan as good practice. We will soon be establishing focus groups and carrying out training with staff to refine and test the app.

Workforce

Human Resources provide workforce information to the Council's Safeguarding Board which meets on a monthly basis. The information includes a monthly update on the status of DBS checks (in particular renewals) and quarterly updates on numbers of completed safeguarding training. If any follow up action is deemed necessary then this is agreed at the meeting and the relevant managers will be asked to take this forward. Reports on DBS end dates and outstanding safeguarding training are sent to managers periodically to enable them to take relevant action. There is a current DBS Policy and Recruitment & Selection Protocol in place to advise managers on the steps to follow when undertaking a recruitment exercise. All managers are expected to complete the recruitment & selection e-learning module prior to participating in this process.

Housing

From October 2022 to October 2023 there were over 1800 homelessness applications with 989 individuals, including 280 children placed into temporary accommodation. Housing and homelessness services are under unprecedented demand. A draft Housing Support Programme Strategy for 2022-2026 has set the Council's priorities for tackling these demands. The draft strategy has been subject to public consultation and the final version of the strategy will be submitted to Cabinet for approval prior to submission to Welsh Government. Joint working through BCBC's Corporate Safeguarding Board and Corporate Parenting Board ensures a link between housing and social services. Actions from these groups are looking to further analyse the circumstances in which individuals, including care leavers have found themselves homeless, with the aim that further preventative measures can be put in place in the future.

Out of country placements and Operating Without Registration (OWRs)

Out of County Placements are placements for care experienced children that are outside of the Bridgend area. There are times where Children's needs require that they are placed out of the local area, these can be related to managing risks for the young person or can be related to the need for specialist support that can only be provided out of area. In other cases, children can be placed out of county where there is no local provision available to meet the child's needs at that time. In these cases, efforts are made to support a child to return to the local area via ongoing searches by the placements team. Decisions to move children between placements are carefully made, balancing the current and anticipated future needs of children together with the requirement to provide local placements where possible.

In accordance with The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015, a local authority may only place a child out of county where they are satisfied there is no placement capable of meeting the child's needs within the county. A regular Out of Authority Panel takes place to review cases where children are placed out of area in residential and high-cost placements. Panel is made up of representatives who can assist

with meeting Childrens' needs in out of county arrangements, such as Health and Education.

01/10/22 – 30/09/23	
Placements out of Bridgend but in Wales	88
Placements outside of Wales	15

Table 9

41 children placed out of county currently are residing in Foster Wales Bridgend placements with General and Connected Persons carers. 17 of these children are placed with their parents. 21 are placed with independent fostering providers. The remaining children are placed with residential providers including parent and child assessment units.

OWR's

OWR as an acronym for Operating Without Registration. This specifically refers to placements that are made where the provider is not registered with Care Inspectorate Wales in accordance with legislation. There have been 16 OWR's between 01/09/2022 and 31/10/2023.

Local authorities place children within such arrangements when there is an overriding need for a placement and where there are no other options available. Such considerations are subject to the highest levels of scrutiny and can only be agreed by the Director of Social Services and Wellbeing or the Head of Childrens Services in their absence. In all cases the Care Inspectorate is notified of the placement and regular updates provided evidencing the additional oversight in place to support the child and continued search activity of the Placement Team to secure a registered provision. These arrangements can vary:

- In some cases, the local authority places children with a provider who is in the process of setting up a new residential home but has not secured registration at the point this is needed.
- In others, a child can be placed with a Supported Living provider, a home for children aged 16+ who have support needs but with an additional package to meet any identified care needs of the child/ren.
- A child may also be placed in a home that is rented by the local authority with the support of a staff team recruited from an agency and/or supported by local authority staff.

The reasons for OWR's are related to overall placement sufficiency, the children's social care market study final report Wales summary (10 March 2022) found there are significant problems in how the placements market is functioning, particularly in England and Wales. The study outlined that there is a lack of placements of the right kind, in the right places, means that children are not consistently getting access to care and accommodation that meets their needs.

Within BCBC we have sought to address these issues via:

- Increases to Fostering Allowances above Welsh Government National Minimum levels

- Targeted foster carer recruitment activities Provision of paid respite for Foster Carers and the implementation of a Foster Friendly Policy within the Local Authority to enhance support to foster carers within BCBC.
- Developing and completing a new single occupancy provision within Bridgend that is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
- Developing and completing a new Residential Home that has 3 emergency beds and 4 assessment beds. The needs profiles of children within our existing medium term Residential Home have been reviewed to enable maximum occupancy.
- Securing funding to enable the commission of a specialist placement support service for children within both fostering and residential placements.

The local authority currently has 3 OWR placements.

Meeting of:	EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2
Date of Meeting:	6 DECEMBER 2023
Report Title:	THE LEARNING DISABILITY TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	JACKIE DAVIES HEAD OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this report is to outline the current position of the Learning Disability Service in Adult Social Care, alongside the proposed response; being the implementation of a new Learning Disability Transformation Programme.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline to Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 a proposed Learning Disability Transformation Programme in Bridgend County Borough Council's (the Council's) Adult Social Services Care. The report will detail the rationale, details of the program and projected benefits.

2. Background

- 2.1 Ten years ago, in 2013, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) commissioned Alder Advice to co-produce an "Assessment of Opportunities to Improve the Cost Effectiveness of Learning Disability Services" with the Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT) staff and senior social services managers, including staff from Practice, Commissioning, and Housing. The aim of the 2013 project was to identify how individuals with learning disabilities could be supported to have as good a quality of life as possible given their individual potential and within the care and support resources available.
- 2.2 Within the findings of the Alder review, both strengths to build on and excellent practice were acknowledged. Building on the existing direction of travel, the project recommended embedding the Progression Approach from practice through the commissioning within BCBC.

- 2.3 The Progression Approach represents good practice in the delivery of services to individuals with a learning disability. It was used as the basis for Welsh Government’s “Transforming Learning Disability Services in Wales” programme. “Progression” is a long-term person-centered developmental approach that aligns well with BCBC’s aspirations. It seeks to help each individual achieve their aspirations for independence. Underpinning this ethos is the goal of enabling each person to be as independent as possible and to optimise care and support costs.
- 2.4 In the last 10 years there has been significant changing context for Adult Social Care as a consequence of global, national, regional and local factors. These include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable people, particularly the impact of lockdowns on how people want to live their lives. In addition, the cost-of-living crisis has impacted disproportionately on the most vulnerable. BCBC is part of a different regional partnership arrangement in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, whilst specialist learning disability services are managed by the Swansea Bay University Health Board. There are also new local partnerships, for example in the area of supported employment. More detail is set out below.
- 2.5 Legislative change, with the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, also now places greater emphasis on:
- **Prevention and early intervention** – Increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need so people stay as independent as possible.
 - **Supporting well-being** – Enabling people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
 - **Giving people a voice and control** – Putting the individual and their needs at the centre of their care. Giving them a voice in, and control over, how they are supported to achieve agreed outcomes.
 - **Co-productive approaches** – Enabling people to be more involved in the design and delivery of how they are supported.

Further changes since 2013 include:

- 2.6 **Changes to the profile of average caseloads.** This is due to the increased average complexity of needs of people supported and changes to mental capacity, Deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS), and Court of Protection scope and requirements.

Within BCBC, although there has been an evidenced increase in both demand and complexity, the permanent staffing resources within the CLDT and the Child Disability and Transition Team (CDTT) has remained the same. As a result, agency practitioners have been engaged to manage pressures in core aspects of practice such as Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and Court of Protection.

- 2.7 In 2014, a report by a House of Lords select committee, concluded that the DoLS legislation was “not fit for purpose”; specifically, the DoLS were not being used when they should be, leaving individuals without legal safeguards and care providers vulnerable to legal challenge. This was swiftly followed by a decision of the Supreme Court (known as “Cheshire West”) which gave a significantly wider interpretation of deprivation of liberty than had been previously applied. This resulted in a considerable increase in DoLS referrals to local authorities and demands to the public

purse, as well as consequential delays in DoLS assessments and reviews taking place, and an increasing backlog.

- 2.8 The DoLS can only be used if the person will be deprived of their liberty in a care home or hospital. In other settings the Court of Protection must authorise a deprivation of liberty (known as non-standard authorisation).
- 2.9 Currently there is a total of 123 people in learning disability services that reside in shared lives, supported living, or live at home with family, who have significant restrictions in their everyday lives and therefore require a Court of Protection application. Under the current DoLS system these people need to be reviewed every year and a new application submitted to the Court of Protection two months prior to the expiry date of the last Court Authorisation.
- 2.10 These Court of Protection applications need to be built into the existing assessment and care management process within the Community Learning Disability Team, by social workers who know individuals and their families well, and who have established positive relationships with over the years because of the complexity and the need to co-ordinate the application and gather all relevant information together to submit to the Court via the Council's legal services.
- 2.11 The extensive Court of Protection application process includes an updated care plan, capacity assessment, statement from a parent or guardian, application, plus a social work statement. As this work cannot be undertaken by assistant social workers, at present the demand is managed through the contracting of agency practitioners.
- 2.12 Specific to transition, new arrangements based in Children's Services were set up in 2017 (in pilot form and later confirmed). Since then, the CDTT has supported people until stable adult care and support arrangements are established, or up to age 25.
- 2.13 Changes to Local Health Boards and boundaries have meant new relationships have needed to be formed. In February 2019, Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) University Health Board (UHB), became responsible for commissioning health services for adults with learning disabilities. It replaced Abertawe Bro Morgannwg UHB, commissioning clinical services for Bridgend from Swansea Bay UHB.
- 2.14 The COVID pandemic and related lockdowns severely affected how people with learning disabilities were supported and working relationships between different professional groups changed. Recovery from this "system shock" is still in progress with ambition to progress a national 'reset' programme within health and social care.
- 2.15 The adult social work review is a large-scale transformational programme that focuses on the design and implementation of a new social work operating model for Adult Social Care. The project methodology has seen the deep dive of 21 social work teams to ensure any proposals are evidenced based.
- 2.16 There has been a decline in outcomes post pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, there had been marked progress towards applying the Progression Approach when supporting individuals managed by the Community Learning Disability Team. This approach included advancing practice towards taking a strengths-based approach which focused on furthering independence and achieving outcomes, which in return

reduced the over reliance of commissioned services, therefore creating financial efficiencies.

- 2.17 As the service resets following the Covid 19 pandemic, there is now an opportunity to revive and strengthen the achievements previously accomplished when embedding the Progression Approach. Positively, although the 2023 Alder report states the progress made between 2013 and the COVID Pandemic has been diluted, the report evidences the strong appetite amongst practitioners to rebuild on previous progress achieved and to reinvigorate the practice approach within the Community Learning Disability Team.
- 2.18 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the population - the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) 2022-2027. The PNA identifies regional priorities for people with learning disabilities. 10 priorities relate to family/friendships/peer support, community integration, daytime opportunities, transport, supported and independent living, advocacy/rights, communication and information sharing, healthcare, respite care, and life transitions. These priorities have influenced the transformation plan being proposed in this report.
- 2.19 The RPB has also a Market Stability Report (2022) to understand the state of the social care market. This report identifies a major gap for individuals with learning disabilities being the lack of opportunities to engage in services within their communities. The report also evidences a projected increase in mental health concerns for people with a learning disability and a lack of specialist mental health support for people with a learning disability.

The degree of change has presented an opportunity to pause and reflect on:

- Where BCBC's learning disability services are now?
- Where BCBC's learning disability services aspire to get to?
- How to achieve its aspirations?

To help with this, Alder Advice were commissioned to carry out a new Opportunity Assessment based on the current situation. The findings of the updated Opportunity Assessment have been applied to inform the Adult Social Care's Learning Disability Transformation Plan.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The latest budget position is that the Learning Disability Budget for 2022-23 over spent by £3.61m (19%). This level of over spending is not sustainable.

3.2 Evidence base to support transformation

The transformation noted within this report, has been considered in accordance with:

- Deep dive of the CLDT (Social Work Review Project)
- Deep dive of the CDTT (Social Work Review Project)
- Learning Disability: Improving Lives Programme (Welsh Government) 2018

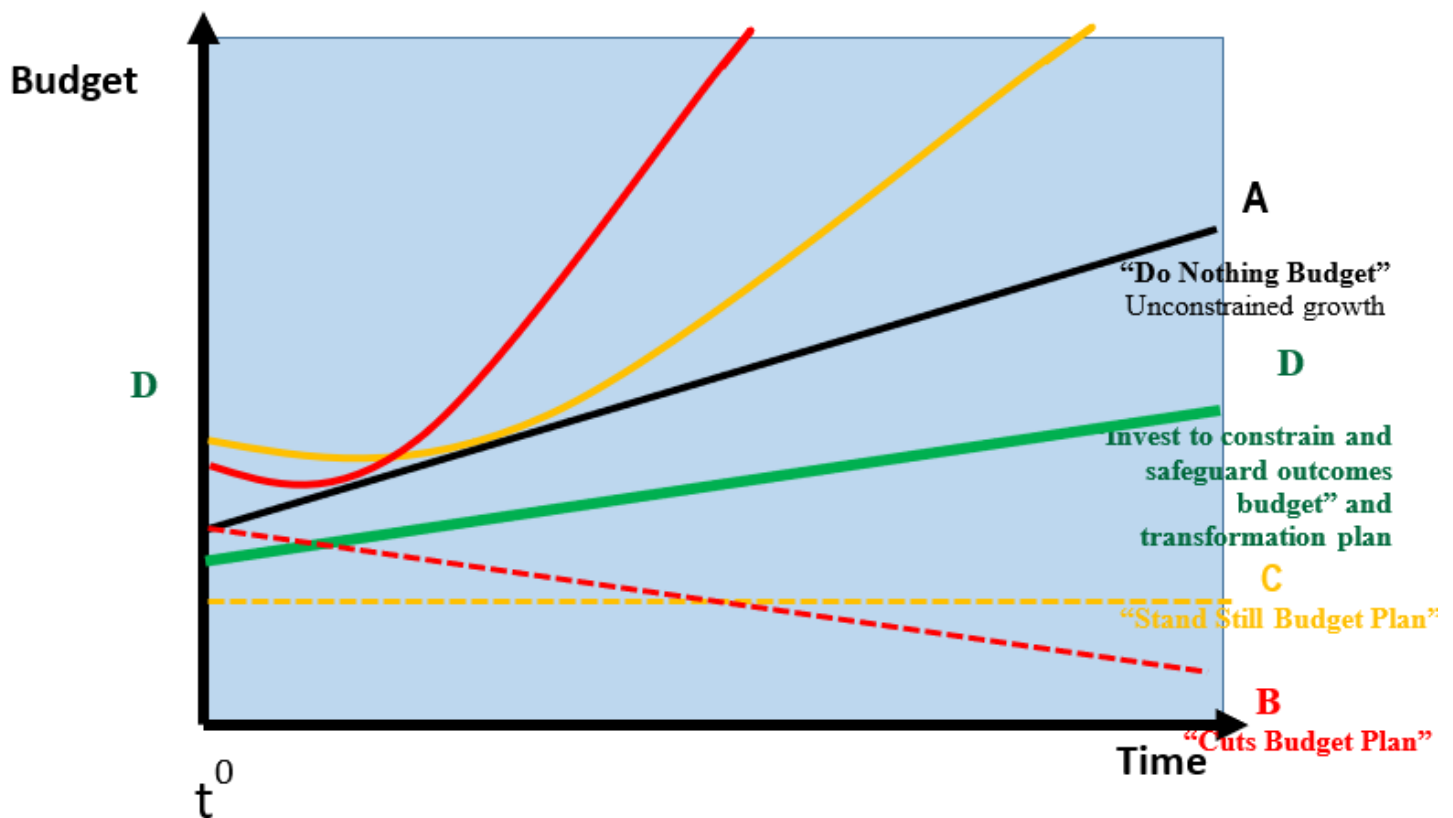
- Historical Assessment of Opportunities to Improve the Cost Effectiveness of Learning Disability Services (2013)
- New Assessment of Opportunities (AO) to Improve the Cost Effectiveness of Learning Disability Services (2023)
- Day services prospectus 2021
- Learning disability service development plan from 2019-2022
- Social work review terms of reference - February 2022
- Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027
- Market Stability Report (2022)

3.3 Expenditure for learning disability services in BCBC is considered at 'tipping point'. The learning disability budget for 2022-23 had an over spend £3.61m or 19%. This included one off income of £838k in the form of additional grant from Welsh Government, which is unlikely to be repeated in future years. The service recognises that this is an unsustainable position, and we need a transformation plan for future years.

3.4 The table below illustrates a breakdown of the expenditure and overspend for 2022-23.

Area of spend	Budget	Spend	Variance
Residential Care	2,469,242	3,290,888	821,646
Supported & Other Accommodation	538,430	522,552	-15,878
Direct Payments	2,794,352	3,101,532	307,180
Internal Homecare	2,633,163	3,641,623	1,008,460
External homecare	6,774,856	7,592,005	817,149
Day care	3,408,113	4,038,074	629,961
Other services	116,617	81,361	-35,256
Assessment & Care Management	534,446	672,600	138,154
TOTAL ADULT LEARNING DISABILITIES	19,269,219	22,940,635	<u>3,671,416</u>

3.5 Illustrated below is the financial projection based on the varying service and financial option for the learning disability service.



- 3.6 Doing nothing, i.e., continuing with current practice and service arrangements, risks allowing future spending to continue to rise in line with current trends (A). This is not an affordable option. Equally, aiming to cut budgets (B) or to keep them at the current level (C) could have unintended negative long-term financial consequences (B/C) and may impact adversely on the outcomes achieved /quality of life of adults with learning disabilities.
- 3.7 In keeping with the principles set within the Progression Approach, Adult Social Care's practice model and the Social Service and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the preferred option is an "Invest to Constrain Budget" (D). Option D optimises expenditure if supported by a Learning Disability Transformation Plan, as detailed later.
- 3.8 It is imperative that innovative and transformative approaches are rapidly considered and implemented to bring the budget back under control, while ensuring care and support for people with learning disabilities remains safe and focused on supporting people to achieve good, overall wellbeing outcomes.
- 3.9 **Suggested response: The Learning Disability Transformation Programme**
- 3.10 In response to the current position, it is recommended that a medium scale transformation programme leads targeted work streams focused on improvement opportunities which will be designed to build on existing strengths.

3.11 The main opportunities are to:

- Reduce overservicing that appears to have emerged in recent years.
- Enable professional practice to more consistently use the Progression Approach and the newly introduced practice model, Outcome Focused Strengths Based Practice.
- Develop local day opportunities to better meet the varying degrees of complexities of the local population. This relates to the modernisation of current day services and significantly strengthening community integration and supported employment pathways for people with learning disabilities.
- Improve operational, monitoring, and planning systems and processes to support the delivery of care and support in line with the Progressive Approach. This includes a brokerage for specialist, complex placements.

3.12 Leading the transformation will be the Adult Social Care's Social Work Lead Officer. Senior leaders and experts from the existing workforce will be assigned to relevant work streams. However, although it will be feasible to progress elements of the programme of change through existing resources, the AO recommends that we need to "Invest to Constrain Budget" (D). Option D should be seen as being necessary to "optimise" the budget, so that spending is as "cost effective" as possible.

3.13 **Western Bay's 'Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme'**

3.14 The Learning Disability Transformation Plan has been modelled on the evidenced success of Western Bay's regional 'Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme'. Established in 2013, the principal aim of the Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme was to address any irregularities in the quality of commissioned care across the previous Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board (ABMU) region.

3.15 This methodology of the transformation programme encourages progression, which empowers people to support themselves, become less reliant on services in the longer term, meaning cashable savings are also realised. Reviewing existing and devising new packages of care for individuals both in residential or supported living placements whose needs are complex. The aim of each review is to ensure that the individual receives services that enable them to live as independently as possible.

3.16 The results of undertaking such a programme are significant:

Between 2013 and 2018, across the ABMU region, the programme achieved:

- Total Savings of £3,920,588.
- £2,511,100 annual cashable savings.
- £1,398,682 annual avoidance savings through the brokerage service and through avoidance of uplift to current costs.
- Between Sept 2014 and March 2016, the programme achieved the target of £1.3 million, even after taking into consideration that the full complement of staff was not achieved until May 2015.
- Between April 2016 and March 2017, the programme exceeded the target of £1m and saved £1,310,256
- Between April 2017 and March 2018, the programme exceeded the target of £1m and saved £1,288,94

3.17 Through adopting the methodology of the Western Bay's 'Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme' the ambition is that BCBC's Learning Disability Transformation Plan will achieve a 5% reduction across certain areas of the Adult Social Care Learning Disability budget. Utilising this approach supports BCBC to provide proof of concept that will enable an invest to save approach going forward. Further details relating to financial implications are noted in section 8.

3.18 The high-level programme structure and work streams are noted in the appendix of this report. Potential benefits from each workstream have also been noted.

3.19 **Project benefits of each workstream**

3.20 **Outcome Focused Assessment**

- There will be a reduction in the commissioning of 2:1 and 1:1 hours. This will be achieved through reassessed rightsizing packages of care where individuals have progressed.
- A focus on waking nights, through utilising technology such as Just Checking, will reduce the use of wakeful night-time staffing. Where individuals are displaying progression, wakeful night-time support will be reassessed for suitability towards a least restrictive option such as sleeping night support.
- There will be scrutiny over new requests for high costed packages of care. The co-working of the outcome focused assessors alongside existing practitioners will support upskilling practitioners in ensuring all requests of changes to packages of care are assessed utilising the outcome focused methodology.

3.21 **Specialist broker**

- There will be a reduction in the use of specialist residential care through the comprehensive analysis of request for such placements. The broker will ensure that where providers can provide the required level of support in a least restrictive environment, this is the sourced accommodation option.
- There will be a fairer market when seeking specialist placements. This is achieved through seeking and utilising all suitable providers when sourcing placements.
- Placements sourced will be right priced through scrutiny and negotiation of presented costings.

3.22 **Enhancing day opportunities**

- There will be a local offer to individuals which will enable choice which is proportionate to need.
- There will be a reduction in seeking specialist residential placements or intensive day support due to the transformed day opportunities offering suitable support for highly complex individuals, in addition to a step down option.
- There will be a new approach to early support planning with a focus on maximising, where appropriate existing community resources.

3.23 **Continuing Health Care (CHC) specialist function**

- We will ensure all individuals who are displaying triggers towards meeting CHC will have their rights upheld, through ensuring the CHC process is actioned.
- The CHC specialist will assess all complex CHC cases whilst co working, with existing practitioners and standard CHC cases. The CHC specialist will provide mentoring and coaching, upskilling staff on all aspects of the CHC process.

3.24 In the current financial year, we have an opportunity to use funds from the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) to deliver aspects of this transformation plan. £130,000 of RIF funding will finance 3 Senior Social Work Practitioners and 1 specialist complex care broker. The recruitment of these posts is underway and we anticipate staff to be in post from December 2023. Therefore, progress and efficiencies achieved by these posts would offer proof of concept towards the future model.

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 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective/objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - Taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming over reliant and dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy, and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – Ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human, and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.
- **Long Term** – Learning Disability Services in Adult Social Care will enhance its practice model of strengths based and outcome-focused practice, therefore in keeping with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, and more appropriate for the longer-term.
- **Collaboration** – The service model is predicated on close collaboration between the service provider, social work teams, wider stakeholders and communities, and the individuals themselves.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implications as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no specific safeguarding or corporate parent implications as a result of this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The Alder report states that expenditure for learning disability services in BCBC is considered at 'tipping point', with its current financial position and projection being 'unsustainable' should there be no change in course.

8.2 The learning disability budget for 2022-23 had an over spend of £3.61m. This overspend is inclusive of one-off income of £838k in the form of additional grant from Welsh Government which is unlikely to be repeated in future years. The learning disability budget for 2023-2024 is £22,227,004 and the projected over spend at quarter 2 was £3,064,000.

8.3 Through adopting the successful methodology evidenced by the work of Western Bay's 'Commissioning for Complex Needs Programme the service anticipates that a full year cashable savings and cost avoidance would be achieved of £870,000. Within the current financial year this would equate to £195,000.

8.4 The Outcome Focused assessment process requires reassessments which are delivered in line with the Progression model. The methodology identifies overservicing and the potential and strengths of individuals to maximise their progression.

8.5 Within this workstream, it is projected that between December 2023 and March 2024, with a staffing resource of 3 social work practitioners the following will be achieved:

- The completion of 40 outcome focused assessments directed within the highest costed external supported living commissioned provider.
- It is expected that this workstream will achieve, in this area, a cost saving of 10% of the current weekly spend (£92,000), resulting in full year savings of approx. £480,000.
- The completion of 4 outcome focused assessments directed to the highest costed learning disability and mental health residential placements.
- It is expected that this workstream will achieve a cost saving of 10% of the current weekly spend (£8,700), resulting in a full year savings of approx. £45,000.
- The completion of 2 outcome focused assessments directed to the two highest costed independent domiciliary packages within learning disability services.
- It is expected that this workstream will achieve a cost saving of 10% of the current weekly spend (£28,000), resulting in a full year saving of approx £145,000.

8.6 In total, the outcome focused assessment workstream is aiming to achieve cost savings across the highest costed areas of expenditure, a total of £670,000 (full year savings).

- 8.7 In addition to the outcome focused assessments, a new specialist brokerage process has been launched.
- 8.8 The Regional Integration Fund offers an opportunity to utilise £130,000 to finance 3 Senior Social Work Practitioners and 1 specialist complex care broker to deliver aspects of the Transformation Plan. The posts will offer proof of concept towards the future model for the 4 months that the posts are in place.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 note and consider the contents of this report; and provide comments on the future direction of the Learning Disability Transformation Programme

Background documents: None

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Learning Disability Transformation Programme

Outcome Focused Assessment Project

A rightsizing, reassessment programme which identifies any overservicing, through reassessment and revised care and support packages; in line with agreed outcomes and the potential to Progress.

Specialist Brokerage Function

Specialist broker to provide standardisation brokerage process. This includes scrutiny over requests for specialist placement, ensure placements sourced are right priced /rightsized. The new process will maximise the market through actively seeking partnerships with all appropriate providers.

Modernisation of Day Service

The design and implementation of an innovative, new service model which develops a community support model with the aims to support people to use community resources and to acquire independent living skills.

Continuing Health Care (CHC) Specialist Function

CHC specialists function which focuses on the assessment of cases identifies as meeting the triggers for CHC. The function will expand to support and develop the required skills and knowledge amongst the workforce.

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