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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.*

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let us know if your language choice is Welsh.*



Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Democratic Services

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Monday, 2 September 2024

Dear Councillor,

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held Hybrid in the Council Chamber - Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB / Remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Monday, 9 September 2024 at 10:00.**

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. Verbal Presentation by Cabinet Members of an Overview of their Strategic Direction and Priorities for the Coming Year 3 - 4

Invitees:

Councillor John Spanswick – Leader.

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing.

Councillor Hywel Williams - Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance.

Councillor Martyn Jones - Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services.

Councillor Paul Davies - Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment.

Councillor Eugene Caparros / Councillor Melanie Evans - Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share).

Councillor Neelo Farr - Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing.

4. Information report for Noting - Corporate Plan Targets 2024/25 5 - 28

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5. Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24 29 - 148

Invitees:

Councillor Jane Gebbie - Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing.

Claire Marchant - Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing.

Jacqueline Davies – Head of Adult Social Care.

Laura Kinsey - Head of Children and Family Services.

Sophie Moore - Group Manager - Prevention and Wellbeing.

Pete Tyson - Group Manager – Commissioning.

Debbie Morgan - Group Manager - Business Strategy, Performance & Improvement.

6. Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 & 2023/24 149 - 186

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Forward Work Programme Update 187 - 216

9. 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 would like to view this meeting live, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

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

Councillors:

F D Bletsoe
JPD Blundell
HJ David
RM Granville

Councillors

S J Griffiths
GH Haines
M L Hughes
RL Penhale-Thomas

Councillors

T Thomas
A Williams
AJ Williams
E D Winstanley

Agenda Item 3

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	VERBAL PRESENTATION BY CABINET MEMBERS OF AN OVERVIEW OF THEIR STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING YEAR
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	<p>There is no impact on the policy framework and procedure rules.</p> <p>The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.</p> <p>The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight and refer any cross-cutting topics to a Committee or Research and Evaluation Panel.</p>
Executive Summary:	<p>The report advises that the Cabinet Members will verbally present an overview of their strategic direction and priorities for the coming year, to the Committee.</p> <p>This will assist with informing future Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes for the year.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise that the Cabinet Members will verbally present an overview of their strategic direction and priorities for the coming year, to the Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 At the last meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) held on 25 July 2024, the Committee recommended that Cabinet Members be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to provide an overview of their strategic direction and priorities for the coming year.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Cabinet Members have been invited to attend this meeting of the Committee to provide an overview of their strategic direction and priorities for the coming year.
- 3.2 This will assist with informing future Scrutiny Forward Work Programmes for the year.

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 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 That Committee is recommended to note the presentations as referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the report and consider how they may inform future Forward Work Programmes.

Background documents

None.

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING - CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS 2024/25
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>To update the Committee with a report for Members information and noting regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An update on Directorate Business Plans 2024/25 - An update on the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for 2024/25 including minor changes to Performance Indicators (PIs) and Commitments following Committees' consideration of the previous year's performance and Self-Assessment - Targets for Corporate Plan Delivery Plan PIs for 2024/25 <p>This will support COSC to scrutinise the Council's quarterly performance information in December 2024, March and July 2025.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the Information Report for noting that has been published since its last scheduled meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 At a meeting of the Council it was resolved to approve a revised procedure for the presentation to the Committee of Information Reports for noting.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Information Report

The following Information Report has been published since the last meeting of the Committee:

Title

Corporate Plan Targets 2024/25

Date Published

2 September 2024

3.2 Availability of Document

The document has been circulated to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members electronically via email and placed on the Bridgend County Borough Council website. The document is available from the above date of publication.

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. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. 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 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in relation to this report.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That the Committee acknowledges the publication of the report referred to in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	CORPORATE PLAN TARGETS 2024/25
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	ALEX RAWLIN POLICY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The Performance Framework forms part of the Policy Framework.
Executive Summary:	<p>This is an information report for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC). It provides –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An update on Directorate Business Plans 2024/25 • An update on the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan for 2024/25 including minor changes to Performance Indicators (PIs) and Commitments following Committees’ consideration of the previous year’s performance and Self-Assessment • Targets for Corporate Plan Delivery Plan PIs for 2024/25 <p>All of this will support COSC to scrutinise the Council’s quarterly performance information in December 2024, March and July 2025.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to give Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) information to support their role in scrutinising the Council’s quarterly performance information in December 2024 and March and July 2025.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan 2023-28 was agreed by full Council in March 2023. A one-year Corporate Plan Delivery Plan was agreed in July 2023 to support it, and a further one-year plan in July 2024. This set out the PIs and Commitments the Council will measure to assess whether it is achieving its Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 Each Directorate developed a Business Plan to support the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan. These include a range of PIs and Commitments and include targets and milestones to ensure we are making progress against them. These business plans will be made available on the Corporate Intranet.

- 2.3 The Council's annual performance data and self-assessment were scrutinised at Governance and Audit Committee (GAC) on 16 July 2024 and at COSC on 25 July 2024 and recommendations were made for changes.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 As a result of GAC, COSC and Cabinet's findings and recommendations, a number of changes have been made to the Council's Corporate Plan Delivery Plan. The following PIs and Commitments have been deleted as the committees felt they did not add value, had already been completed, were not being funded in 2024/25 or were not in the control of the Council –

- Commitment 2.3.2 Redevelop Bridgend Railway Station including improving the front public area and consider the feasibility of developing a transport interchange at the rear, providing links between bus services and trains, in partnership with Welsh Government and Network Rail.
- Commitment 3.5.2 Work with the Cwm Taf Nature Network Project to improve access to high quality green spaces.
- Commitment 5.2.3 Deliver 5 tree planting schemes, seeking to promote maximum carbon sequestration.
- Commitment 5.3.1 Adoption of the Replacement Local Development Plan.
- Commitment 4.2.1 Improve the offer to adults with Learning Disabilities to enable them to develop new skills and deliver their potential.
- Performance Indicator DCO23.17 New active travel routes.

- 3.2 The following PIs and Commitments have been added as the committees felt the aims were not fully supported and it was difficult to tell whether the council was achieving what it set out to -

- Commitment 1.1.8 We will ensure that children and families access support from the right service at the right time with the aim of preventing their needs from escalating.
- Commitment 1.4.2 Develop a five-year plan to meet increasing demand on support services, specialist provision and schools.
- Performance indicator 1.4.1 Number of pupils on the waiting lists for specialist provision.
- Performance indicator 1.4.2 Percentage of year 9 pupils with ALN and with a transition plan in place, that have had an annual review by 31 March of each current school year.

- 3.2 The targets for each PI (which will also be included in quarterly performance information) are set out in **Appendix 1**.

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. Wellbeing of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Wellbeing Objectives

5.1 This report supports the committee to review the Council's progress against the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 that form part of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-28:-

1. A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard, part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

5.2 The 5 ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act have also contributed to the Council developing its own five ways of working. Progress on these 5 ways of working is also summarised in the draft self-assessment.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change. However, the performance framework helps the Council to assess performance on areas including climate change.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting. However, the performance framework will help the Council assess performance on areas including safeguarding and corporate parenting.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that the Committee -

- Note the changes to the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan in paragraphs 3.1 / 3.2.
- Note the performance indicator targets for 2024/25 in **Appendix 1**.

Background documents

None

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Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2024-25 – Performance Indicator Targets

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WBO1 - A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable**Aim 1.1 Providing high-quality children's and adults social services and early help services to people who need them**

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
SSWB55 Percentage of eligible carers who were offered a carer's assessment (SSWB) a) Children's b) Adults (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	a)100% b) Data not available	a) 80% b) 80%	a)100% b)100%	Target set to see all eligible carers offered an assessment
SSWB78 Timeliness of visits to a) children who are care experienced b) children on the child protection register (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	a) 85.31 b) 86.77	a) 85% b) 85%	a) 87% b) 87%	To continue to improve performance and reflect the challenges there have been linked to recruitment and retention
SSWB39 Safe reduction in the number of care experienced children (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	370	374	350	Target set to see reduction in numbers reflective of pre-pandemic levels
CH/026 Safe reduction in the number of children on the child protection register (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	189	270	175	Target set to see reduction following significant increase in 2022-23
SSWB57 Percentage of enquiries to the Adult Social Care front door which result in information and advice only (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	74.88%	70%	75%	A new Early, Intervention and Prevention operating model has been implemented at the front door to manage adult social care.
SSWB76 Number of packages of reablement completed during the year (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	377	370	400	The resetting of reablement programme will increase demand.
SSWB38 Percentage of reablement packages completed that: a) reduced the need for support b) maintained the same level of support c) mitigated need for support (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	a)14.32% b)13.79% c)66.58%	a) n/a b) n/a c) 68%	a) 18% b) 14% c) 68%	The resetting of the reablement programme will increase the number of individuals going through reablement and maintain / reduce the need for support.

SSWB61 Number of people who access independent advocacy to support their rights within: a) children's social care b) adult's social care (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	a) 64 b) 87	a)185 b)180	a) 130 b) 180	a) To reflect predicted demand b) To improve performance.
DEFS29 Percentage of completed Team Around the Family (TAF) plans closed with a successful outcome (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	83%	72%	87%	To continue to improve performance.

Aim 1.2 Supporting people in poverty to get the support they need / help they are entitled to

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED43 Percentage of people supported through FASS (Financial Assistance and Support Service) where support has resulted in increased income through claims for additional/increased benefits and allowances (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	92%	60%	85%	Target set to maintain good performance. The 'drop in' and 'outreach' approach is proving positive in encouraging people coming forward for support early and therefore improving outcomes.
CED44 Percentage of people supported through FASS who have received advice and support in managing or reducing household debt (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	93%	60%	85%	

Aim 1.3 Supporting people facing homelessness to find a place to live

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
PAM/012 Percentage of households threatened with homelessness successfully prevented from becoming homeless (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	11%	20%	20%	Target set at realistic level considering the legislative changes in terms of priority need which has a significant impact on number of households included in this measure
DOPS39 Percentage of people presenting as homeless or potentially homeless for whom the Local Authority has a final legal duty to secure suitable accommodation (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	29%	10%	10%	Target set to see reduction in the number who fall into the final legal duty category. This is where initial measures to relieve their homelessness within 56 days have failed.

Aim 1.4 Supporting children with additional learning needs to get the best from their education

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Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
NEW Percentage of new local authority individual development plans (IDPs) delivered using the online IDP system (EEYYP) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New 2024-25	New 2024-25	100%	All IDPs to be transferred to the new online system as soon as possible to comply with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.
NEW Number of pupils on the waiting lists for specialist provision (EEYYP) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	23	New 2024-25	10	Placing pupils in specialist provision at the earliest opportunity ensures that all of their educational needs are met. Throughout the year waiting lists may fluctuate as pupils can be added at any time. We aim to see a trend of decreasing numbers on the waiting list over time. This target is the end-of-year target.
NEW Percentage of year 9 pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) with a transition plan in place, that have had an annual review by 31 March of each current school year. (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	New 2024-25	New 2024-25	100%	To comply with the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales, all IDPs must be reviewed annually.

Aim 1.5 Safeguarding and protecting people who are at risk of harm

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CORPB1 Percentage of council staff completing safeguarding awareness training (CEX/All) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	82.73%	100%	100%	All staff to complete mandatory training
SSWB77 Percentage of Adult safeguarding inquiries which receive initial response within 7 working days (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	81.85%	85%	85%	To continue to improve performance and ensure adults are protected from harm
CH/003 Percentage of Childrens referrals where decision is made within 24 hours (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	99.69%	100%	100%	To continue to improve performance and ensure children are protected from harm

SSWB62 Percentage of child protection investigations completed within required timescales (SSWB) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	77.78%	Baseline setting	75%	We are reviewing systems and processes to accurately reflect this information.
SSWB63 Average waiting time on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) waiting list (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	16 days	Baseline setting	16 days	To maintain good performance within existing resources.

Aim 1.6 Help people to live safely at home through changes to their homes

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED45 Average number of days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for: a) Low level access showers b) Stair lifts c) Ramps d) Extensions (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	a)668 b)346 c)694 d)917	Baseline setting	a)210 b)210 c)210 d)210	Backlog of works due to the impact of CV19 is still significantly affecting our ability to improve performance or record a meaningful baseline for each category. Therefore, we will continue to use our original aspiration of 210 days as an initial baseline
DOPS41 Percentage of people who feel they can live more independently as a result of receiving a DFG in their home (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	98%	98%	98%	Target retained. To continue to achieve a positive outcome for grant recipients in living more independently.

Aim 1.7 Support partners to keep communities safe

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CORPB2 Percentage of council staff completing Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) training (Level 1) (CEX/ALL) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	75.54%	100%	100%	All staff to complete mandatory training
CED46 Number of instances where CCTV supports South Wales Police in monitoring incidents (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	944	Baseline setting	944	To continue supporting South Wales Police in actively monitoring CCTV incidents across Bridgend County Borough

NEW Percentage of Assia service users reporting increased feelings of safety at their exit evaluation (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New 2024-25	New 2024-25	100%	New PI – 100% target. Safety planning, targeting hardening and safety measures carried out with all service users throughout support and before exiting the service
NEW Percentage of high-risk domestic abuse victims / public protection notices received by the service contacted within 48 hours (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New 2024-25	New 2024-25	100%	New PI – 100% target. Contact within 48 hours is identified best practice (in line with Leading Lights accreditation)
NEW Percentage of medium risk domestic abuse victims / public protection notices received by the service contacted within 72 hours (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	New 2024-25	New 2024-25	100%	New PI – 100% target. Contact within 72 hours is identified best practice (in line with Leading Lights accreditation)

WBO2 - County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns

Aim 2.1 Helping our residents get the skills they need for work

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DEFS82 Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme going into employment (COMM) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	366	350	233	Target set to maximise use of funding secured for that year. Funding arrangements can vary from year to year therefore targets are not comparable

Aim 2.2 Making sure our young people find jobs, or are in education or training

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DEFS80 Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme supported into education or training (COMM) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	76	727	409	Target set to maximise use of funding secured for that year. Funding arrangements can vary from year to year therefore targets are not comparable
PAM046 Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training, or employment (NEET) in the careers Wales annual destination statistics (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	1.4	1.5%	1.5%	Collaborative working with schools and social care teams should improve support available and encourage children to attend education, employment or training.

Aim 2.4 Attracting investment and supporting new and existing local businesses

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO23.03 Number of businesses receiving support through Shared Prosperity Funding (COMM) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	25	20	21	This is the final year of the funding so will attempt to maximise the benefits locally where possible.
DCO23.04 Number of business start-ups assisted (COMM) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	219	52	53	Continue to assist and capitalise on the strong new business demand

Aim 2.5 Making the council an attractive place to work

Page	Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CE29	Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: a) I feel every department is working towards the same common goal b) I am satisfied with BCBC as an employer c) Working here makes me want to perform to the best of my ability d) I feel that BCBC values its employees' ideas and opinions e) Do you think there are opportunities for two-way communication to discuss and raise ideas and issues? (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	a)35 b)66 c)73 d)39 e)85	a)42 b)74 c)79 d)48 e)85	a)42 b)74 c)79 d)48 e)86	Target set to show increase in positive feedback from staff in comparison to the previous survey conducted
CED49	Percentage of staff reporting through survey that they agree or strongly agree with the statement: a) I feel supported to manage my personal wellbeing whilst in work: b) The council is dedicated to taking positive action to support employees achieve a positive sense of wellbeing in their working lives (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	a) 67% b) 50%	a) 71% b) 54%	a)71% b)54%	Target set to show increase in positive feedback from staff in comparison to the previous survey conducted
CED50	Number of sign up of new subscribers to the staff extranet (CEX) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	0	Baseline setting	Baseline setting	The staff extranet site is in its final test phase with the initial pilot being initiated in July 2024 prior to all staff roll out, where baseline data can be captured.

Aim 2.6 Ensuring employment is fair, equitable and pays at least the real living wage

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED54 Number of real living wage employers identified (by size of contract) (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	250	249	255	Increase the number of suppliers replying and becoming accredited

WBO 3 - A County Borough with thriving valleys communities

Aim 3.1 Investing in town centres, including Maesteg town centre

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO23.01 Number of commercial properties assisted through the enhancement grant scheme (COMM) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	4	2	2	To allocate the grant appropriately to successful applicants in line with funding terms

Aim 3.6 Encourage the development of new affordable homes in the valleys

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED55 Number of additional affordable homes provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in the Valleys (CEX) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	2	20	20	This 1-year target forms part of wider programme to see an additional 100 units in the valleys provided by RSLs over the next 5 years through the Welsh Government capital build scheme.

WBO 4 - A County Borough where we help people meet their potential

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Aim 4.1 Providing safe, supportive schools, with high quality teaching

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DEFS156 Number of schools judged by Estyn to be in 'significant improvement' or 'special measures' (EEYYP) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	1	0	0	Support is in place through the Central South Consortium to avoid the outcome of any school requiring 'significant improvement' or in 'special measures'
PAM032 Average 'Capped 9' score for pupils in Year 11 (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	361.5	Baseline Setting	363.0	Continued support to schools from the local authority and Central South Consortium means we continuously strive to improve learner outcomes and better the all-Wales average.
EDU016 Percentage pupil attendance in a) primary schools b) secondary schools (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	a) 91.5% b) 87.9%	a) 90% b) 90%	a) 93% b) 90%	Pupil attendance is a critical measure as young people are unlikely to attain their full potential and are more likely to be diverted into anti-social behaviour if they are not attending school regularly. Work is ongoing with schools and families to highlight the importance of attendance and support available.
EDU010 Percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the school year in a) primary schools b) secondary schools (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, lower preferred)	a) 0.024% b) 0.165%	a) 0.02% b) 0.12%	a) 0.03% b) 0.15%	Primary exclusions have remained fairly static since COVID-19 lockdown, so targets remain the same as pre-pandemic levels. Secondary exclusions have shown an upward trend since the pandemic due to behavioural changes and increased complexity of need. The target reflects an expected improvement in this performance
DEFS155 Percentage of schools that have self-evaluated themselves as 'green' as part of their annual safeguarding audit (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	95%	100%	100%	In line with guidance, to ensure schools are exercising their legal safeguarding obligations.

Aim 4.3 Expanding Welsh medium education opportunities

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DEFS138 Percentage of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	8.56%	8.7%	8.7%	Target to increase learners studying through the medium of Welsh as per Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019.
DEFS157 Percentage of learners studying for assessed qualifications through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4 (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	6.62%	7.16%	7.16%	Target to increase learners studying through the medium of Welsh as per Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019.
DEFS158 Number of learners studying for Welsh as a second language (EEYYP) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	11	1437	20	Target to increase learners studying Welsh as a second language as per the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (Wales) Regulations 2019.

Aim 4.5 Attract and retain young people into BCBC employment

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DOPS36 Number of apprentices employed across the organisation (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	46	39	20	Target decreased due to recruitment freeze.
CED56 Percentage of those concluding apprenticeships and obtaining a non-apprentice role (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	90%	75%	90%	Continue to improve the number of apprentices gaining employment

Aim 4.6 Offering youth services and school holiday programmes for our young people

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
SSWB66 Participation in targeted activities for people with additional or diverse needs (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	357	Baseline Setting	400	Increased external funding available

SSWB67 Participation in the national free swimming initiative for 16 and under (SSWB) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	19,659	Baseline Setting	16,000	Reduced/more targeted programme due to increasing costs.
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Aim 4.9 Being the best parents we can to our care experienced children

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
SSWB48 Percentage of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the a)12 months since leaving care b)13- 24 months since leaving care (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	a)68.97% b)57.69%	a) 60% b) 65%	a) 70% b) 65%	To continue to improve performance
CH/052 Percentage care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)	7.17%	10%	10%	To maintain performance

WBO 5 - A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency

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Aim 5.1 Moving towards net zero carbon, and improving our energy efficiency

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO23.05 Reduction in emissions (across our buildings, fleet & equipment, streetlighting, business travel, commuting, homeworking, waste, procured goods and services) (COMM) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	4.3%	5%	5%	To see a reduction in emissions and progress our corporate energy efficiency
DCO20.01 Annual Gas Consumption across the Authority (kWh) <i>(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	21,966,783 kWh	23,144,515 kWh	20,868,443 kWh	To see reduction in energy consumption levels and progress our corporate energy efficiency
DCO20.02 Annual Electricity Consumption across the Authority (kWh) <i>(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	15,210,536 kWh	15,130,803 kWh	14,450,009 kWh	
DCO20.03 Annual CO2 related to gas consumption across the Authority (tonnes) <i>(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	4,018 tonnes	4,235 tonnes	3,817 tonnes	To see reduction in energy consumption and related emissions and progress our corporate energy efficiency
DCO20.04 Annual CO2 related to electricity consumption across the Authority (tonnes) <i>(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	3,150 tonnes	2,925 tonnes	2,925 tonnes	
CED57 Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) pollution in the air (micrograms per m ³) (CEX SRS) <i>(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	40.8	40	40	This target is the legal air quality objective for NO ₂ . Modelling undertaken for the Air Quality Action Plan, suggests, this will be achieved by 2026.

Aim 5.2 Protecting our landscapes and open spaces and planting more trees

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO23.07 Number of green flag parks and green spaces (COMM) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	2	2	2	Target set to maintain current high standards
DCO23.06 Number of blue flag beaches (COMM) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	3	3	3	Target set to maintain current high standards

Aim 5.3 Improve the quality of the public realm and built environment through good placemaking principles

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
PAM/018 Percentage of all planning applications determined within 8 weeks (COMM) (<i>Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred</i>)	68%	80%	80%	Target set in line with national target for good performance
PAM/019 Percentage of planning appeals dismissed (COMM) (<i>Annual Indicator, higher preferred</i>)	87%	66%	80%	Target set in line with national target for good performance

Aim 5.4 Reducing, reusing or recycling as much of our waste as possible

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO20.05 Percentage of street cleansing waste prepared for recycling (COMM) (<i>Annual Indicator, higher preferred</i>)	41.12%	40%	40%	To maintain the existing targets which remain challenging to achieve
PAM/030 Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted a) reused b) recycled. c) composted (COMM) (<i>Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred</i>)	71.94% a)1.39% b)50.42% c)20.14%	70% a)1% b)49% c)20%	70% a)1% b)49% c)20%	To maintain the existing targets which remain challenging to achieve
PAM/043 Kilograms of residual waste generated per person (COMM) (<i>Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred</i>)	119.80kg	131kg	125kg	To maintain the existing targets which remain challenging to achieve
PAM/010 Percentage of highways land inspected which is of a high / acceptable standard of cleanliness (COMM) (<i>Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred</i>)	99.97%	98%	99%	To maintain the existing targets which remain challenging to achieve

Aim 5.5 Improving flood defences and schemes to reduce flooding of our homes and businesses

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO23.08 Percentage of statutory sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) applications processed within 7 weeks from receipt of appropriate scheme drawings (COMM) (<i>Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred</i>)	100%	95%	95%	To maintain existing performance

WBO 6 - A County Borough where people feel valued, heard, and part of their community

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Aim 6.1 Celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion and tackling discrimination

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CORPB3 Percentage of council staff completing Introduction to Equality and Diversity E-Learning. (CEX/ALL) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	47.61%	100%	100%	All staff to complete mandatory training

Aim 6.2 Improving the way we engage with local people, including young people, listening to their views and acting on them

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED58 Percentage of consultation participants who answered positively: How effective do you think we have been in meeting our aim of being citizen-focused over the last 12 months? (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	49.4%	50%	50%	To ensure that the actions of the Council do support the residents of the area
CED59 Level of engagement a) across consultations b) with corporate communications to residents using the digital communications platform c) across all corporate social media accounts (CEX) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	a)7,946 b)972,384 c)1,715,802	a)8,268 b)795,336 c)1,230,699	a)8,300 b)800k c)1.3 million	To ensure the Council is engaging well at all levels across the area

Aim 6.3 Offering more information and advice online, and at local level, and making sure you can talk to us and hear from us in Welsh

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED5 Percentage first call resolutions (Customer Contact Centre) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	69.17%	75.92%	75.92%	To increase the number of calls resolved at the first point of contact
CED51 Number of online transactions using the digital platform (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	72,500	103,348	72,500	To increase online transactions by customers to promote channel shift

CED52 Number of hits on the corporate website <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	3,415,000	1,398,560	3,415,000	To provide a digital option for people wishing to contact and transact with the Council
CED53 Percentage of staff with Welsh language speaking skills (including schools) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	26.82%	52%	28%	To improve the number of staff, including schools, with Welsh language speaking skills.
CORPB4 Percentage of council staff completing Welsh Language Awareness E-Learning <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	47.61%	100%	100%	All staff to complete mandatory training

Aim 6.4 Helping clubs and community groups take control of and improve their facilities and protect them for the future

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO16.8 Number of council owned assets transferred to the community for running (CATs) (COMM) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	7	15	10	To continue to deliver the CAT programme across the County
SSWB69 Number of people supported to have their needs met in their communities by local community co-ordinators (SSWB) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	395	200	450	Increased staffing resource (3) enables some additional support.

WBO 7 - A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

Aim 7.2 Offering attractive leisure and cultural activities

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
SSWB70 Number of visits by older adults to physical activity opportunities supported (SSWB) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	23,308	Baseline Setting	23,500	External funding secured

Aim 7.3 Improving children's play facilities and opportunities

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DCO23.09 Value of investment in play areas (COMM) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	£54,443	£1 million	£1.6 million	Target set in line with programme of works for the year
DCO23.10 Number of play areas refurbished (COMM) (Annual Indicator, higher preferred)	0	20	22	Target set in line with programme of works for the year

Aim 7.4 Providing free school meals and expanding free childcare provision

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
DEFS163 Percentage of eligible learners offered a free school meal (EEYYP) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	100%	100%	100%	Target set in line with government expectations
DEFS162 Percentage of non-maintained settings that are judged by Care Inspectorate Wales as at least 'good' (EEYYP) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	76.5%	100%	100%	Target set in line with government expectations
DEFS160 Number of two-year-olds accessing childcare through the Flying Start programme (EEYYP) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)	530	500	570	The target reflects the positive investment made in the Phase 2A and 2B expansions of the Flying Start programme.

Aim 7.5 Integrating our social care services with health services so people are supported seamlessly

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
SSWB75 Number of people recorded as delayed on the national pathway of care (SSWB) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	104	71	71	To continue to improve performance

Aim 7.6 Improving the supply of affordable housing

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
CED60 Number of additional affordable homes provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) across the County Borough (CEX) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	64	110	110	Working with RSL's to utilise capital income streams, such as the Social Housing Grant (SHG) – to develop 500 units over a 5-year programme.
CED61 Total number of empty properties returned to use with local authority intervention (CEX) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	6	5	5	The Empty Properties Group will work with property owners via the Empty Properties Strategy with a focus on the top 20 properties as identified.

Ways of Working Indicators (not already included under Wellbeing Objectives)

Performance Indicator Description	2023-24 Actual	2023-24 Target	2024-25 Target	Rationale for Target
PAM/001 Number of working days per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence (CEX/ALL) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)</i>	12.37 days	No target	No target	To reduce sickness levels across the organisation
CORPB5 Percentage of staff that have completed a Personal Review/Appraisal (excluding school staff) (CEX/ALL) <i>(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	60.89%	80%	80%	Target set to ensure all eligible staff have an annual review
DRE6.1.1 Percentage budget reductions achieved (Overall BCBC budget) (CEX/ALL) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	90.57%	100%	100%	Target retained at maximum
DOPS34 Availability of: a) voice and data network b) storage area network (core computing) c) core applications (as defined in the ICT Strategy), central printers and multi-functional devices, and network connected devices (CEX) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	a)100% b)100% c)99.95%	a)99.99% b)99.99% c)99.90%	a)99.99% b)99.99% c)99.90%	Target set to maintain good performance
DCO16.9 Realisation of capital receipts targets (COMM) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	n/a	Nil	Nil	The corporate property disposal strategy is currently in development for Spring 2025
DCO19.02 Percentage of full statutory compliance across BCBC operational buildings (COMM) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	84.9%	100%	100%	To ensure full statutory compliance
DCO23.14 Percentage of statutory compliance across BCBC operational buildings for the "Big 5" categories (COMM) <i>(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)</i>	93.5%	100%	100%	To ensure full statutory compliance

Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	DEBBIE MORGAN GROUP MANAGER, BUSINESS STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE & IMPROVEMENT
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 2023/24 is a statutory requirement providing the Council, the people of Bridgend, regulators and key partners with an overview of the effectiveness of Social Services and Wellbeing in the county borough in the last year. The report requires the statutory Director of Social Services to exercise their legal duty to advise on quality, performance, workforce, risks, priorities and resources required.</p> <p>The report reflects on 2023/24, highlighting key achievements and challenges whilst outlining key priorities for 2024/25. In line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, performance is reported against six quality standards evidencing how we have performed against these standards.</p> <p>Engagement and consultation are a key aspect of the report and how we undertake these activities so an overview of feedback is included. The report also notes 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 focuses on inspections of regulated services across residential and domiciliary care, Foster Wales Bridgend and the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements in Bridgend.</p> <p>The report also outlines how we support our workforce and notes key partnership arrangements both within the Council,</p>

	<p>as well as with partner agencies and third sector organisations.</p> <p>The report highlights our financial resources noting the key challenges and pressures that the directorate and the Council face in order to deliver statutory services.</p> <p>The report sets out the key risks to effective social services and wellbeing delivery in light of the growing population, the complexity of needs of individuals, the cost pressures in social care provision, significant changes such as the need to secure a new case management system and the financial position of the Council.</p>
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the Director of Social Services' draft Annual Report for 2023/24, and request that Members scrutinise the report, the analysis therein of the strengths and areas for improvement in Social Services and Wellbeing and the next steps set out, in preparation for consideration by Council on 25th September 2024.

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 authorities report on and performance evaluate 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;
 - 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 Council on the effectiveness of social services and well-being in the authority area.
 - 2.3 The methodology for the format of the Annual Report is prescribed under the Code of Practice issued under the SSWBA, to measure social services' performance setting 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 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 the effectiveness of social services and wellbeing. It aims to highlight the progress made over 2023/24, being clear about strengths as well as areas for improvement, and identify priorities for 2024/25. It is clear about the risks to social services and wellbeing which are particularly escalated in the context of the financial position of the Council, the growing population of the county borough, legislative and system changes, levels of need for services and inflationary pressures in in-house and commissioned services.
- 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 2023/24 considering the challenges faced and also highlights the priorities for the directorate in 2024/25. The analysis draws on progress against the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate business plan, performance data for each service area in Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services, 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 2023/24 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 2024/25.
- 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) and other statutory partners, 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 the professionalism and commitment of the workforce.

Inspection of Local Authority Social Services

- 3.8 In June 2023, CIW, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn undertook a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend. The inspection highlighted a number of areas of positive practice and a multi-agency action plan was agreed in September 2023 to focus on the key areas for improvement. Within Social Services and Wellbeing this plan is overseen by the Social Services Improvement Board and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (RSB).
- 3.9 In November 2023, CIW undertook an inspection of Foster Wales Bridgend which comprises of the General Fostering and Placement Team and the Kinship and Permanence Team. The inspection, whilst noting a number of key strengths, did acknowledge the context within which the service was operating; "*the number of children who are referred to the service, outnumbers foster carers available*". There were 8 areas identified for improvement which can be categorised into 4 areas: matching of children with complex needs, safe care arrangements, timeliness of responses to allegations and improvements to systems to ensure policies and procedures are evidenced in practice.
- 3.10 Throughout the year, CIW also undertook 8 inspections of regulated residential and domiciliary services across the directorate. Within Adult Social Care, 5 inspections were held in residential services and domiciliary care services with 3 inspections within Children and Family residential services. All inspections considered the wellbeing of individuals receiving care and support, the quality of care and support provided and the leadership and management of the service and for residential-based services, the environment.
- 3.11 Examples of good practice, strengths and areas for improvement identified via these inspections are summarised in section 2, 'How People are Shaping Our Services' of the report.

Priorities for 2024/25

- 3.12 The priorities consist of Council wide priorities and those specifically for Adult Social Care, Children and Family Services, and Prevention and Wellbeing. The directorate will implement the actions as set out in the 2024/25 Social Services and Wellbeing directorate business plan. Service area priorities are noted below.

Adult Social Care

The key priorities for 2024/25 are to:

- embed the changes to our adult social care operating model;
- ensure the whole Council and partners are delivering on our commitment to outcomes-focused strengths-based practice which will help us promote resilience and independence for the people we support;

- drive through further improvements in our front door response, hospital discharge, reablement and long-term support in the community to ensure that our services are most effective in promoting resilience and reducing unnecessary demand;
- secure transformation and greater cost-effectiveness through our plans for learning disability, mental health and long-term conditions services;
- ensure support for staff, community engagement, technology and partnerships are all geared towards cost-effective and sustainable social care in the longer term.

Children and Family Services

The key priorities for 2024/25 are:

- continued delivery of the 'Signs of Safety' Programme together with an agreed future training plan for this model of practice;
- the implementation of an operating model between prevention (early help) and statutory services to provide an integrated service in which more children and families with complexity of need are supported preventatively where families are motivated and consent to change;
- improvements in the sufficiency, quantity and quality of provision for care experienced children requiring residential care;
- work with Foster Wales to recruit enough foster carers within the local authority, enhancing foster carer support;
- work jointly with key partners to deliver the priorities laid out in the three-year plan;
- the enhancement of partnership working with key professionals and partners as well as co-production with children and families;
- the development of an updated commissioning strategy for family support services;
- the revision of the Quality Assurance framework.

Prevention & Wellbeing

The key priorities for 2024/25 are to:

- further develop the active Bridgend plan and engage communities and stakeholders in determining future priorities;
- develop a strategic plan, with external support for community hubs, libraries and cultural services including; the potential role that community hub approaches could play;
- to support people to remain resilient within their communities via cross sector working and maximising the impact of local community co-ordinators and community navigators;
- support unpaid carers including young carers and young adult carers to access community based support and manage their own wellbeing;
- work with colleagues across the Council and partners to develop more pathways to education, training and employment for people who experience the most significant barriers to work;
- review our approach to community connection to ensure we are maximising impact for people most at risk of needing statutory services.

3.13 Additional 2024/25 service specific priorities for each of the 6 quality standards are noted in sections 3 to 5 of 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 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 demonstrate 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. To support this, the remits of our long term and specialist teams within Adult Social Care have been widened to ensure the model supports people well with long term and complex disabilities and ill health.
- **Prevention:** The report highlights developments by the directorate in line with the SSWBA. For example, the Edge of Care and Early Help Screening teams joined our new Children and Families Division on 1st April 2024 to work towards a single front door for children and families in Bridgend. Within Adult Social Care our integrated community services developed a focused approach on working to support adults with complex needs and those at risk of hospital admission.
- **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. Key examples of integration include our Prevention and Wellbeing Service who work with third sector partners HALO and AWEN to deliver cultural, leisure and wellbeing services across the borough and the new operating model within Adult Social Care, supports integration with health and the recognition given toward areas of expertise and specialism.

- **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.

5.3 It is important to note that the priorities outlined within the Annual Report are reflected within the Adult Social Care and Children and Family strategic plans as well as the directorate's business plan and are aligned to the appropriate Corporate Wellbeing objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 Social Services and Wellbeing are part of the Council's response to the climate emergency and have progressed specific projects at reducing carbon emissions in 2023/24 in line with the Welsh Government's route map to 2030 for social care in Wales. These include the use of electric vehicles in the care and support at home service.

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.

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

- working with key partners to implement the integrated safeguarding GOSS system to enhance the sharing of safeguarding information;
- continuing to ensure that learning from child practice reviews and other in-depth analysis is systematically embedded. Examples include the publication of 7-minute briefings and targeted workshops with child practice reviews referenced in core safeguarding training

7.3 Safeguarding priorities for 2024/25 include:

- having a strong and effective shared approach to adult safeguarding understood and implemented by agencies and practitioners across Bridgend;

- agreeing and implementing a single programme of shared priorities with partners for children in the County Borough;
- working with the third sector and in line with safeguarding considerations of the Bridgend County Borough Council volunteering policy to grow community based support.

7.4 As the Corporate Parent for all care experienced children and young people, the launch of the co-produced Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy led by the Youth Voice Forum of care experienced children and young people, ensures we engage and listen to continue to support and improve outcomes for these individuals.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report, the short, medium and long term sustainability of social services, well-being and prevention presents growing challenges on the Council to meet statutory responsibilities for the most vulnerable and deliver a balanced budget. Part 8 of the SSWBA requires the Head of Paid Service and the Corporate Director of Social Services to ensure Members have clear advice on the level of resources required for a local authority to effectively deliver its social services functions.

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 £5.660 million from earmarked reserves the financial position at year-end 2023/24 was an over spend of £11.827 million.

8.3 The Annual Report highlights the key areas of over spend which have arisen as a consequence of:

- significant increases in the cost of services due to wage and other inflationary factors;
- a continued exponential increase in demand in Children's social care which impacts on the workforce required;
- a further increase in the number of independent residential placements in Children and Family Services;
- pressures in learning disabilities, mental health, physical disabilities and older people's services driven by increase in cost, volume of people supported and levels of need.

8.4 Pressures funded in the 2024/25 budget approved by Council do not cover all areas of underlying pressures and remain a highly significant risk. Whilst a significant transformation program is underway across the directorate to fundamentally change operating models, practice and commissioning in light of this financial context, we will be required to closely monitor the budget given the level of demand, high cost of services and reduction in specific grants which have previously, for many years, underpinned the budget. The Annual Report highlights the 3 year sustainability plan for children and families and highlights that an aligned plan for adult social care will be presented to Cabinet in 2024/25.

8.5 It is important to note that whilst the Council remained committed to meeting statutory duties in social care, the costs of so doing outweighed the finances available in

service budgets in 2023/24 and the cost of social services and wellbeing is causing huge challenge in determining how to balance statutory duties in 2024/25.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee scrutinises the content of the Director of Social Services draft Annual Report for 2023/24 and provides feedback to be considered in preparation for the full report being presented to Council on 25th September 2024.

Background documents

None

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

**SOCIAL
SERVICES AND
WELLBEING
DIRECTORATE**

**Director of Social
Services
Annual Report**

2023-24

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1. Director's Overview

Director's Analysis

This is my fourth annual report as Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in Bridgend. This report is prepared as a statutory requirement under the Code of Practice issued under Part 8 of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. It describes how as Bridgend County Borough Council we have exercised our functions, our performance during the year, and developments and action taken to further improve our services and support.

Our social services and wellbeing workforce have gone above and beyond in this last year to make life better for the most vulnerable citizens in our county borough. This report starts with a heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them. They have risen to every challenge. We have continued to experience exponential increases in the numbers of people contacting parts of our services. High levels of contacts have continued into children's social care and safeguarding in children and adult services. Some partners have changed the way they work which has contributed to a higher level of referrals needing to be screened and managed by the Council as the safeguarding authority.

Our workforce has been part of significant change programmes, embracing new models of social work practice in children's and adults social care and new operating models across the service. They have welcomed new colleagues, including international recruits who have moved long distances to be part of our social services and wellbeing family in Bridgend. We have focussed on getting our culture – how we do things around here – right. The whole workforce is focussed on 'doing the right thing' for the people we support which is inevitably the most cost-effective course of action. We are committed to continuous improvement, using data and evidence – including people's experience of working with us – to develop and progress to be the best social services and wellbeing service we can be within the resources available to us. Celebrating what is going well, and being open and transparent to support improved practice were this is needed is at the heart of our culture.

Director's Overview

Despite this context, in many areas our quantitative performance has been good or excellent. We have seen improvements in other areas where we needed to be better. We have significantly improved management oversight of practice and are sighted on those areas where performance is not as good as we would like it to be and have clear plans to support improvement. We have strengthened our quality assurance, performance management and continuous improvement mechanisms. We also celebrate many successes. Some areas – such as our prevention and wellbeing preventative services - which have flexed and adapted to support the most vulnerable – are sector leading. With our partners in Halo we have received an excellent accreditation ranking for our leisure services. Our multi-disciplinary integrated community teams in adult services bring together 9 different health and care professions to seamlessly support people with long-term health and care needs. Our children and family services performance in many areas is in the top quartile in Wales. There has been significant improvement in the last 2 years which is due to the dedication of front-line workers and managers.

There are areas where we need to continue to improve and it is important there is a strong evidence base, good governance and systematic approach to progressing continuous improvement. At a leadership level we have a Social Services Improvement Board (SSIB) chaired by the Leader of the Council, which oversees service and financial performance. During 2023/24 this board was advised by an independent expert who provided effective scrutiny and advice to the Council on how to achieve sustainable children and adult services in the context of the improvements required by regulators, high levels of need in terms of both volume and complexity, high levels of statutory interventions and financial challenges:

‘Quantitative performance is remarkable in light of exponential increase in demand. Inevitably there can be an impact on quality when the volumes are so elevated.’

Director's Overview

Children and Family Services

In September 2023, Cabinet and Council approved a 3-year strategic plan for children and families in Bridgend: 'Think Family - Improving Outcomes for Children and Families in Bridgend'. This plan had been developed to support the improvements needed for Bridgend to move from adequate to good, then excellent in its support for vulnerable children and families, following the rapid improvements required at pace by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in their inspection carried out in May 2022 when they expressed their serious concerns with regard to Bridgend children's services. A Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA), undertaken by CIW, Estyn, Health Inspectorate Wales and His Majesty's Inspectors of Police and Fire Services in June 2023, noted overall, systems and relationships are in place to facilitate effective partnership working where a child is at risk of abuse and neglect, led by the Council as the safeguarding authority. Ongoing challenges were highlighted, in the context of the levels of contact into statutory services, particularly in relation to securing and retaining a permanent workforce which resulted in turnover of agency social workers and resulting variability in the quality of practice. There is a multi-agency action plan to progress recommendations for improvement overseen by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTM RSB). The evidence within the JICPA, alongside in-depth independent analysis from the Institute of Public Care (IPC), expert advice from the independent improvement advisor, and internal analysis has informed the priorities within the 3-year strategic plan which are:

1. Hearing and acting on the voice of the children and families
2. Securing a stable, well-supported, motivated and permanent workforce
3. Improving practice
4. Maximising the impact of our services and interventions
5. A more effective response to families with complex needs
6. Seamless working with partners
7. Better intelligence and information system

Director's Overview

Good progress has been made in the second half of 2023/24 as evidenced in a stocktake of the first 6 months reported in April 2024.

Examples of progress in line with the priorities are:

1. The launch of the co-produced Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy led by the Youth Voice Forum of care-experienced children and young people.
2. Improvements in retention and recruitment of children's social workers including the successful recruitment and positive impact of our cohort of international social workers.
3. The first phase embedding of 'Signs of Safety' as the model of social work practice with 178 colleagues receiving training.
4. Opening our children's residential assessment home, providing therapeutic emergency and short-term care and support for up to 7 children and young people.
5. A steady but safe reduction in the numbers of children who are on the Child Protection Register and the number of care experienced children.
6. Seamless partnership working with police, health and other agencies in our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
7. Successful implementation of the GOSS system to support multi-agency information sharing.

The 3-year strategic plan will continue to provide an improvement framework for Children and Family services in Bridgend in 2024/25.

The key areas of focus are:

Director's Overview

1. Improving the engagement and involvement of parents and improving uptake of advocacy.
2. Continuing to significantly improve retention and recruitment of Children's social workers and children's social care workers through effective workforce planning.
3. Continued embedding of Signs of Safety, supporting workforce confidence in the tools they have been trained in and partner commitment to the model.
4. Progressing business cases for children's residential homes and improving in-house fostering to ensure we are well placed for the elimination of profit from children's Social Care.
5. Rebalance of early help support for families so more children are supported to live with their parents without the need to be come care experienced.
6. Build on the strengths of multi-agency working through joint screening of referrals and quality assurance of outcomes for children.
7. Procurement of a new, fit for purpose, case management IT system.

Director's Overview

Adult Social Care

Performance in many parts of adult services has been good in 2023/24. There have been no CIW local authority inspections in the last year, but the engagement activity in the integrated dementia day service highlighted a well-run service which is having a highly positive impact on the lives of the people who attend and their carers. Regulatory inspections of registered care homes and domiciliary care service provided by the Council have been highly positive. It is particularly pleasing how person centred the care and support provided is. Need for improvements have been identified in some areas such as ensuring timely social work assessments, improving timescales for domiciliary care, continuing to improve the interface between hospital and community services and implementing more progressive practice in learning disabilities. Our understanding of what needs to change in these areas has driven the areas of focused work described below.

In adult social care, we have progressed the implementation of our new model of strength based, outcome focussed social work practice. The practice model is based on 10 principles which provide the framework for practice, which is person centred, understands the strengths and resources available to meet an individual's needs, and supports people to live their best life as independently as possible. Throughout the year we have strengthened our quality assurance mechanisms through outcome panels and surgeries involving senior professionals to really support the embedding of this way of working which is delivering improved outcomes more cost effectively.

Strength based working has been key to the service priority to transform the way we support people with learning disabilities to live their best lives.

The covid pandemic meant significant change for the way all of us lived and for people with learning disabilities the restrictions meant a greater emphasis on having their outcomes met through commissioned care and support. The learning disabilities -transformation programme has progression at its heart, supporting people to access their

Director's Overview

community, meaningful daytime occupation and to live as independently as possible in their own homes. Outcome focussed assessors have been working with individuals to understand what matters to them and reviewing care and support arrangements to ensure they reflect the model of practice and maximise independence in the post-pandemic world.

2023/24 also saw the conclusion of a significant piece of work to review and modernise the social work operating model in adult social care. This new operating model aims to ensure people get the right support at the right time, be that early intervention and prevention or more specialised long-term support. The model builds on the successful integrated multi-disciplinary teams, with people with long term physical disabilities now benefitting from the seamless integrated working of social workers and health professionals. The new model was implemented from February 2024 and its success will be evaluated in 2024/25.

A 3 year strategic plan for adult social care is being developed and will be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn of 2024. The plan sets the transformation priorities for the next 3 years which are:

1. Manage demand through the front door of the Council – to handle and resolve initial enquiries more effectively.
2. Work with partners to manage demand from acute hospitals – supporting people to recover and regain skills and minimising poor discharges which result in unnecessary care and returns to hospital.
3. Increase the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community – short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer term solutions.
4. Promote asset-based community and targeted preventative support to help people live well in thriving and supportive communities.

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5. Work with partners to redesign care and support for people with long term needs - help people with long-term conditions to gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.

Prevention and Wellbeing

The prevention and well-being offer in Bridgend has continued to be leading edge in supporting the most vulnerable citizens of the county borough to be healthy, well and connected in 2023/24. Our approach is to recognise that people are experts in their own lives and increasingly focussed on the most vulnerable, preventing escalation of their needs. There are examples of positive practice working with people of all ages in the County Borough including:

1. Local community connectors who now work with people across the county borough to support them to make meaningful connections and live well in their own communities, developing new community activities such as bushcraft where these don't currently exist.
2. The carer's wellbeing service which has provided information, advice and assistance to 1249 carers in 2023/24.
3. The young carers networks which are engaging over 150 young carers in 'we are valued' days.
4. Accredited training and supporting for people with meaningful occupation in Awen's Wood-b and B-leaf supported employment.
5. Halo leisure trust have supported autism friendly swimming and the feel good for life programme for those living with dementia, lonely, isolated and their carers.
6. Our active young people's programme which engages children of different ages in sports, games, arts and creative activities.

Director's Overview

7. Our Bevan exemplar super agers programme which keeps us fit, active and socially connected as we grow older.

Our Most Significant Risks and Issues

Risk management is essential in all public services, and it is no different in social services and well-being services that support our most vulnerable citizens. The risks outlined below are reflected in corporate and directorate risk registers. An open transparent culture and practice, identifying managing and mitigating risks, is fundamental in supporting continual improvement. The Council continues to manage a number of inter-related risks and challenges in respect of social services and wellbeing.

1. Financial Risks

Public finances continue to be exceptionally challenging. The most recent forecasts from the Wales Fiscal Centre suggest that the next four years will be as challenging as the past period has been. The Council's ability to fund social services and wellbeing at the necessary level to meet all statutory duties will continue to be difficult when set alongside all the other pressures that exist within the local authority's remit. Adjusted for inflation, spend on social services (and education) has risen in recent years. As a result, these two services represent a significant share of local councils' budgets. Conversely, spend on most other services, many of which can reduce the need for statutory interventions, has reduced. Analysis by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) shows that in 2009/10, Education and Social Services accounted for 65p of every £1 local councils spent. By 2020/21, this had increased to 74p of every £1 spent.

The Code of Practice for Part 8 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act requires that 'as a member of the corporate management team, a director of social services may be required to

Director's Overview

consider overall resource implications, including budgetary issues. The head of paid service and the director of social services have a responsibility to ensure councillors have clear advice on the level of resources required for a local authority to effectively deliver its social services functions'. It is clear that the Council has, in light of robust analysis and professional advice, supported pressures in Social Services as far as it has been able in the 2023-24 budget, including pay and price increases for commissioned services (£3.36 million), an investment of £2 million in the Children's workforce, £1.970 million in Learning Disability services and £1.0 million in Residential Care for older people. It must be noted that the single most significant area of pressure in Social Services in Bridgend is children's independent residential placements and this is not an area the Council has been able to support, the budget for children's independent residential placements will fund 7 placements, for the last 2 years there have been an average of 20 placements at any time. This pressure will not diminish with the changes required with the Welsh Government policy to eliminate profit from children's social care as set out in their Health and Social Care Bill. The way we provide homes for our most vulnerable children will continue to change with more in-house provision being created. It is also important to note that whilst core budget has increased, grant funding available to meet Social Services and Wellbeing duties has significantly reduced from over £11m in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to an estimated £4-5m in 2023/24.

The WLGA has reported that in 2024-25 local authorities will face an estimated pressure of £809m. In 2025/26 it will be £604m and £612m in 2026/27. In respect of Social Services specifically they report that there is a £261m pressure across Wales which represents an 11.3% increase in current budgets. Commissioning costs, as well as pay and non-pay inflation account for £180m of the pressure. The remainder is down to demand which accounts for £81m. There is an additional pressure of £187m in 2025/26, and £198m in 2026/27 respectively giving a cumulative total of £646m. Pressures of this level to meet essential statutory services represent an unprecedented challenge for Bridgend and local government in Wales. If the Council is not able to afford to meet statutory duties

Director's Overview

to safeguard, assess need, and provide care and support in some cases vulnerable individuals will be at risk of harm. The financial position of the Council is the most significant risk to social services and wellbeing in the county borough.

Given the £11.213 million overspend from Adults and Children's services at the end of 2023/24 a budget recovery plan has been developed which sets out a range of actions which will enable reductions in spend, and avoidance of additional costs, whilst continuing to meet statutory duties in a proportionate way which enables and supports independence. These actions include maximising grant spend, reviewing contracts to ensure best value, safe reduction of agency staff levels, and a focus on rebalancing from high-cost intensive services to more cost-effective solutions which also achieve better outcomes for individuals. Whilst these actions are important and mean the Council has continued to meet all statutory duties, as cost effectively as possible, they are highly unlikely to address all the underlying deficits in service budgets given the level of gap identified by the WLGA.

2. Children's Placement Sufficiency

On the 20th May 2024, the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill was presented to the Senedd. The focus of the bill is eliminating profit from children's social care in Wales which has created some additional instability in the children's social care market, with a number of residential providers electing to withdraw whilst others await further information before committing to become a not-for-profit provider. Local market analysis indicates some providers are on several frameworks and are actively accepting children and young people from local authorities outside of Wales, which is increasing pressure on the supply and demand for quality children's placement providers and adds to pressures on the safeguarding authority. The Council is developing further in-house provision for care experienced children in Bridgend which is more cost effective and supports better outcomes than independent

Director's Overview

provision. These developments are dependent on Regional Partnership Board (RPB) capital funding. There is short term 'eliminating profit' grant funding to support the impact of the new legislation but this is currently due to end in March 2025 which will create a revenue gap.

There is a deficit in the sufficiency of foster care families in the Bridgend fostering service; which given the number of care experienced children heightens risk to the Council in securing suitable care and support for children and adds to the financial risk. The number of children and young people accommodated in independent residential care homes has increased significantly. In 2023/24, there were also a small number of children being placed in settings which are "operating without registration". This is a significant risk as the safeguards of a registered provision are not in place and means risk of prosecution. The financial implications of high-cost placements , registered and operating without registration, is very high.

3. Social worker and care capacity in Adult Services

Whilst there have been reductions in the numbers of people waiting for social worker assessment and care and support provided by the Council and independent sector, capacity issues within the adult social care, in-house short term enabling services have increased the number of people having to wait for their assessed needs to be met. The impact of this is that people are sometimes delayed in hospital or have to rely on family and friends for support which can impede a person's ability to maintain a level of independence. These delays, combined with health delays, can cause problems for the whole health and social care system. The directorate has a key priority to remodel short-term enabling services and increase the proportion of people who are supported to retain or regain their independence prior to commissioning a long term care service.

4. Levels of need for social care services

Within children and family services there is continued significant

Director's Overview

increase in the number of contacts received which places the service at risk of meeting its statutory duties in a timely way and most importantly ensuring children and families are protected. Whilst there have been reductions in the number of assessments and child protection registrations, social work caseloads, number of care experienced children and levels of activity, the number of contacts, and statutory intervention in the lives of children and families, remains relatively high when compared with other local authorities. Integration of preventative early help services and the embedding of strength based practice, through the signs of safety practice model, are key to mitigating this risk.

As the number of people aged 65+, living in the Borough, continues to grow, adult social care and our key partners within the NHS will continue to face challenges in meeting increased demand of services. It is anticipated that a rise in an ageing population will in turn increase the number of people living with dementia which will impact not only on service delivery within the community but could potentially increase the number of high-cost residential placements.

Adult social care has seen a significant increase in the number of hours of support for people with learning disabilities. Within the learning disability service there has been an increase in the number of intensive two to one and one to one support packages being delivered as well as an increase in the number of supported living package of care; with both contributing to an overspend within the service and a risk that people aren't being supported to live as independently as possible. There have been pressure in the social work teams due to court of protection safeguarding work and agency workforce has increased. A transformation programme and outcome surgeries have been established to improve practice and commissioning, with a focus on embedding strength-based practice and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to maximise their independence.

5. Workforce

Despite significant improvements in the last year, the over-reliance

Director's Overview

on agency workforce in children and adults social care remains a significant risk to the directorate. The use of agency workers is not only far more expensive than a permanent workforce but can impact on a person's experience of the service, with more frequent turnover of staff meaning a lack of continuity of care. There are workforce challenges in social work and social care workforce. Strengthened workforce planning, improved retention, innovative recruitment initiatives such as growing our own social workers, apprenticeships and international recruitment and a focus on workforce support, wellbeing and flexibility and innovative recruitment are mitigating this risk.

6. IT System replacement

The Council is facing a number of challenges and risks in relation to the procurement of a replacement system for its current safeguarding and case management IT System. The resources to implement a change of system are not yet in place at the Council level in either the IT department or in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate. Changing an IT system which contains such sensitive personal data, which will need to be transferred to the new system, is always an inherently risky undertaking. There are significant staff training requirements from any system change. The Council is working with others regionally and nationally to manage and mitigate the significant safeguarding risks presented by this system change.

7. Pressures on partner agencies

Service and financial pressures are impacting all parts of public services and a number of key partners have indicated a 'reset' of their operating models to focus on statutory priorities. This includes the 'right care, right person' reset by the police and a reset from probation services. There is a significant risk this means a greater expectation on local authority social services and wellbeing and gaps in the support available to people from other agencies. Partnership is a strength in Bridgend and there is a real focus on working through changes with partners to ensure

Director's Overview

people continue to access the support they need, whilst being clear what the Council's responsibilities are and the expectations on other partners to fulfil their responsibilities. Partnership works best where there are integrated service arrangements such as the MASH and integrated adult community teams.

Priorities for 2024/25

Strategic plans have been developed for children and families and adults in Bridgend.

Adult Social Care

In Adult Social Care, our aim is to ensure our services are seamless to people, are well co-ordinated; with close professional integration, joint working, and information sharing between services and providers. The key priorities for 2024/25 are to:

- embed the changes to our **adult social care operating model**;
- ensure the whole Council and partners are delivering on our commitment to **outcomes-focused strengths-based practice** which will help us promote resilience and independence for the people we support;
- drive through **further improvements in our front door response**, hospital discharge, reablement and long-term support in the community to ensure that our services are most effective in promoting resilience and reducing unnecessary demand.
- secure **transformation** and greater cost-effectiveness through our plans for **learning disability, mental health and long-term conditions** services;
- and to ensure support for staff, community engagement, technology and partnerships are all geared towards **cost-effective and sustainable social care** in the longer term.

Director's Overview

Children and Family Services

Within Children and Family Services the aim is 'Working together to enable better outcomes for children, young people and their families via strong relationships, effective practice and timely and responsive services, which support children and families to live together (wherever possible), work on difficulties and safeguard children from harm'. The key priorities for 2024/25 are:

- continued delivery of the '**Signs of Safety**' Programme together with an agreed future training plan for this model of practice.
- the implementation of an **operating model between prevention (early help) and statutory services** to provide an integrated service in which more children and families with complexity of need are supported preventatively where families are motivated and consent to change
- improvements in the **sufficiency, quantity and quality of provision** for care experienced children requiring residential care;
- work with Foster Wales to **recruit** enough **foster carers** within the local authority, enhancing foster carer support;
- work jointly with key partners to deliver the priorities laid out in the **three-year plan**;
- the **enhancement of partnership working** with key professionals and partners as well as **co-production with children** and families;
- the development of an updated **commissioning strategy for family support services** ;
- and the **revision** of the **Quality Assurance (QA) framework**;

Prevention and Wellbeing

The aim of the Prevention and Wellbeing Service is to ensure people are connected to the right community based services and support to prevent their needs escalating to require statutory services. This approach supports longer term sustainability whereby people are able to manage their own wellbeing and resilience within communities where there are local opportunities that can meet many identified needs.

Director's Overview

- further **develop** the **active Bridgend plan** and engage communities and stakeholders in determining future priorities;
- develop a strategic plan, with external support for **community hubs, libraries and cultural services** including; the potential role that community hub approaches could play;
- to support **people to remain resilient** within their communities via cross sector working and maximising the impact of local community co-ordinators and community navigators;
- and, **support unpaid carers** including young carers and young adult carers to access community based support and manage their own wellbeing.
- Work with colleagues across the Council and partners to develop more **pathways to education, training and employment** for people who experience the most significant barriers to work.
- Review our approach to **community connection** to ensure we are maximising impact for people most at risk of needing statutory services.

Looking to the future – sustainably improving at a time of challenge for public services

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a review of the last year, the progress we have made and the areas where we must still improve further. There is a strong commitment across all the services in social services and wellbeing to work with partners to ensure the very best services and support for our most vulnerable citizens. The demands upon services and the levels of need the teams work with is increasing but through evidence informed practice we can continue to improve and support better outcomes for people, whilst supporting them to be more resilient and live as independently as possible. There are many reasons to be positive about social services and wellbeing in Bridgend. We have seen greater regulatory confidence from CIW in our ability to sustain improved performance. We have improved the stability of

Director's Overview

our workforce. We work well with partner agencies. Our quantitative performance is largely good. We have good business intelligence which tells us where we need to improve and are acting on that intelligence. Most importantly, whilst knowing we have further work to do to grow confidence and consistency, our qualitative review shows us improvements in practice, building on the strengths in people's lives and building our relationships with the people we work with and alongside.

As Statutory Director, I am, however, not complacent about the position of our system. The risks set out in this report are not inconsiderable. The financial risks to the Council are acute and there is a huge challenge in continuing to meet all statutory duties in social care within the resources available. My statutory duty is to advise on what resources are required to do this in the most cost effective and proportionate way which both safeguards the most vulnerable and promotes independence, wellbeing and understanding of people's strengths and resources. Addressing risks requires focussed management and mitigation. We need to continue as a whole Bridgend community approach - one Council and with partners - to ensure in these most challenging of financial times for public services we do not collectively take our eye off the ball of the need to safeguard and support the most vulnerable. Our leadership and management team is stable and our workforce is growing in confidence to deliver excellent social services and wellbeing for our people.

My final word is of sincere thanks; firstly to all Councillors, my colleagues across the Council, in the directorate, across all our partners. Your support and understanding of what is needed to improve social services and wellbeing in Bridgend has been unwavering and the progress within this report could not have been achieved without your leadership, challenge and commitment. The ultimate thanks are to the people of Bridgend with care and support needs - the barriers they overcome, their tenacity and resilience are what, despite the challenges, brings joy to all of us who work in social care.

Diolch o gallon,

Claire Marchant
Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing



Summary of Performance

Adult Social Care

Contacts, Assessments & Screening



↓ 4% decrease
5782 contacts received in the year



↑ 2% increase
294 contacts for carers



↑ 13% increase
1850 new assessments completed in the year

24%

↓ 5% decrease in proportion of new assessments progressing to a care and support plan

The overall decrease in the number of contacts received during the year equates to 262 or an average of 22 referrals per month. Whilst there has been an increase in new assessments, the proportion that result in a care and support plan evidences our strength based practice model and commitment to promoting people's independence.

Reablement Services

65

↓ 53% decrease in the number of people awaiting a Community Occupational Therapist Assessment at 31st March

99

↓ 18% decrease in the number of people awaiting a sensory assessment at 31st March

67%

↔ of people who received a reablement service, had no ongoing service needs.

5%

↓ 2% decrease in the percentage of people whose needs increased following a reablement service

14%

↓ 1% decrease in the percentage of people who maintained their level of need following a reablement service

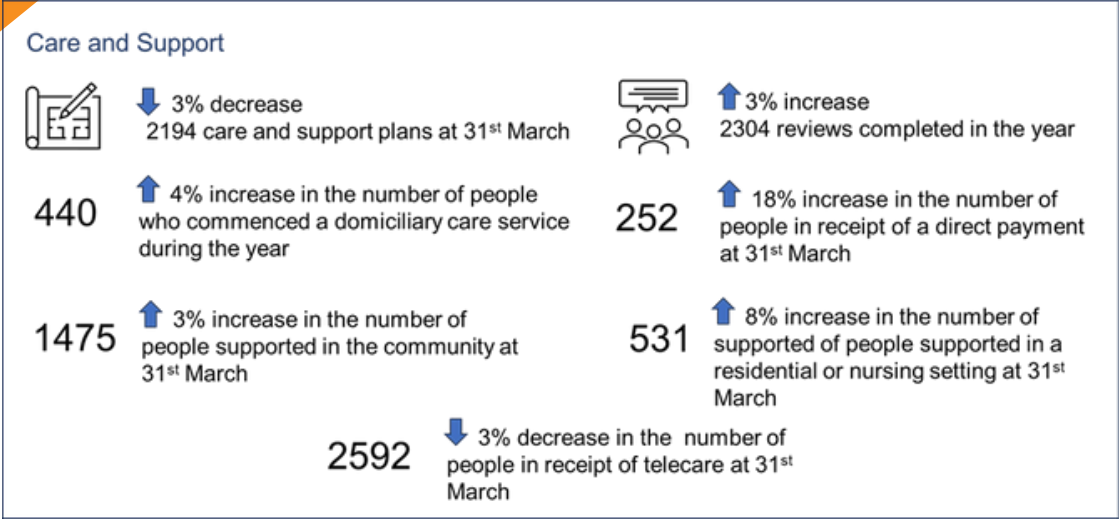
14%

↑ 2% increase in the percentage of people whose needs reduced following a reablement service

The success of preventative services to maximise the opportunity for people to have wellbeing outcomes met through community connection and resources in their community can be evidenced in the reduced level of care and support people require following reablement intervention. Whilst the number of people who maintained their level of care and support is comparable with last year, the overall percentage of people requiring less support has increased. People with additional needs are being referred to reablement which has an impact on the proportion of people whose needs are mitigated but means more people have

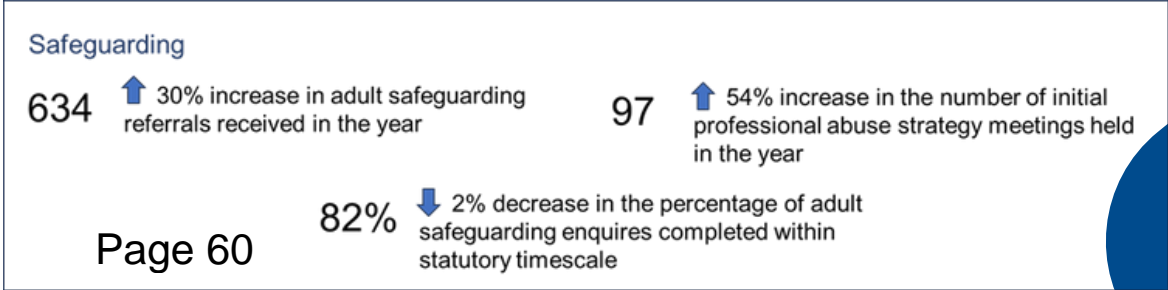
Summary of Performance

their independence maximised.



The small shift in the number of care and support plans and reviews, along with the percentage of people supported within the community or within a residential setting illustrates that despite population increases we are supporting less people overall but those who we do support have greater needs.

Of the total number of people supported at the 31st March 2024, 74% are supported within the community and 26% within a residential or nursing setting, representing a 1% shift to residential care. This shift and the increase in the number of people commencing a domiciliary care service is due to the increasing health and care needs of our population as people are presenting with greater care and support needs. However, by providing support at home we are able to continue to support people in a community setting. Technology such as telecare also plays a key role in promoting people to live independently within their own home. We saw a decrease in the number of people in receipt of telecare as staff focussed on the major task of switching all equipment from analogue to digital services. However, as outlined in section 3, we are taking steps to promote the use of technology to support people at home.

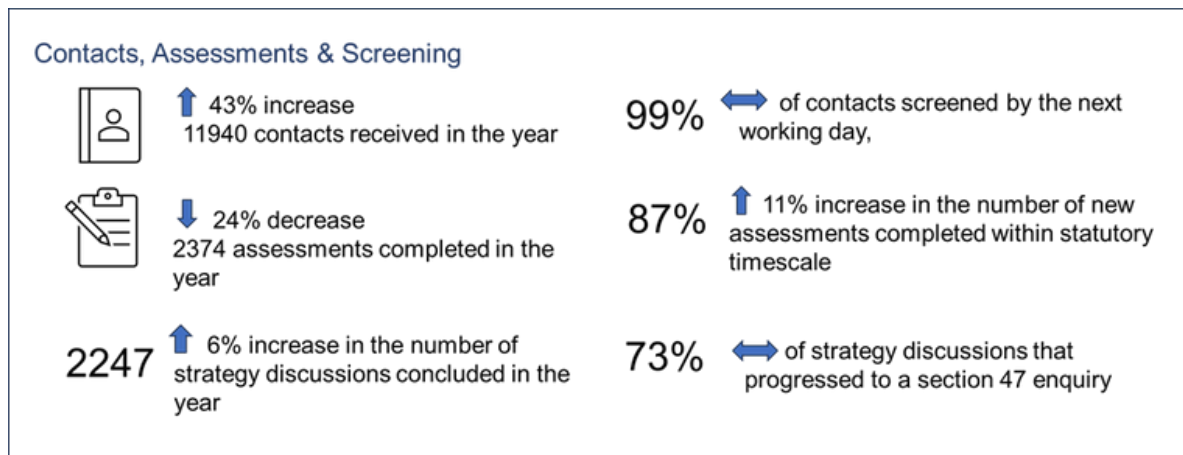


Summary of Performance

There was a decrease in the completion of safeguarding enquiries within statutory timescales which will be an area of focus for 2024-25.

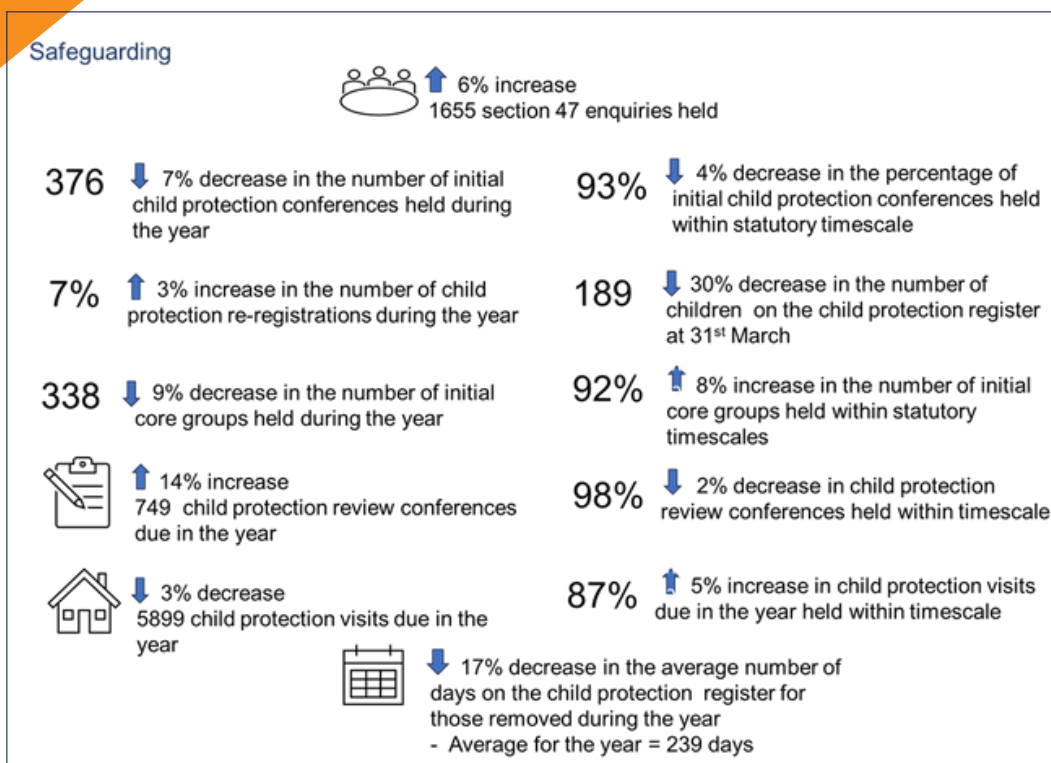
The completion safeguarding enquiries relies on information from partner agencies which cannot always be provided within the statutory timescale. Whilst there has been a dip in performance, the permanent recruitment of a Social Work Team Manager for the Safeguarding and Secure Estates along with the revision of safeguarding processes, provides increased managerial oversight and support for this area to ensure timescales are met.

Children and Family Services



Whilst the number of contacts increased significantly, the decrease in those resulting in assessment not only evidences our increased sign-posting to Early Help and preventative services but also demonstrates the number received that do not meet the threshold for our services. The Signs of Safety screening tool is assisting us in clearer decision making and along with further enquiries at the front door has strengthened the direction of work. We continue to work with partner agencies to improve understanding of what is an appropriate referral .

Summary of Performance



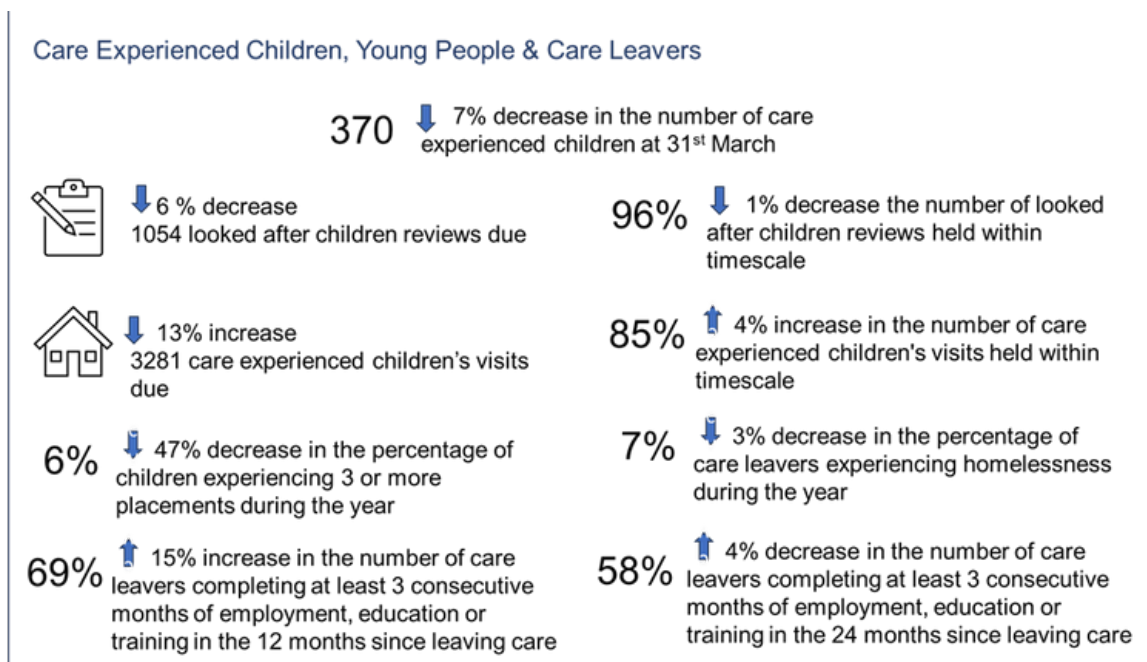
Over the last year we have further strengthened our awareness and recognition of child protection concerns. Our screening is more thorough and considers the history, there is greater professional awareness for partner agencies in their recognition of risk, and improved management oversight in the MASH/IAA Service. Whilst this robust process will increase the number of section 47 enquires, risks are fully considered with appropriate safeguarding actions being implemented.

To improve the timeliness of initial child protection and review conferences, processes have been reviewed to understand the reasons for non-compliance and targeted work has commenced. A number of non-compliance cases were as a result of Social Workers not sharing conference reports in good time. The Group Manager for IAA and Safeguarding has sent a recent request to all Safeguarding Hub Team Managers to monitor conferences closely to ensure this only takes place in exceptional circumstances. We have also recruited a permanent Independent Reviewing Officer Team Manager and one of their priorities is to improve this performance.

The re-registration of children equates to a small number, (22 out of 328) when compared to other local authority areas in our RSB region. We will continue to monitor this figure to ensure when we cease involvement with a family, we do so when they are in the best position to succeed and have a support network to give the best

Summary of Performance

chance of not reverting to harmful behaviours. Targeted work continues within our locality safeguarding hubs to close care and support cases open to statutory services for an extended period of time without the need. This work has resulted in a reduction of cases and social worker caseloads consistently remain at a safe level. This allows practitioners to focus their time on those children and families who require it, with the right intervention at the right time and timely reviewing of plans. The Signs of Safety model has supported decision making in child protection conferences, and will support practitioners to evidence positive change more clearly which will support more thorough decision making and further reduce registration numbers.



Over the last year, we have implemented a number of actions to focus on the safe reduction of care experienced children. Care experienced reduction meetings have had a clear focus and fed into care order discharge (COD) meetings. We have ensured social workers are fully prepared and work is completed to a high standard. The embedding of the Signs of Safety model means there is greater consistency of practice and is supporting families to utilise their own resources to find their own solutions.

The performance of reviews for care experienced children is comparable with 2022/23. Over the year a high number of reviews

Summary of Performance

had to be rescheduled outside of timescale due to reports not being completed by allocated workers. Performance has also been an identified area for improvement in the Care Experienced Children's Team. To improve performance, we have strengthened practice and processes.

Whilst the performance of visits to care experienced children has improved over the year to ensure this trajectory continues a Care Experienced Children's Framework has been drafted and provides practice guidance on visit compliance and recordings. Social Workers are also being provided with protected time to ensure visit recordings are completed and bi-weekly team meetings focus on statutory visits to support compliance by discussing any barriers to completion and providing cover where required.

We have made progress in reducing the number of children who experienced 3 or more moves during the year. Practice guidance for placement searches is in place regarding the use of case consultation to engage workers in slow thinking to enhance care planning and reduce crisis led responses and a behaviour analyst joined the fostering service in February 2024 to provide input and support with placements at risk of breakdown.

There are significant challenges within housing supply which impacts on the provision of accommodation and access to accommodation in a planned and safe way for care leavers. Accommodation for young people aged 16+ is at capacity and we continue to develop options for care leavers such as supported lodgings. Whilst the number of care leavers completing at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training improved at 12 months, it has been recognised that the introduction of the Basic Income Pilot has correlated with the reduction in care leavers accessing education, employment and training for young people in the 24 months post leaving care. The 16+ Team have a new Multiply Worker within the team and are working to further develop links with the Youth Development Team and Employability to improve the contribution of all parts of the Council to this key corporate parenting priority.

2. How People are Shaping our Services

People that Use our Services

To understand the needs of the people who access our services, it is important we understand their views and experiences. In social services and wellbeing engagement and involvement is at the centre of everything we do. The principle we work to is '**nothing about me without me**'.

Engagement Activity

Whilst examples of engagement and involvement are referenced throughout this report, here are some highlights from the last year:

- The engagement of care experienced children and young people has been coordinated by the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer through a range of participation events and the care experienced youth forum supported by Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru. The engagement events and youth forum activity has informed and influenced service planning and delivery; including young people hosting the Corporate Parenting Strategy launch, naming the new children's residential home, planning an education achievement awards ceremony, informing the new complaints process in residential settings and being consulted on foster placements to inform changes within the service. Young people also participated in the tendering process for a new supported accommodation contract and the recruitment and selection process of a variety of new posts. The youth forum meet regularly to discuss a wide range of issues and take part in various national consultations, receive visitors and act as a soundboard to the Corporate Parenting Board on specific topics. The young people have felt really valued having the opportunity to have a say and be involved in matters that affect them: *"We are the experts and the ones in care or leaving care so should be fully involved."* *"Other young people coming into care will be happy and reassured I think that children and young people have been fully involved and not just the adults sorting this stuff out".* *"I love group and the people in it, they all know how hard in can be being in care and leaving care"*? *"I feel my voice can make a difference".*

How People are Shaping our Services

- Within older persons residential services and learning disability accommodation services feedback is captured in quarterly care reviews . The impact of this feedback is improved monitoring and compliance with regulatory standards, setting actions and agreed areas of improvements for services, regular visibility and accessibility of senior managers to both individuals supported and their teams. Overall improvements to service standards which has been reflected in annual inspections undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales.
- Within domiciliary care services, community meetings are facilitated by management teams and are accessible to all individuals; subject areas discussed include health and wellbeing, health and safety, community and 'at home' activities.
- In learning disability services, a number of individuals are active participants and members of People's First Bridgend, an independent advocacy group for people with learning disabilities and autism. Participants attend regular meetings and actively contribute on the development of services. During 2023/24 People First members have assisted the Council with consultations about specialist supported living and day opportunities. They have led the 'Better Together Bridgend' initiative with 4 workstreams and developed a comments and complaints process. Members have also participated in regional service planning groups and local and regional service planning events. The organisation also continue to provide training to a range of organisations, advocacy, self-advocacy and support for participation as well as help with staff interviews and support to focus groups.
- The regionally supported substance misuse group meets on a monthly basis. During 2023/24 the group were engaged in responding to the Welsh Government draft mental health strategy and producing and approving the service user involvement strategy.
- Consultation and engagement took place with extra care tenants to understand what they would like to see from the extra care service in the future. Tenants were asked about aspects they like about the current service model and things they might

How People are Shaping our Services

like to change. The feedback from the tenants is being used to help inform a wider accommodation-based service review across all of adult social care, where options and proposals, which will include how extra care is to be delivered moving forward, are being developed.

- To monitor and review the embedding of the Signs of Safety Model, the Principal Officer Safeguarding, undertook an appreciative enquiry. The Principal Officer met with Mum to discuss their previous experience of involvement with children and family services compared to their current involvement. Mum noted a difference in the support received currently as she felt that she now understood concerns and what needed to happen as compared to having to 'try and make sense' of previous reports and concerns. This has allowed Mum to create a trusting relationship with her social worker as she felt she was working openly and honestly with her despite, this also being the same Social Worker who worked with Mum previously. Mum also noted a difference in the attempts to include family in supporting her and felt this time round the difference in approach gave her hope that she could succeed.
- The young carers network provides a platform for young carers and young adult carers to have their voice heard and acted upon. The network is driven by Bridgend Young Carers Ambassadors and holds large events on a termly basis attracting 100 plus young carers allowing insight, learning and co-production to take place.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were held with members of the Bridgend Youth Forum, People First Bridgend and Mental Health Matters to gain an insight into how people felt about the services they received. Each session focused on discussion around people's involvement and experience of social care over the past 12 months with a number of themes being identified at each group.

How People are Shaping our Services

Bridgend Youth Forum

Contact: The majority of young people knew who to contact with regard to their social care. There was a combination of the young people contacting the service themselves or the service contacting them. When an allocated social worker is on leave or away from the office the young people are not always aware of who else they can contact.

Communication: Whilst all young people were able to communicate in the language of their choice, all noted they had not been asked their preferred language.

Voice: Discussions noted a mixed response with some young people noting that they felt their voices were not always heard and that they did not always receive the right information and advice at the right time. All young people were aware of the advocacy service and had been informed of the service by either their social worker, youth worker or foster carer.

Care & Support: There was a mixed response in relation to the young people's experience of a social worker. One young person noted they had the "perfect social worker" who is "always there for me" and "got to know me and want I want to do"; Whilst another felt their social worker "spoke down" to them. One young person noted that they would like to get to know their social worker and extending the use out of "social worker profiles" was discussed.

People First Bridgend

Contact: Whilst the majority of members noted they know

How People are Shaping our Services

how to contact social services and would contact their social worker there were a small number that were not always aware of who to contact as they did not have an allocated worker. Some members of the group noted that if they required information or advice they would contact their social worker. However, there was a mixed response when asked if they were kept informed with their care and support.

Choice: When discussing with members if they had been involved in the decisions about their care, the majority felt that they had not. Most felt that due to staffing and available hours of care and support there was not enough flexibility to engage in their preferred activities. *"We have 4 hours but don't know why. They told us they can't give us more hours. They don't tell us"*. Some members also expressed that they would like to be involved in more activities with people with their own age group rather than attend mixed age group day services.

Voice: Some members felt that they were not involved in decisions about their care and support and they did not always feel listened too. *"I'm moving away from (my adult family placement) [doesn't know they are moving]. I'd rather stay with (adult family carers)." However another member noted that "I make decisions about how I like my home to be."*

Community: Almost all members noted that they were accessing community groups or voluntary organisations. However, some members identified transport and accessibility as a barrier to accessing community groups and activities. Information on groups within the local area was discussed and it was noted that it would be beneficial to have a list of groups and activities all in one place.

Care & Support: The majority of members noted that they had been treated with dignity and respect. *"They are all friendly", "We have a laugh"*. However a small number felt that they had not, with one member noting *"You get some people who are not so understanding, strict and need a lot more training"*. Most members have an allocated social worker noting; *"they*

How People are Shaping our Services

listened to what I had to say” and “did what they said they were going to do”. Overall, members were happy with the care and support they received.

Mental Health Matters

It is important to note that not all members are currently or have been in receipt of social care services over the last year.

Contact: Most members who responded indicated they know who to contact about social care, and for those that had received information and advice there was an almost 50/50 split in whether they thought they had received the right information at the right time.

Voice: Whilst most members felt that they had been listened too, a small number felt that they had not. When asked if they had actively been involved in decisions about their care, just over half noted they had.

Community: Everyone noted that they were accessing a community group or voluntary organisation. One member noted that they enjoyed attending Mental Health Matters as *“it gives me a purpose. I feel like I am helping others.”*

Care & Support: The majority of members were not happy with the care and support received, with one member noting they feel they need more support. For those members with experience of working with a social worker or social care worker there was a combination of responses. Some were very satisfied with the support received, *“Found Early Help really helpful”*, some were neither satisfied or dissatisfied and some were not satisfied, *“Social Worker is difficult to get hold of”*, and *“different people all the time”*. Overall, when members were asked if they were satisfied with their overall experience of social care there was an even split between satisfied and unsatisfied.

How People are Shaping our Services

On-Line Questionnaire

We hosted 4 online questionnaires for people who have had experiences of our services over the last 12 months between April and May 2024. We received a total of 85 responses, which is an increase of 16% compared to 2023/24.

• Adult Social Care	24
• Children & Young People	18
• Unpaid Carers	22
• Parents	21

Each questionnaire contained questions common across all 4 or had questions that were specific to that service area. An overall analysis of responses noted 40% of respondents were satisfied with the social care services they had received which is an increase of 25% when compared to last year. Other **areas of improvement** include:

- 44% increase in the number of children being treated with dignity and respect.
- 27% increase in the number of carers offered an assessment.
- 22% increase in parents reporting that they know who to contact in social care.
- 15% increase in adults being involved in decisions about how social care services.
- 94% of respondents were able to communicate in their language of choice, comparable with 2022/23.

This year we included a new question around people's experience with social workers or social care workers. Of those that responded, 72% reported having experience of a social worker or social care worker

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of people

How People are Shaping our Services

who responded to the questionnaires did not report an overall positive experience. Areas for improvement, noted in responses were:

- further development of communication to ensure people are accessing all areas of our service;
- ensuring everyone has the right information at the right time;
- ensuring everyone is involved in decisions about how social care services are provided to them;
- continuing to increase the number of assessments offered to unpaid carers;
- and continuing to raise the profile and role of advocacy, community and voluntary based services.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the response to the on-line questionnaires represents a small proportion of the people, their families and carers that access our services the areas for improvement identified are consistent with those noted within the focus groups.

An overall analysis information gathered from the on-line questionnaire and focus groups noted the following as key areas for improvement:

- ensure people receive the right information or advice at the right time;
- improve communication with people who experience our services;
- where possible, minimise the reallocation cases to different social workers , and where this is not possible, ensure people are fully informed ahead of any changes;
- and improve how we respond to “what matters” to people.

Inspections

Regulated Services

During 2023/4, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) undertook 8

How People are Shaping our Services

inspections of regulated services provided by the Council. All inspections considered the wellbeing of individuals receiving care and support, the quality of care and support provided and the leadership and management of the service and for residential-based services, the environment.

Within Adult Social Care, inspections were undertaken of 5 regulated residential-based establishments and the domiciliary support services by the CIW. All inspections identified there is a good standard of care and support provided across the services, with the following noted as key strengths:

- relationships between staff and individuals receiving care and support;
- leadership and management;
- the provision of activities;
- individuals happy with their care and support and their needs being well met;
- choice of meals and positive mealtime experiences.

It is positive to note that the inspections highlighted previous areas of improvement had been addressed and no priority action notices for 2023/24 were noted. One **area for improvement** was identified within one of our residential settings; of the updating of personal plans. The area for improvement is being addressed and achievement of the actions is monitored through the Council's regulatory tracker which is reported to the Governance and Audit committee through the Corporate Performance Assessment process.

In **Children and Family Services**, 3 regulatory inspections took place, 2 of residential establishments and 1 of Foster Wales Bridgend. Key strengths highlighted across the 2 residential establishments include:

- effective governance arrangements in place;
- supportive Responsible Individual (RI) who regularly audits and reviews and operations, ensuring continuous improvement and compliance;

How People are Shaping our Services

- comprehensive personal plans and risk assessments in place, ensuring tailored support for each child.
- positive feedback from external professionals and strong relationships between the child and care staff;
- a proactive approach in managing risks and promoting the child's independence is evident;
- children's health is promoted through registration at local health services, and efforts are made to reduce anxiety about appointments;
- and the home is clean, warm, and personalised, offering a sense of belonging and pride for the children.

It is positive to note that no priority action notices were identified, with 2 areas for improvement being identified; staffing challenges as a reliance on agency staff and standard of staff personal files. Recruitment and retention of care workers is a priority and processes have already been implemented to improve the personal files.

In November 2023, CIW undertook an inspection of Foster Wales Bridgend, which comprises of a General Fostering and Placement Team and Kinship and Permanence Team. The General Fostering and Placement Team considers the needs of children referred to the service and finds suitable care provisions, either in-house or externally. General foster carers are assessed and approved to look after children, providing respite, short and long-term care. The Kinship and Permanence team assess and approves connected carers, who are usually friends or family members of children and young people.

The inspection acknowledged the current context in which the service is operating, commenting that, *'the number of children who are referred to the service, outnumbers foster carers available'* it did highlight a number of **key strengths** which include:

How People are Shaping our Services

- children's views and voices are heard in several ways, and they are supported to access advocacy;
- the Bridgend Youth Voice Forum has provided opportunities for children to be involved in the development of the service and the recruitment and selection processes of staff;
- standards of care and support foster carers must provide are set out clearly within the statement of purpose, policies, and procedures for the service;
- unannounced visits are undertaken in compliance and the placement stability process in place is having a positive impact;
- appropriate checks are undertaken as part of foster carers' annual reviews and children are able to have a say in how their bedrooms are decorated to personalise them;
- safe recruitment checks are carried out with all staff and the Signs of Safety model is being embedded within the service;
- and arrangements in place for oversight and quality assurance of the service with Quality of Care and quarterly reports.

The inspection noted 8 areas for improvement which can be broadly categorised in to the 4 areas of: the matching of children with complex needs, safe care arrangements, timeliness of responses to allegations and improvements to systems to ensure policies and procedures are evidenced in practice.

The relevant action plans being monitored via the fortnightly Children's and Family Services Pressures meeting and quarterly performance management meetings.

A copy of all published regulatory services inspection reports can be found [here](#).

Local Authority Inspections

How People are Shaping our Services

In June 2023, CIW, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), and Estyn undertook a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend with a focus on the following areas.

- the response to allegations of abuse and neglect at the point of identification;
- the quality and impact of assessment, planning and decision-making in response to notifications and referrals;
- protecting children aged 11 and under at risk of abuse and neglect;
- the leadership and management of this work;
- and the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding partner arrangements in relation to this work.

The inspection noted a number of areas of positive practice and a number of areas for improvement, due to inconsistent practice, a summary of findings noted:

- overall, systems and relationships are in place to facilitate effective partnership working where a child is at risk of abuse and neglect;
- partners are working to a shared ethos of safeguarding children;
- managers and leaders provide a positive working together culture;
- actions generally happen within timescales with support and protection in place to meet needs;
- professionals make appropriate referrals but partner agencies, such as police and health, are struggling to resource the increase in child protection activity
- challenges in sharing information between agencies in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub;
- immediate actions are taken to promote children's safety but there can be gaps following a Section 47 safeguarding enquiry (S47);
- the quality of care and support protection plans (CASPP) is too variable;
- gaps in recording and in supervision;

How People are Shaping our Services

- schools across Bridgend work well with a wide range of services to support children and families;
- and there is good multi-agency attendance and participation in child protection meetings arranged under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP).

A multi-agency action plan reflecting the areas for improvement was developed in September 2023. Within the Council progress is overseen by the Social Services Improvement Board and the RSB. Actions identified for South Wales Police and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board are monitored by individual agencies own governance arrangements.

The full [JICPA report](#) outlines more detailed findings, noting strengths and areas for improvement for in each agency within the 4 areas of in the four main areas of Wellbeing, People, Partnerships, and Integration and Prevention.

CIW Engagement Activity: Dementia Service

In collaboration with CIW we completed an engagement activity of our integrated dementia service at the Bridgend Resource Centre. The outcome of the activity, which was noted as positive, will inform a review of services with a view to developing 'outreach' and community-based services and support models.

How People are Shaping our Services

Thank you

We would like to thank everybody who took the time to speak with us about the Integrated Dementia Service.

Summary

We visited the Integrated Dementia Service at Bridgend Resource Centre on 28 March 2024. We observed some activities, and we spoke with some staff and eight carers/family members about their views of the service.

This briefing summarises our findings from this engagement activity. It includes a sample of quotes we received, and strengths identified. Feedback we received did not highlight any areas for improvement.

Our findings have been shared with the local authority.

Strengths

People are treated with dignity and respect. Their views are sought, and they are listened to.

The staff team know people well and have developed good relationships with people who use the service and their carers. We observed kind and positive interactions between staff and people using the service.

Carers told us they value the service. They discussed how the service not only promotes the well-being of the person cared for but also the carers well-being, helping to promote and support carer resilience.

Some carers we spoke with provided examples where they felt staff had gone above and beyond to support the physical and emotional well-being of people using the service.

The service provides a flexible and person-centred approach, where people's individual needs and preferences are catered to.

There is a varied programme of activities for people to participate in if they wish.

Carers know who to contact if they need to speak with someone at the service and receive a timely response.

The service demonstrates effective partnership working via an integrated model to enhance the well-being of people and their carers.

Quotes from carers and family members

"[my family member] is stimulated and engaged. They go on trips out and do activities."

"They [staff at the service] are amazing, they take great care of [my family member] and me."

"They [staff at the service] really go above and beyond."

"I have time to do things that are important to me, this makes a big difference."

"It is the difference between living and existing."

Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru
Care Inspectorate Wales

7-Minute Summary

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Compliments and Complaints

During 2023/24 the directorate received 362 compliments and 182 complaints. In the last year our compliments have increased by 41% while complaints have decreased by 7%.

An analysis of complaints received during the year highlighted 3 key themes: lack of support, staff conduct and communication. We have implemented a process to regularly monitor complaint information so that we can identify not only areas of good practice but also learning outcomes so that the appropriate training and support to improve can be put in place.

There were 8 stage 2 (formal) complaints in 2023/24. Of the 36 matters investigated, 17 complaints were upheld, 5 were partially upheld and 14 were not upheld. All recommendations from stage 2 complaints are responded to and actions reviewed to ensure that we continually learn, develop and improve.

How People are Shaping our Services

It is important to note that of the 182 complaints received during the year, 77% of all complaints were resolved at the informal stage, and 96% by stage 1 of the statutory complaints process. This evidences our focus on providing a good local resolution for the people and their families and carers that use our services.

"A, Thank you for all your help and support for my mother and our family over the last six months, and for helping us acquire the very best setting for my mother. You have been amazing!"

Adult Social Care

"Thank you I wanted to let you know what an outstanding practitioner B is, I have had feedback from Carers who stated they have not seen such good practice, they have difficult conversations but find a way through and are thrilled to be working with C. I have enjoyed working with him too."

Children and Family Services

How People are Shaping our Services

Quality Assurance Framework

The directorate quality assurance framework has the voice of people as a core standard in all quality assurance activity.

The quality assurance system has been strengthened by the appointment of a Quality Assurance Officer in October 2023. Through embedding the Quality Assurance Framework and subsequent reporting in January 2024, **clearer** standards have been developed, along with plans for how the quality assurance system can be further improved.

Themes observed from the monitoring and review of quality assurance identified the need for performance improvement in compliance rates to case file auditing, direct observations and reflective supervision. A programme of development to increase compliance to the Quality Assurance Framework is in place. **Evidencing** strengths-based practice models in recorded work is a key theme emerging by auditors. Steps to align the Children's Social Care Signs of Safety approach and strengths-based, outcomes focussed model in Adult Social Care are therefore under development. Other themes identified include recorded work needing to be up to date and/or transferred to the case management system and more evidence of informed decision making and how expectations are managed in the climate of service pressures and demands.

Strong evidence of positive, relationship-based practice was another theme underpinning meaningful change with individuals in receipt of services by the Local Authority. Consistent evidence of co-produced, collaborative assessments, plans and reviews with individuals, families, carers and multi-agency partners were also observed. **Safeguarding and risk management** plans were central to practice with evidence of managerial oversight in line with supervision policy to support staff.

3. Adult Social Care

During 2023/24, Adult Social Care developed a **draft “Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend”** which, sets out the strategic objectives, priorities and plans required to deliver **sustainable and effective social care** and wellbeing support for adults in the County Borough.

The plan builds on work that has progressed during 2023/24 , focussing on: systematic implementation of a **strength based**, outcome focussed model of social work practice; the **transformation** of learning disabilities; the modernisation of support at home services including resetting of reablement to **maximise** the number of people who are supported to retain or regain their **independence**. The draft plan will be presented for pre-scrutiny in July 2024, followed by **engagement events** over the summer with the final plan being presented to Cabinet in the Autumn of 2024.

Following the social work review completed during November 2023 Adult Social Care also implemented a **new operating model** in February 2024. More information on this model can be found on page 46.

The **Strengths-based model of practice – working to achieve outcomes’** has been implemented across our community teams, and extended to the independent sector direct care domiciliary care services in November 2023. More information on how the model was developed can be found on page 95.

Adult Social Care

A strengths-based model of practice: working to achieve outcomes



1. What is the model?

The model is an Adult Social Care practice framework.

It reflects the principles of the SSWBA 2016 and the Code of Professional Practice.

The framework reflects good practice that has developed in BCBC.

The model supports people's right to:

- have respectful, collaborative conversations about their wellbeing.
- to take part in decisions about them
- to identify how their family friends and local community may play a part in their life.
- to help them achieve their personal outcomes.

2. When can I use the model?

We should observe the principles of the model in all of our practice, and in all of our contacts with individuals, their carers, and their families.

The approach the model defines should be used by social work, social care, and occupational therapy staff working in BCBC.

The model can also be used by allied health and therapy staff working in our multi-disciplinary teams.

The model should be applied when safeguarding.

3. How can I use the model?

Staff can ensure that the principles for practice guide their work.

The model can be used to help explain our role when working with individuals, carers, families.

The model should be introduced in induction and referred to in supervision.

Remember the model has two chief elements- strengths and outcomes.

Respectful, sensitive, collaborative conversations allow for relationships to develop. Out of this relationship, strengths and outcomes should become clear, rather than questions that we ask people.

7. What next?

Meet with your supervisor and ask them to share any practice tools they have found useful.

Keep an eye out for any training opportunities and attend any mandatory training required.

If you are unsure about the model contact David McManus in SCWDP.

Talk to your supervisor during supervision about how to use the model in your practice.



4. What tools do I need?

Practice using the O.A.R.S tool:

- open questions
- affirmations – listen out for good things, acknowledge them.
- reflections – to check out understanding and seek insights.
- summaries – a summary of the conversation and highlight strengths you have heard and 'what matters' to people.

6. Training

An awareness workshop will be included in the First Year in Practice programme.

A two-day skills-based course will be available for new starters, and multi-disciplinary staff working in BCBC teams.

A refresher course is being developed for more experienced staff.

5. What about people who may not be able to have a conversation easily?

We must not assume that a person is unable to express 'what matters to them' because they may have an impairment or a diagnosed condition. We must '*presume capacity*' unless we suspect otherwise. Even then, as capacity is '*decision specific*' it doesn't follow, for example, that because someone is unable to manage their money, they are unable to share with us what matters and is important in their life. We must work with those who know them to fully understand what matters to individuals in order that we can act in their best interests by knowing their strengths and outcomes.

3. Adult Social Care

2023/24 Key Achievements

During the last year, the **resetting of reablement** and **support at home** services has been a key focus. The reablement model has been reviewed to improve the effective use of resources, timeliness of support and **focussed intervention** with other professionals. The services have reviewed hospital discharge processes and have implemented a **short term assessment** service approach, enabling people, via a 6 week programme, to fully assess and **understand** people's **strengths** and needs.

We have progressed work to **modernise** the support at home service, we have **improved working patterns**. To further support this modern approach, the Mobile Response Team and Team Leads have access to **6 electric vehicles**. Both service developments demonstrate the **value** of our service to both those who access our service as well as staff. Whilst staff benefit from an improved **work life balance** and less wear and tear on their own vehicles those that access our services are ensured that the Mobile Response Team has the necessary resources to respond in a **timely manner, in doing so reducing conveyances to hospital and taking pressure off health services**.

In accordance with the Welsh Government national direction and policy, our integrated community services developed a **focused approach** on working to support adults with complex needs and those at risk of hospital admission. This has been undertaken to provide prudent and **preventative** approaches for adults living with disability, frailty and primary mental health challenges. Integrated teams comprise 9 professional groups working together to develop care and support plans around the individual – Mr and Mrs Jones – to ensure a seamless approach to meet health and care needs.

To further support the **remodelling of community services**, a complex needs integrated dementia day service has been developed to enable a more **flexible** approach to carer support and access which is supporting carers to keep caring and prevent the need for care home placements. It has provided an

Adult Social Care

outreach service to enable people who may not be able to travel to the centre to be supported within their local community. The professional staff at the day service also provide outreach support in people's homes to translate the behaviour and therapy plans to enable family carers to build knowledge and resilience within their caring role.

To support the **Learning Disability Transformation Programme**, an initial **review** of regional and national service models has been completed. We have established a task and finish group who are **exploring options** for day opportunities. As noted above the continued transformation of learning disabilities is a **key priority** of our 3 year strategic plan.

We have been able to **reduce** our **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard** assessments and renewals **waiting list**, at the year-end we had cleared the backlog meaning people have effective safeguards in place. The service strives to ensure that assessments are now being completed in a **timely manner** by in-house and independent Best Interest Assessors.

While we have seen a 2% increase in the number of contacts received from carers, this was not reflected in the number of **carers assessments** completed. As noted within the prevention and wellbeing section of this report the Cares Wellbeing Service supported 1249 unpaid carers, by offering information and advice and proportionate assessments within the community. In addition, we have developed a workstream to look at carers support which will focus on ensuring that the relevant systems and processes are in place to accurately reflect the number of assessments offered to unpaid carers and the number where the offer was accepted.

Promoting and Improving the Wellbeing of those we help

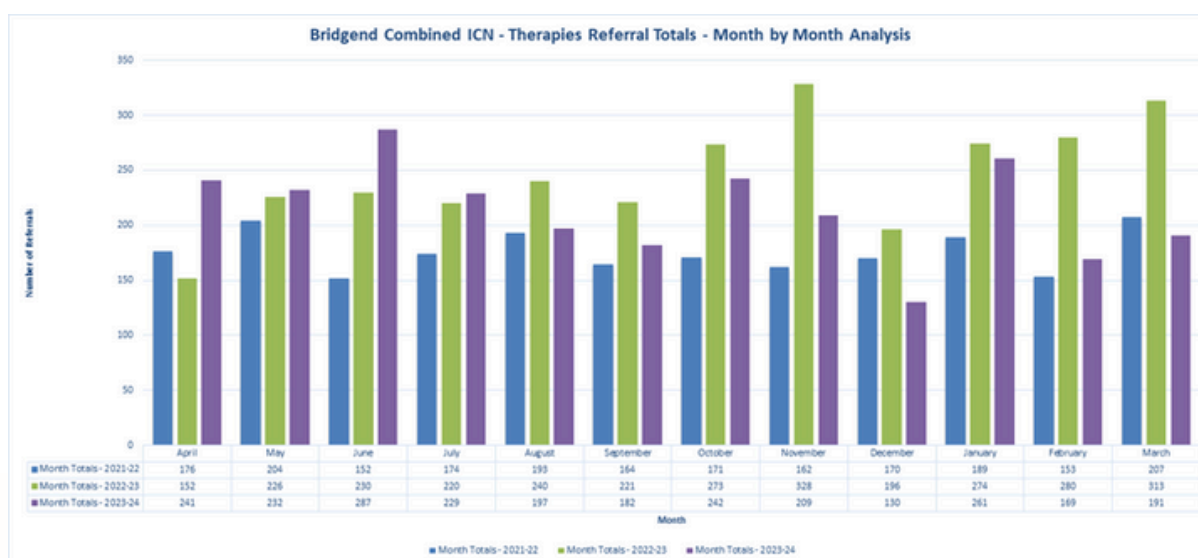
Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

To ensure that our **integrated community services** in

Adult Social Care

Bridgend are sustained and enhanced in the new regional integrated model we are embedding our strength based model of practice, across all teams to ensure assessments and reviews focus on people's strengths and resources and what matters to them. To further support this integrated model, the service also had an increased focus on hospital avoidance and frailty. Adult Social Care is also linking in with the Welsh Ambulance Service Team (WAST), hospitals and GP partners to target support to those at most risk.

The team is successfully implementing **preventative strategies**, such as tracking people who have recently been discharged from hospital, through our multi-disciplinary team meetings. We are also developing **innovative work** around early identification of pressure ulcer avoidance through integrated intervention. The focus and impact of the team is supporting adults to live longer in their own homes and communities and through timely multi-disciplinary intervention we are achieving good success in hospital admission avoidance and prevention in the deterioration of people's health. This is leading to good outcomes for adults and supporting cost avoidance.



To enable us to understand and **evaluate the impact** of the **integrated community services** model we have developed and revised a number of performance dashboards in line with the strength based model approach. We are also

Adult Social Care

reviewing population segmentation data to ensure we are focussing on the most vulnerable adults in a timely way.



Adult Social Care: New Operating Model

Our new operating model was fully implemented on 26th February 2024. The objectives of the new model are to:

Improve Customer services with outcomes of clear access criteria for teams so that individuals can access the most suitable MDT for individuals.

Improve Customer Journey with outcomes of clear pathways when travelling through the system and reduction in internal 'hand off' so that the individuals are entering the system at the appropriate place.

Improve Staff Experience with outcomes of staff having a clear remit of their work and social work practice models.

Improve Social Work Standards with outcomes that will ensure the operating model supports integration with health and recognition is given toward areas of expertise and specialism.

What we did

An evidence-based methodology was used to analyse the existing operating model to identify areas of improvement.

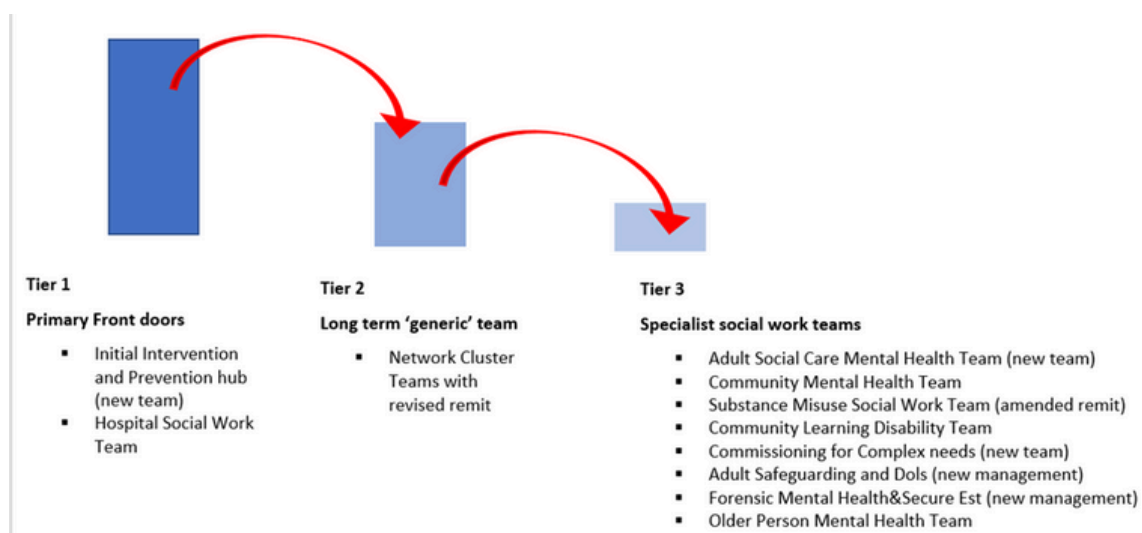
As a result of this analysis, a model was agreed that would:

Adult Social Care

- Improve overall services
- Remove gaps in access criteria
- Mitigate pressure points in the operating model
- Create Clear flow between social work teams

The new model introduced the concept of tiers, where each tier will manage varying levels of demand and complexity. The tier concept ensures individuals are responded to through an innovative, robust multi-disciplinary hub, which will be the 'Front Door to Adult Social Care'.

Time specific interventions will ensure proportionate initial assessments which will direct the next stage of the individual's journey through the service. The assessments and direction of the journey of the individual will be done by utilising evidence informed decision making, focusing on strengths, community assess and crisis intervention.



Where we are now

Adult Social Care are now operating on a model with the concept of tiers, where tiers manage varying levels of demand and complexity.

Individuals are initially responded to through an innovative, robust, multi-disciplinary Early Intervention and Prevention hub which is seen as the 'Front Door to Adult Social Care'.

Adult Social Care

To work in line with our Adult Social Care Practice Model, all practitioners work to our high strengths-based outcome focused practice to individuals, where the focus is on maximising community assets and preventative approaches to avoid early entry in our long term, specialist teams.

Remits of our long term and specialist teams have been widened, along with the introduction of new teams, to ensure that the model supports people well with long term and complex disabilities and ill health.

The operating module will continue to be evaluated to ensure the objectives agreed are being met and signs of obstruction to the flow of the individual's journey are identified and resolved as soon as possible.

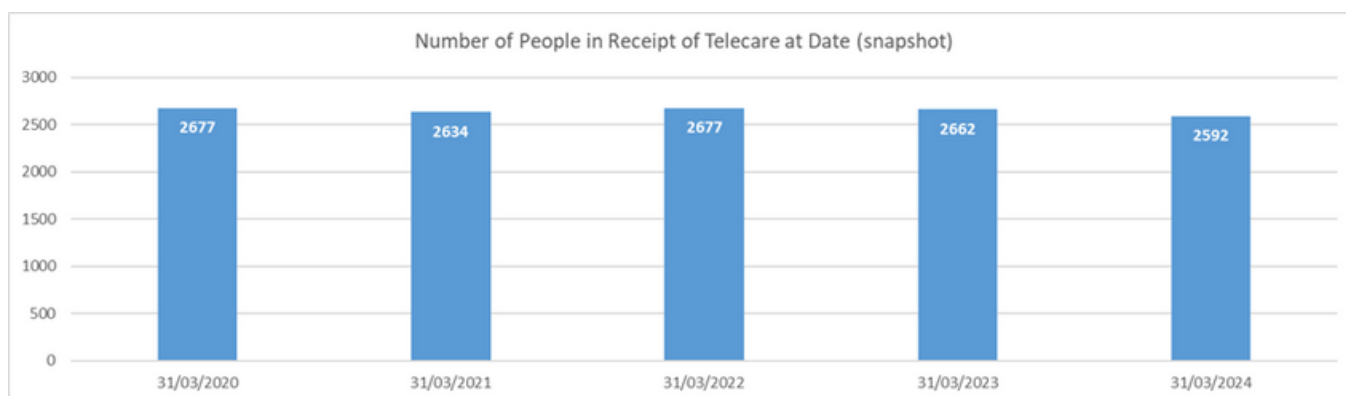
Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

To support tier 1 services including crisis response and early intervention services we focussed on restructuring the model. The creation of the Adult Social Care Mental Health team focusses on early intervention whilst we continue to support our partners at Mental Health Matters who operate a 'Wellbeing Retreat' 5 evenings a week which offers a crisis response. To further support early intervention services there has been significant improvement on the time taken to complete initial assessments and a multi-agency approach implemented at the front door to support people on non-active caseload. We have also further developed the links between primary and secondary mental health to provide a tiered response which enables improved flow for people as their needs change to ensure the right multi-disciplinary team is supporting the person at the right time.

The **analogue to digital** switch over of our **Telecare** Services is progressing well and is forecast to be completed by the end of July 2024. To focus on **increasing** the number of people who will benefit from the Telecare Service, we have developed a new in-house training model to raise the awareness and benefits

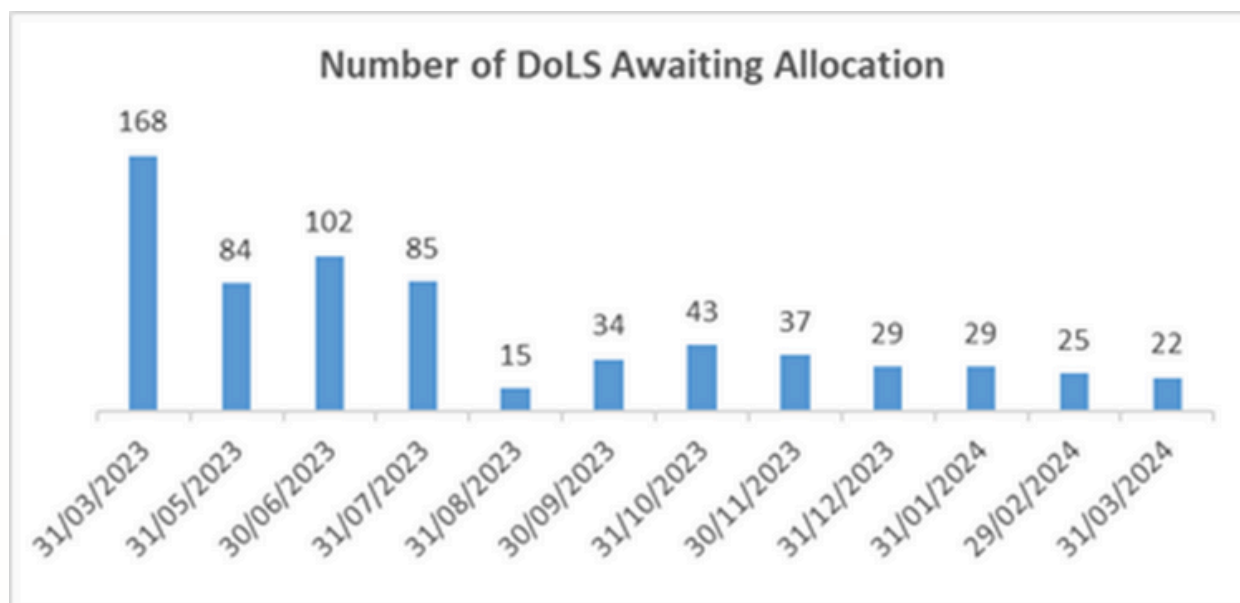
Adult Social Care

of the service to staff across the directorate to increase referrals to the service. To further support new pathways for Technology Enhanced Care we begun to explore the wider benefits of digital technology on promoting people's independence and are working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board on a technology enhanced care project to support improved medication adherence within the community.



Quality Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

We have reviewed our Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) processes to further strengthen our model to ensure the continued safeguarding of people's rights. During the year we employed additional capacity to address our backlog. This has resulted in the Best Interest Assessors and independent Best Interest Assessors effectively managing the timely delivery of assessments.



Adult Social Care

To **enhance** the **sharing** of **safeguarding information** we worked with key partners to implement the integrated safeguarding GOSS system and are reviewing internal processes to identify how best to utilise the system.

Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

We continue to work in **partnership** with the **Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board** and **third sector partners** to **develop seamless services** in line with the **dementia standards** for Wales and following a mapping exercise across the borough we are working together to implement a new contract with the Alzheimer's Society and also with Age Connect to develop a connector role. These services will become an integral part of the network teams, the complex dementia day service and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board's new memory assessment service. Our leisure partner HALO has also been provided with funding to develop social inclusion opportunities for people living with needs associated with complex dementia.

Adult Social Care

Project (activity): Specialist Dementia Unit at Bridgend Resource Centre



- As part of an integrated / multidisciplinary team the dementia resource within Bridgend Resource Centre, an 'outreach' and community-based service was developed to support individuals who are living with dementia/cognitive related issues to access services in a pre-emptive and timely way.
- During the process of developing an out-reach and community based model, the team consisted of: team leader, assistant team leader, day service assistants, mental health nurse and occupational therapist (OT) / OT assistant.
- Review the dementia resource at Bridgend Resource Centre with a view to developing 'outreach' and community-based services and support models.

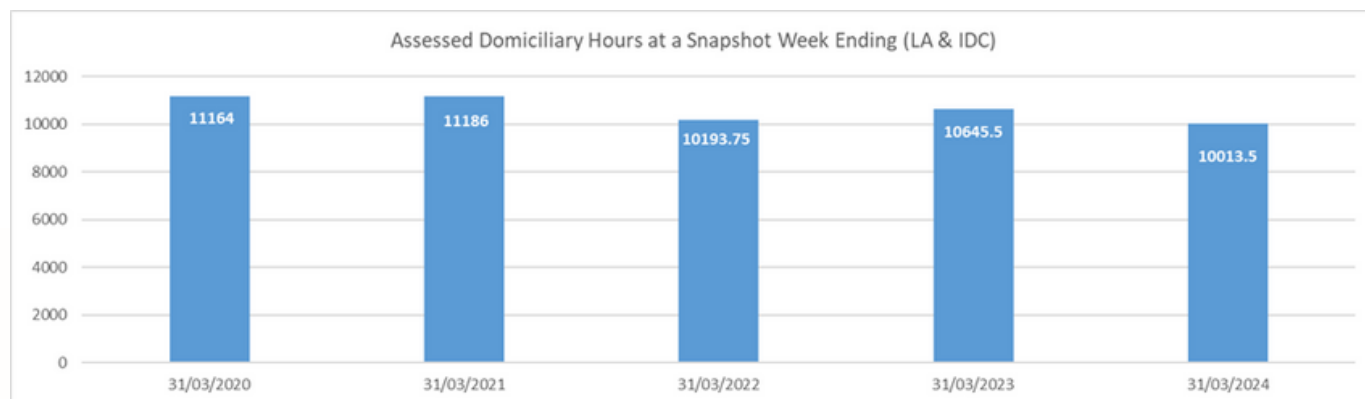


Adult Social Care

During the year we **developed** a learning disability transformation **action plan** which includes the support of the daytime **opportunities**. Implementation of the action plan has commenced and focusses on a number of key workstreams which include; outcome focussed assessments, specialist brokerage function; single carers project and continuing health care. Each workstream has a dedicated work plan with key actions progressing into 2024/25 and the continued **embedding** of the strengths based **practice model**, will support staff on focussing on the **strengths of individuals** and active **participation** in their **community**.

Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy, domestic, family and personal relationships

To **develop** the **Support at Home Service workforce** in line with **national policy** we developed a Care Worker Charter. To further support the development of the service we improved our marketing strategy and are developing a pathways to care programme with Employability Bridgend. We are also exploring opportunities to develop an apprenticeship programme for the support at home service.



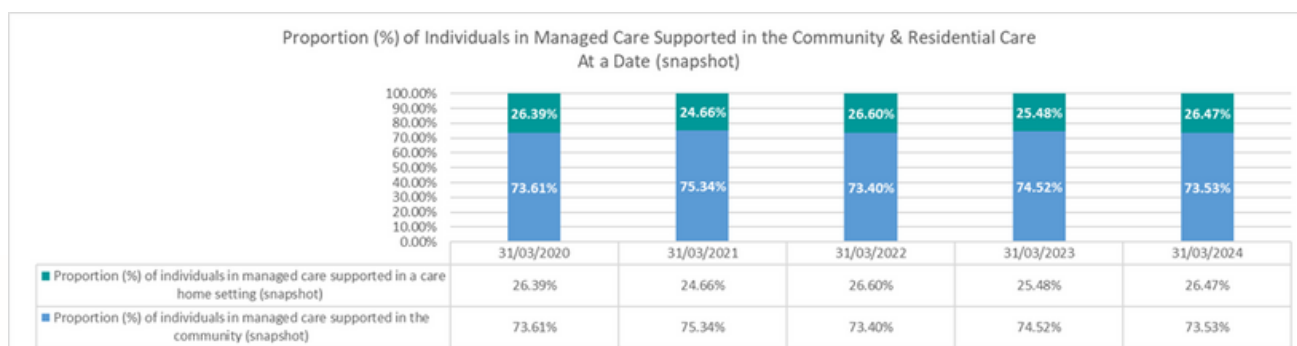
During this year, our Social Care Workforce Development Team has worked jointly with our **Autistic Spectrum Disorder** Project Development Officer to **identify the learning**

Adult Social Care

and development needs of our workforce. Our plan is based on the National Autism Training Framework for Wales 2021. The first phase 2023/24, sought to equip staff working in the directorate to achieve an awareness level of understanding (L1) with the aim of improving the lives of autistic people and their families by the workforce gaining a greater understanding of autism. We have made available a series of **E-learning modules**, along with one on Tourette's, produced by the National Autistic Society in conjunction with the LGA. This provides a platform ahead of delivery in 2024-05 for more skills based training (L2 and L3) in communications, assessment, and care and support planning.

Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets needs

In-line with the **10-year regional capital strategy**, the directorate's Commissioning Team commenced a **review** of all **accommodation** based services to identify accommodation options to meet population need. In response to the finding of the Population Needs Assessment and Market Stability Report, we have developed 5-year (2023-28) commissioning strategies across the three main population areas (Children's Services and Transition, Adult's with Lifelong Conditions/Complex Needs, and Older Person's Regulated Community Care), setting out the key priority areas and commissioning intentions for regulated services in these areas.



One of the workstreams of the **daytime opportunity assessment** action plan focusses on **social enterprises** to support **young adults with a learning disability** to develop their employability skills. We are aiming to focus on 2 projects which will be linked to **supported employment** and day opportunities. In early

Adult Social Care

stages of mapping future potential options.

Case Studies: Supported Employment

CASE STUDY: SID – WILDMILL



EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT
FOR OUR TRAINEES

“ SID SAID:
“I love working in the café,
I really look forward to
coming into work.” ”

Sid recently started a work placement at our café within Bryngarw Park.

Sid has been so successful within this work placement; he has now been offered paid employment and has settled in really well as part of the café team. Sid worked hard on developing his skills and has grown in confidence throughout his time with us. Sid really enjoys working at the café and is saving to “buy something big”.

CASE STUDY: DEAN – BETTWS



EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT
FOR DISABLED ADULTS

“ DEAN SAID:
“I am loving volunteering at Sue Ryder (charity shop). I want to continue doing this job and I have enjoyed meeting the other staff and being supported by them” ”

Dean is a keen member of both Wood-B and B-Leaf, and now he has the addition of being a volunteer at Sue Ryder Charity Shop in Bridgend.

Dean has been so excited to begin this role and do something that has purpose and can benefit other people's lives. Dean is currently being supported by Awen to attend each week, learn how the shop runs, its layout and how to present items for selling once they have been tagged and priced.

This role gives Dean a huge sense of independence and he has such pride in his work. Dean is learning to work with a totally different team from his peers within Awen. He loves being around the other staff and takes great pride in the work that he does independently.

CASE STUDY: DEAN – BETTWS

Dean has been inspired by his English Language course and decided that he would like to start a work placement in the library.

Dean is well known in his local community and wanted to enhance his sense of belonging. Dean's local library is within walking distance, so it has promoted independence, alongside positive health, and wellbeing. Dean's responsibilities include setting up equipment, returning books to the correct shelf, picking books, and greeting customers.



EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR OUR TRAINEES

“ DEAN SAID:
“I have English lessons in B-Leaf, they help with my reading. I like to read Harry Potter Books and I am happy being in the library with all the books.” ”

DEAN'S MUM, TRUDY SAID:
“Dean loves going to B-leaf and Wood- B and enjoys all the tasks. We are overjoyed at his library placement; we feel it will be good for him to volunteer in his local community.” ”

Adult Social Care

Key Service Priorities for 2024/25

<p>Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.</p>	<p>We will ensure that quality assurance of practice enables the quality and effectiveness of practice to be evaluated through the lens of the experience of the people that we work with.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing</p>	<p>Work with partners to agree and implement a plan to redesign care and support for people with long term needs - help people with long-term conditions to gain opportunities for greater independence in the longer term.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm</p>	<p>To have a strong and effective shared approach to adult safeguarding understood and implemented by agencies and practitioners across Bridgend.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society</p>	<p>We have developed a workstream to support adults to develop employability skills.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy, domestic, family and personal relationships</p>	<p>Develop and implement a plan to increase the number and range of effective short-term interventions for people in the community – and thus increase the impact of short term help to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term solutions.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets needs</p>	<p>Work with our colleagues in Housing to develop Housing with Care provision sufficient to meet future need and demand, and reprofile BCBC's accommodation-based services across adult and children's services (both internally and externally)</p>

4. Children and Family Services

Within Children and Family Services our aim is 'Working together to enable better outcomes for children, young people and their families via strong relationships, effective practice and timely and responsive services, which support children and families to live together (wherever possible), work on difficulties and safeguard children from harm'.

In September 2023, Council approved a 3-year strategic plan for children and families in Bridgend. The plan sets out a sustainable future operating model which is based on:

- A realistic assessment of the staffing capacity and associated financial investment required to meet demand to the required standards.
- Lessons learnt from a strong evidence base, experience and best practice elsewhere in terms of the Council-wide service, workforce and financial strategy to best improve outcomes for children and families in a way which reduces the need for statutory intervention.

The evidence based analysis which underpins the 3-year service plan is that a number of things need to change for sustainable improvement including:

- Sufficiency of workforce.
- A changed operating model between prevention (early help) and statutory services which provides an integrated service in which more children and families with complexity of need are supported preventatively where families are motivated and consent to change.
- Continued focus on implementing the Signs of Safety and Wellbeing model of practice.
- Commissioning the right quantum and quality of service.
- Enhanced working in partnership with professionals and partners and co-productively with children and families

Good progress was made in progressing the priorities within the plan in its first 6 months of implementation in 2023/24.

Children and Family Services

2023/24 Key Achievements

To **reduce variability** in the quality of **practice**, Children and Family Services continues to offer 'Back to Basics' training to provide a foundation for strength-based practice within safeguarding. Following the launch of the **Signs of Safety** strength-based model of practice in March 2023, 113 staff attended a 5 day training event and 178 attended the 2 day event. A Signs of Safety Training Strategy for 2024/25 is being finalised.

To ensure that the practice model was supported by a **quality assurance** framework, the Signs of Safety Meaningful Measures workstream compliments the work of the Quality Assurance Officer, who is also part of the workstream. This workstream has been designed to assist leaders to understand what we are doing, how well we are doing it, and the difference it makes for children, young people, their families and carers, so we can better improve service consistency, quality, and impact. The workstream aims to consider:

- the breadth - what elements of the signs of safety approach is being used by practitioners.
- the depth – how aligned is the practice with the fidelity of the framework and
- and the impact - the outcomes the approach is helping workers achieve with families.

These aims will be measured via surveys, good practice examples, quality assurance audits and management information. A Signs of Safety staff survey was sent to teams in September 2023 to establish a baseline for future surveys, 32 responses were received. The aim of the survey was to measure how confident practitioners were in using the practice framework, any worries they had in particular areas and what was working well in relation to the implementation.

To support the continued learning from child practice reviews we have developed dashboards to provide information at a

Children and Family Services

team level to strengthen management oversight and monitoring of services. As new services are developed, dashboards are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to meet needs as new services are developed. We have also worked with regional partners to implement the GOSS system to support the sharing of information with key partners in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub which is making a positive improvement.

During the year we continued to progress the children's social worker **workforce plan**. The directorate has a dedicated Marketing and Communications Officer to drive forward recruitment campaigns over the next two years and there have been several specific workforce related activities. These include the recruitment of 13 experienced international social workers, a review of job descriptions, the introduction of both a market supplement, and a new social worker career progression framework. We have also continued to 'grow our own' social workers of the future. These efforts have meant we have been able to significantly reduce our agency children's social worker numbers.

To ensure **fit for purpose operating models** across the service area, we completed a review of the operational and management arrangements. Following budget confirmation of sustainable investment, a restructure report has been agreed and progressed to implementation. The intention of this model is to reduce demand on statutory services ensuring children and families access the right support from the right service at the right time.

The retention and recruitment of a **permanent workforce** is required to support and deliver fit for purpose operating models and the table below highlights progress made over the last year.

Between March 2023 and April 2024 our agency workforce reduced by 14% with our full-time occupancy increasing by the same rate evidencing our commitment to decreasing reliance on agency staff.

Children and Family Services

Childrens - SW Trend Analysis (including SWA)	13/03/2023	29/06/2023	08/08/2023	05/09/2023	04/10/2023	10/11/2023	01/12/2023	05/01/2024	29/01/2024	23/02/2024	19/04/2024
Establishment	149.99	156.52	148.52	148.52	153.21	155.21	156.21	161.74	162.75	162.75	164.94
Current Occupancy FTE (Excluding agency, includes Sickness and Maternity)	106.31	124.91	115.41	114.91	120.72	123.94	127.94	127.75	127.75	129.75	120.94
Current Occupancy %	71%	80%	78%	77%	79%	80%	82%	79%	78%	80%	73%
Agency FTE	73	77	73	64	68	62	60	55	54	50	44
Workforce including agency FTE	179.31	201.91	188.41	178.91	188.72	185.94	187.94	182.75	181.75	179.75	164.94
% of workforce which is agency	41%	38%	39%	36%	36%	33%	32%	30%	30%	28%	27%

We have developed a **Commissioning Strategy for Children, Young people and Transition Services**. The commissioning strategy covers a 5-year period setting out the commissioning intentions for these services during this time with implementation beginning in early 2024/25 . The commissioning strategy, whilst noting these groups as a priority, include a focus on the provision of accommodation, care and support services for children with disabilities, the accommodation and care and support needs of care experienced children, young people and care leavers.

International Recruitment Case Study for ADSS Anti-racist Wales Report

We initiated our international recruitment project in April of 2022 in response to an increasing level of vacancies and dependency on agency workforce. We welcomed the first two members of our cohort in March 2023 and as of March 2024 we have 10 internationally recruited Social Workers in post and three further eagerly undergoing pre-employment processes. Our offer includes sponsorship, visas for dependants, relocation allowance, and pastoral support, whilst we ask for a minimum of 3 years post qualifying experience in statutory child protection settings through a rigorous and extended selection process. Our appointed social workers have originated from Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the United States of America. Some have chosen to relocate alone, and others with their families.

Our appointments have had a highly positive impact on our vacancy levels as well as increasing diversity, bringing additional experience and perspectives which have been well received and, in many cases, have been an asset to our teams and the children and families of Bridgend. All have settled well into their respective

Children and Family Services

teams, successfully completed their probation periods where applicable, and undertaken a programme of training to assimilate their practice to the Welsh context. We expect our international social workers will achieve holding full caseloads (equivalent to other members of their respective teams) between 6 months to 1 year of being in post, evidenced by those who have already been with us for this period. An independent survey conducted in January 2024, when 8 of our social workers were in post, concluded that *“none of the Social Workers spoken to described having experienced direct discrimination or racism since moving to Wales and most of them spoke specifically about feeling welcomed into their local communities and the Local Authority”*.

Due to this being the first project of this kind for the teams involved, there was initial difficulty understanding the varying levels of capability, learning, and experience each appointee brought. For example, team managers needed to adjust for each individual, the level of support available, the expectation put on each new starter, and the pace of their learning and progression. Similarly, each individual presented varying pastoral needs and queries. Whilst dealing with these differences presented challenges and impacted capacity for team managers and other members of the project workforce, they proved to be learning experiences for all which helped improve the experience for future new practitioners. A quote from one of our team managers on their experience, *“Whilst the first few weeks were very stressful, from my point of view, this process have been a success”*. Our first two practitioners *“are very settled in the team. They are key team members who are well thought of. Both are holding complex cases and whilst they still have things to learn this is no different to any social worker in the team”*.

Social Care Workforce Officer

Promoting and Improving the Wellbeing of those we help

Children and Family Services

Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

To strengthen engagement and involvement, a young people's forum has been established run by Tros Gynnal Plant. The forum meets on a regular basis to ensure care experienced children and young people have an opportunity to have their voices heard, express their wishes and feelings on matters important to them and be involved in shaping service delivery.

The Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer facilitated an **action planning engagement** event in June 2023 and involved a range of professionals from a number of organisations.

To understand the **experience** of the families who work with children's social care the Principal Officer, Social Work Transformation and the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer have worked with the Early Help service to ascertain how the **views of parents** can be sought within our existing mechanisms and networks.

The Signs of Safety, Meaningful Measures Workstream has developed **surveys for families and partner agencies** which focus on the parent and partner agency experience of working with a social worker or attending meetings such as Core Groups or Child Protection Conferences. The surveys do not request any personal information, with questions capturing the extent to which the principles and disciplines of Signs of Safety are reflected in practice. One of our Team Manager's completed an engagement exercise with 10 families to understand their **experience** of online Child Protection Conferences. Themes identified in the **engagement** process noted some parents found online meetings less intimidating, whilst others reported they did not feel as included and that professionals were not paying attention. However, all parents noted they felt listened too with most also noting they felt an equal participant. Our Independent Reviewing Team are currently developing a parent survey in relation to face to face meetings, which will be rolled out in the Autumn.

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Care Experienced Youth Forum Mural

During the Autumn 2024, our Care Experienced Youth Forum took part in workshops as part of a national campaign, in partnership with Foster Wales, to dispel misconceptions about young people in care. Out of this piece of work, and with the aid of the former Welsh Children's Poet Laureate a mural has been produced in Brackla, Bridgend.



At the end of June 2024, the campaign won 2 awards:

- A Low Budget Campaign Award at the PRCA DARE Awards Cymru, honouring outstanding PR and communications; and
- Gold in the low-budget category of the CIPR Excellence Awards in London (a UK-wide PR awards ceremony). These are our voices campaign was up against several national and international company campaigns.

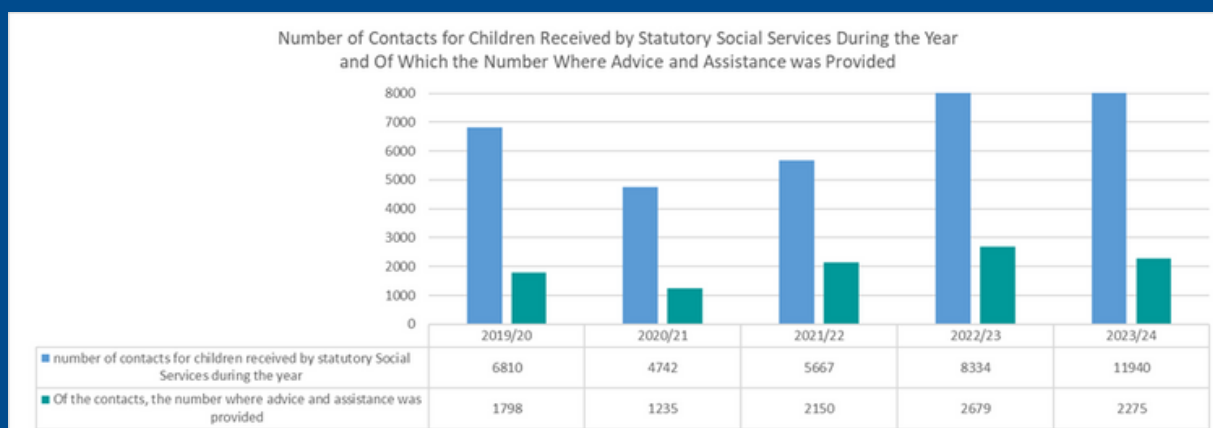


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Reflecting on the campaign, judges said they were: "Impressed by how this campaign was grounded in the real experiences of young people in care which led to an emotional insight the campaign was built around, based on a shared experience of this group".

Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

We reviewed **preventative** early help and **family support services**. The edge of care and early help screening team joined our new children and families division on 1st April 2024 to work towards a single front door for children and families in Bridgend.



Based on priority areas as defined by the Population Needs Assessment and market stability reports, a **commissioning strategy for family support services is being developed**.

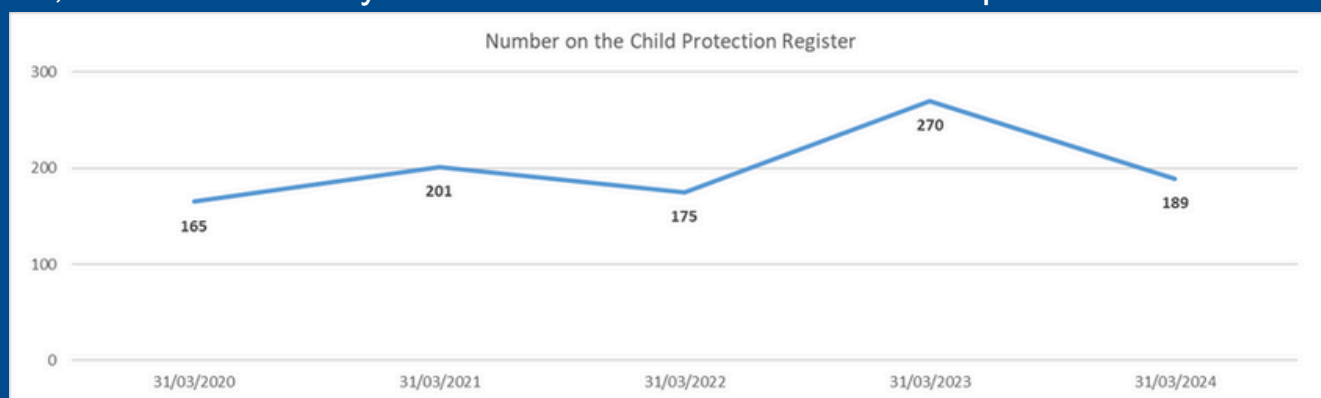
We **reviewed** existing **partnerships** to ensure the most effective set of arrangements for **joint** and **integrated working**. The Bridgend Joint Operational Group of safeguarding partners continues to meet monthly to review working practices between partner agencies. This has been identified as good practice within recent inspections and provides a forum for discussion on best practice related to safeguarding between partner agencies. Looking ahead to 2024/25, work has already commenced on the development of multi-agency

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threshold guidance which will assist professionals in identifying where support for children and families is best placed to refer appropriately to these services.

Quality Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

We continue to ensure **learning** from **child practice reviews** and other in-depth analysis is systematically embedded. Key activities have included the publication of 7-minute briefings and targeted workshops. Child practice reviews are referenced in core safeguarding training and Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board held workshops during Safeguarding Week. To ensure learning ties in with our **quality assurance** processes the Group Manager, Safeguarding and the Quality Assurance Officer are members of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board, Children's Quality Assurance and Performance Group.



The table below outlines key stages of the child protection process and evidences the improvements made based on our learning and strengthened processes. Whilst contacts increased by 43% during the year, the number of children on the child protection registered as at 31st March decreased by 30%.

Metric Description	2022/23	2023/24
The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services	8334	11940
The total number of Initial Strategy Meetings concluded during the year	2154	2274
The total number of Strategy Discussions held during the year that progressed to Section 47 Enquiries	1557	1655
The total number of Section 47 Enquiries completed during the year that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference	406	376
Number of Child Protection Registrations	379	328
Number of Child Protection De-Registrations	284	409

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Due to strengthened screening arrangements within our Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub, the proportion of contacts progressing to of initial strategy decreased from 26% in 2022/23 to 19% in 2023/24. This **improvement** can also be attributed to the implementation of Signs of Safety at the point of screening as well as strengthening our **early help offer**, and improved signposting of contacts.

The impact of the implementation of the Signs of Safety practice model and the focus on strengths based assessments has also decreased the proportion of strategy discussions, section 47 enquiries and initial child protection conferences. By focussing on **family strengths** we were able to clearly **evidence risk reduction** which in conjunction with consistent and strengthened workforce arrangements and greater **management oversight** within the locality safeguarding hubs has enabled children to be removed from the child protection register in a safe and timely manner. The implementation of our supervision policy along with the quality assurance framework provides a mechanism to ensure learning continues to be implemented and reviewed.

We established a local multi-agency exploitation panel which meets on a monthly basis. The panel is made up of members from 15 key agencies, who, discuss on average, between 10 and 15 cases per panel. The regional approach is currently being agreed, and a pan Wales exploitation exchange and best practice forum is being developed to further support the work around exploitation. During 2023/24 we received 118 reports, where exploitation was a factor, in respect of 80 children or young people.

To ensure the recommendations from the **Public Law Outline (PLO)** working group reforms are **embedded** in our operating models, training has been delivered and cascaded to relevant parts of the organisation with its guidance and principles now being followed in the operating models. Work has also been completed to ensure consistency across the Local Family Justice Board region. We have developed a system to monitor the impact of the PLO with Team Manager's and legal colleagues reporting a reduction in cases. In June 2023

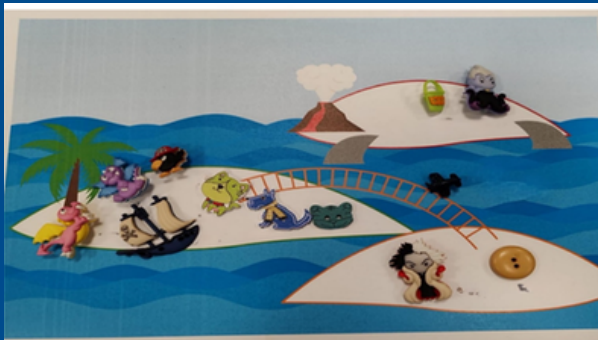
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there were approximately 10-15 legal gateway meetings per week which indicated that children were escalating through the system and into the PLO process. Currently there are approximately 3 legal gateway meetings per week. We believe this is due the implementation of a case consultation process which has allowed us to slow down our thinking and have an opportunity to reflect on the safety plans for the family. This approach has led to a reduction in applications to court for all orders.

Signs of Safety: A Case Study

Within the IAA team, practitioners are using Signs of Safety mapping within their assessments to help identify the worries, strengths and safety goals.

It is essential that views, wishes and feelings of children and young people are gathered. Below is an anonymised example of the creative way workers in IAA are communicating with children and find out who is important in their life.



when we discussed how the children were feeling about the situation. Most importantly the children enjoyed this task, it was an engaging piece of work, particularly when trying to relationship build and it ensured the child's wishes and feelings were clearly heard within the assessment.'

The practitioner who completed this piece of direct work commented – 'The direct work I completed with the children provided me with a clear understanding of who and what mattered to the children. I also took this piece of work out and shared it with the family so they had a visual representation for

Family Safety Circles
By Susie Essex



As Signs of Safety is the Practice Framework which is strengths based, solution focussed and safety orientated and using the principle of every family has strength, it promotes a relationship based

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approach with children, young people, their parents or carers ensuring 'nothing about you, without you'. Working on the principle that families are the experts in their lives, it is essential that Family Meetings are held as soon as possible. Practitioners are the Facilitators not the Fixers, therefore family are encouraged to involve their wider network in developing the family support plan through a family network meeting.

When the assessment confirms that there are worries about a child, a family network meeting must be arranged at the earliest point and is attended by the people who are naturally connected to the child and their family. Using family finding tools and family meetings practitioners begin supporting the family to develop their own safety plan.

The Practitioner commented that the family meeting ' was an excellent tool, it enabled the family to take ownership of the worries and to plan what they will do if there any bumps in the road. With a network meeting everyone was aware of the worries and what the plan was, and it also meant the full responsibility would not end with me.

Family time needed to be supervised for the children and this plan enabled the family to do this in a natural way as and when it suited everyone without asking me questions about what they could and couldn't do, it put the family in control. As a result, I felt confident that everyone was aware of the worries and how to manage them and the family could move the plan forward with support from the social worker in the locality team.'

Once cases transfer from IAA to safeguarding teams, for some more in depth support, Practitioners continue to use the Signs of Safety Mapping within Core Group where scaling allows the family to chart the progress they are making. A Health Visitor attending the core group commented – 'It was refreshing having the family lead the exercise...This approach highlights the families are the ones who can complete the changes for their own safety

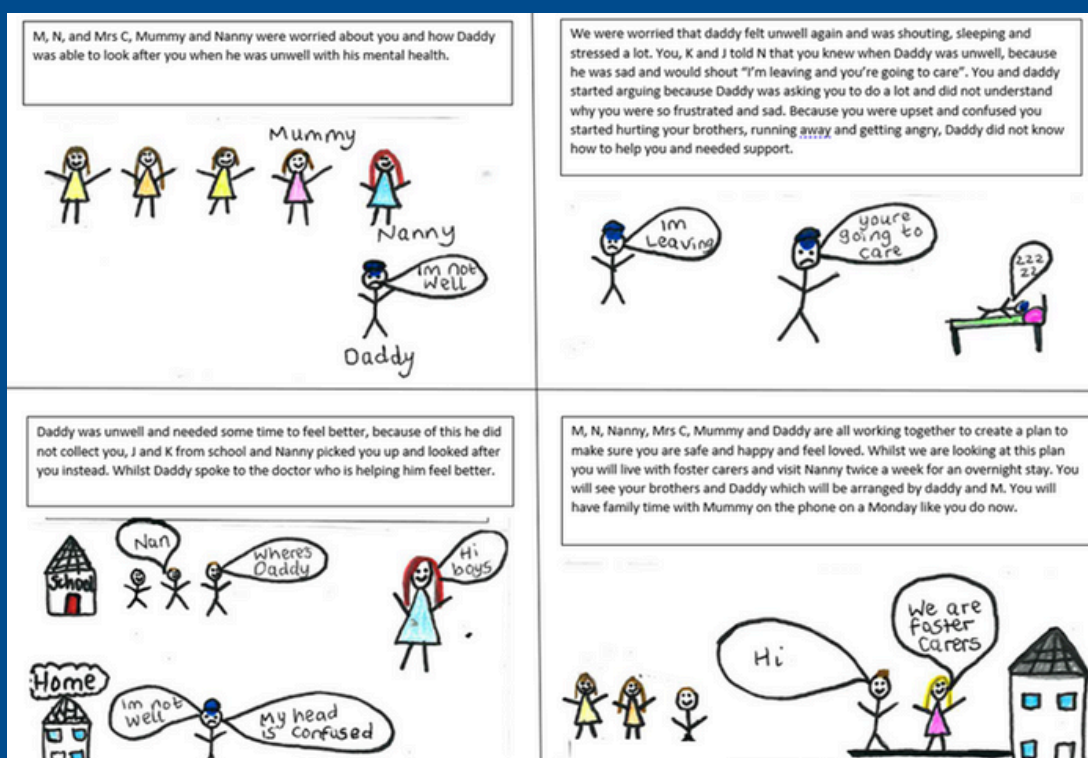
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and reduce the danger.’ A Health Visitor attending the core group commented – ‘It was refreshing having the family lead the exercise... This approach highlights the families are the ones who can complete the changes for their own safety and reduce the danger.’

Words and Pictures is another new tool offered by Signs of Safety. Words and Pictures is a tool used to explain to Children and Young People what is happening and the worries from the assessment. Using stick people drawings, Practitioners must draft Words and Pictures and share them with the family to agree a final draft.

Parents will then share this with their children with the support of the Social Worker, as it is important the children hear from their parents as to why Children’s Social Care are involved.

Below is an example of an anonymised words and pictures that was shared with a child to explain why they needed to stay with a foster carer while their father was unwell due to mental health.

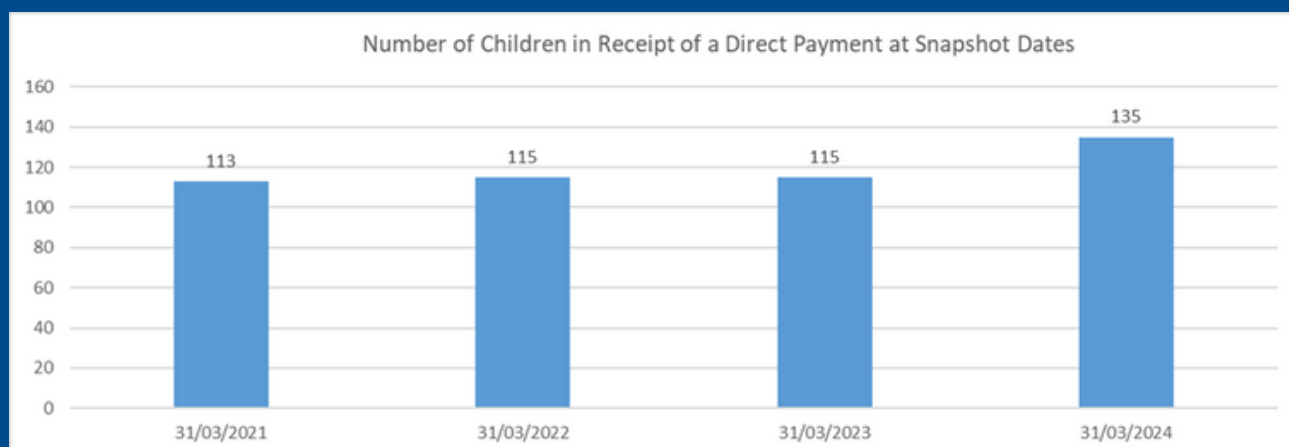


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The Practitioner from the safeguarding team commented on how the words and pictures helped the family – ‘Using a signs of safety approach exploring words and pictures with the family and mapping helped us keep things simple and broke down the barriers of communication with the family. Parents were able to understand our worries and see what the risks were for their family. Parents worked with us to create words and pictures to explain the situation and safety plan to the children in a child friendly way using words they would understand. Parents felt empowered and supported by this piece of work and were able to share it with the children. The children went from confused and upset to understanding what was happening for them, the reasons why this was happening and had less questions about it. Whilst working in this way with families they have shared “we feel listened too and wish this could have been used with us sooner, it has made a difference and is easy to understand and know what is expected of us”.’

Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

The directorate’s **Direct Payment Policy** has been **implemented** and provides a new more flexible approach. The project group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis to develop and implement operational guidance, which will be concluded over the next year.



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A celebration event was held in September 2023 for young people's achievements in education, training and employment. This was supported by the Leader, Deputy Leader, the Deputy Minister for Social Services and a range of Welsh Government Officials. An achievement awards event is planned Autumn 2024 for all care experienced children, young people and care leavers. Below are some photographs from the event.



Using Shared Prosperity Funding, we have **appointed a Multiply Engagement and Skills Project Officer** to support young people aged 19 and over to **develop** their **numeracy** skills.

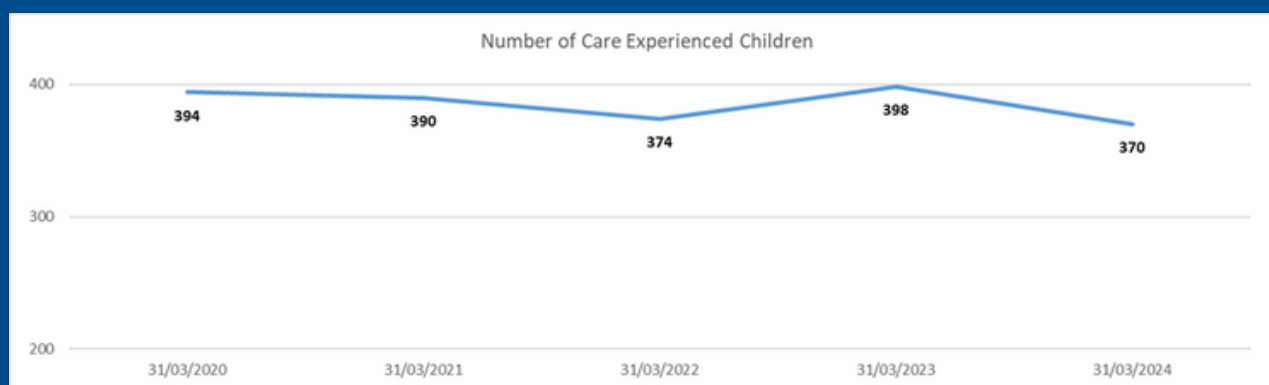
To further **improve outcomes** for care experienced children and young people key partner agencies are represented on the Corporate Parenting Board. These outcomes include, improving personal education plans to align with individual development plans, improving school attendance and reducing the number of care experienced children and young people with a reduced timetable.

Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy, domestic, family and personal relationships

Our **care experienced children reduction strategy** was implemented in April 2023 and has been supported throughout the year by a number of focussed activities. These activities

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along with a number of targets support the framework for the safe reduction of care experienced children with their progress being monitored by the Social Services Improvement Board. The effectiveness of the strategy continues to be monitored over the next year.



Following a successful application for grant funding, we have commenced the implementation of the placement support service, to ensure the right multi-agency therapeutic input for children, young people and their carers. Whilst we were unable to commission an organisation to support us in providing this support the grant funding has enabled us to develop an in-house service and a board has been established to oversee its development.

Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets needs

The **children's assessment hub** 'Meadow's View / Golygfa'r Dolyddl' has been **completed** and provision commenced. The provision has enabled children and young people previously placed in external residential care to return to this in-house service enabling us to become less resilient on external services.

We continue to work with **Foster Wales** and now have a dedicated **Recruitment Officer** in place with a number of recruitment activities taking place throughout the year. In

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January 2024, a national campaign to increase the number of foster carers was launched, supported by public relations, television, radio, digital and physical activation. This was further supported in Bridgend town centre with the mural and 3 to 4 pop-up events per month across the borough to enable members of the public to access meet and greet sessions.

Despite efforts there are continued challenges recruiting and retaining carers to meet our sufficiency needs. Within Bridgend we have an aging carer population and most carers who have ceased fostering over the past year have done so owing to age or health related issues, followed by family commitments. We have not lost any fostering households to the independent fostering sector in the past year which is positive and there are some households who have ceased fostering in order to provide a permanent home to children they were looking after by obtaining a Special Guardianship Order. National challenges related to costs of living and research tells us that the average person takes 7 years to decide to foster before making an application. We are reviewing the offer to foster carers to promote additional recruitment and retention. We are seeking to embed the Foster Carers Charter within the local authority, enhance our learning and development of foster carers and continue to work with local partners to increase the number of businesses operating foster friendly policies.

To ensure there is sufficient provision for children and young people with complex needs, the RPB regional children's board have agreed an ambition to develop a regional residential accommodation facility for children and young people with complex emotional wellbeing needs. To support this, three project managers are being sought to work with partners to develop facilities across the Cwm Taf region; one will focus on children's residential accommodation, and the other two will be available to support the findings in the 10-year Regional Capital Strategy.

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Case Study: Meadows View Approach

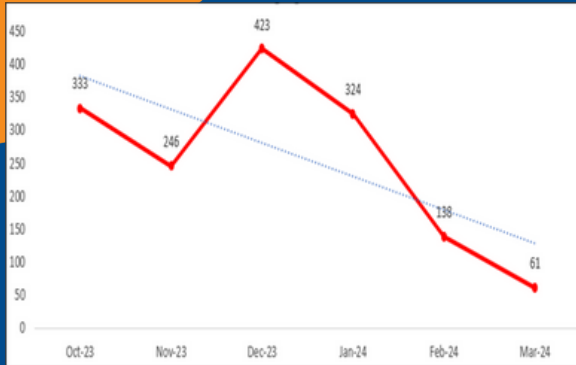
Meadows View opened in September 2023 and consists of an emergency and assessment unit. The assessment unit provides a safe and therapeutic home for up to four children and young people. Meadows View adopts a Trauma Informed approach that is underpinned by behavioural science and attachment theory. When children move to Meadows View the first six weeks is used to assess their therapeutic and care needs. A detailed report is produced which outlines a plan for caring for the child whilst they live at Meadows View; this includes recommendations about what therapy is needed, what parenting style would meet their needs, and what skills they would benefit from developing that will support them in the future. All staff are trained in a model of Trauma Informed parenting and provide a level of compassionate and therapeutic care.

X's Story so far...

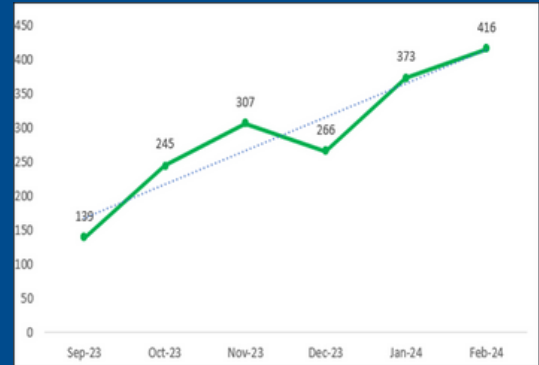
X has been known to Social Services for a number of years. Prior to moving to Meadows View they several placement breakdowns with carers reporting difficulties with managing behaviour. X has experienced several Adverse Childhood Experience's (ACE's). Since moving to Meadows View in September the team have been working with X on building their emotional understanding, learning to communicate their wants and needs, forming trusting relationships with adults, and therapy to help them explore and process their trauma. X has made great progress in all areas.



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This graph depicts behaviours that are deemed as **challenging** per month displayed by X. A steep downward trend can be seen since arriving at Meadows View.



This graph depicts behaviours that are deemed as **positive** per month displayed by X. An upward trend can be seen since arriving at Meadows View.

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<p>Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.</p>	<p>Develop a parent's participation charter so the experience of the families who work with children's social care is understood and used enhanced practices and interventions</p>
<p>Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing</p>	<p>Develop an updated commissioning strategy for family support services ensuring children and families access the right support from the right service at the right time.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm</p>	<p>Agree and implement a single Programme of shared priorities with partners for children in the County Borough.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society</p>	<p>Establish arrangements to ensure that senior health, education, housing, NHS and partners work with children's social care services strategically and operationally.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy, domestic, family and personal relationships</p>	<p>Working with key colleagues within BCBC, commission services and help shape the market in response to the findings of the early help commissioning strategy that is being developed.</p>
<p>Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets needs</p>	<p>Work with regional partners in Cwm Taf Morgannwg to ensure there is sufficient quantity and quality of flexible provision for children whose needs cannot be met in standards residential or fostering provision.</p>

5. Prevention and Wellbeing

During 2023/24, the Prevention and Wellbeing Service saw a growth in the range of programmes being developed to support both children and adults not only in community settings but in new and innovative ways.

The successful **Feel Good For Life programme** that supports people living with dementia or a cognitive impairment was offered in additional locations and has an online activity helping to attract more participants with referrals from social care and third sector partners. The **carers wellbeing programme** was further developed in partnership with Halo, to provide unpaid carers with the skills and knowledge to manage their wellbeing. We launched the **Carers Wellbeing Support Service** to provide advice and assistance and connect unpaid carers to community based support. This service was co-designed with unpaid carers and a new **partnership** to deliver the service was established with TuVida.



To support more people with reduced needs for more formal services across the borough the service expanded the number of **local community co-ordinators** to 6 working in **partnership** with BAVO's team of 5 community navigators. This has resulted in more people being provided with the information they need and

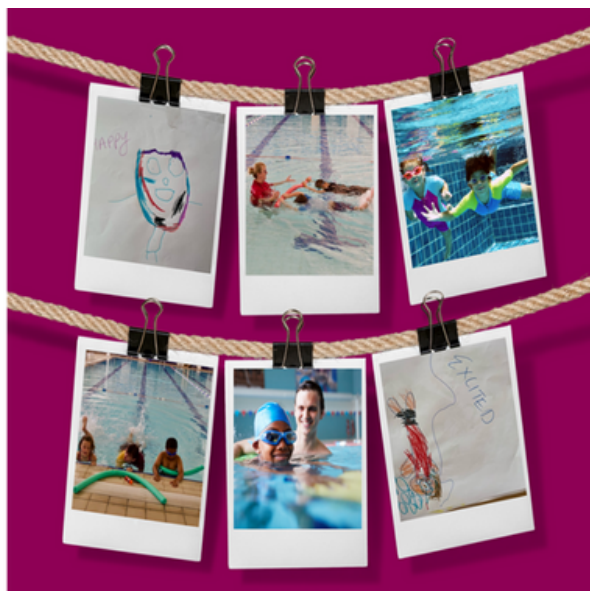
Prevention and Wellbeing

connected to their communities. By the end of the year, 237 people were being supported by a local community co-ordinator and through the BAVO partnership over 200 community opportunities were identified to connect people to alternatives to services.

The Prevention and Wellbeing Service has led the **Age Friendly** Communities plan that will help to create more cohesive communities and promote inter-generational opportunities. With Welsh Government support there has been a review of the population in regards to the 8 domains of the World Health Organisations framework that includes transport, housing, environment and buildings, civic participation, community support and health services, social participation, respect and social inclusion, communication and information. The findings will support community **engagement** and development of an action plan for stakeholders and **communities**.

The **young carers network** and take up of the young carers ID card has continued to grow with 380 young carers cards and 347 leisure memberships supported. There are 13 **young carer ambassadors** and 154 young carers attended “We are Valued” events. A new preventative referrals programme has been jointly developed with social care teams to help support wellbeing for young people. There have been 84 referrals supported including 31 from the Edge of Care team and 41 from the Disabled Children and Transition Team.

Autism-
Friendly
Swim
Lessons
@
Halo
Leisure



Prevention and Wellbeing

In leisure and cultural services, usage by the public continues to grow, particularly in targeting support to the more vulnerable. Programmes such as the **National Exercise Referral Scheme** are supporting high demand and include support for people living with chronic conditions. There are specific pathways supporting stroke, joint care, pulmonary rehabilitation, cancer, postural stability and more. The autism friendly swimming programme that has been developed with families and stakeholders won two National Swim Wales awards for inclusion and community impact. From a pilot programme of 20 participants in 2018 there are now 221 parents/carers that have registered interest. The scheme has been assessed as delivering £3.33 of social return on investment for every pound invested.

2023/24 Key Achievements

During the year, the Prevention and Wellbeing service **implemented a leisure strategy and option appraisal of contract**. The service engaged a development partner to help progress the next Active Bridgend plan with the commencement of fieldwork, including visits to relevant facilities and connecting with key stakeholders. This exercise will continue during 2024 focussing on leisure centres, pools and how we use the outdoor environment, playing fields, active travel, community use of school facilities and asset transfer. The need for a One Council approach to wellbeing outcomes had been identified in a previous Wales Audit Office review.

To support the roll out of **local community co-ordination across the borough** the service recruited 3 additional posts. The new posts are based in the south of the borough, and have focused on building connections within their communities and with partners who can support referral processes. There is continued partnership working with BAVO and the community navigator roles to align people with those services that can best support their level of need.

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There has been **continued work with the long term partners**, Halo Leisure and Awen, on preventative activities and opportunities **to continue to focus and support the most vulnerable**. The service has also worked with BAVO, the Alzheimer's Society, Cwmpas and Cruse to support local people. Shared Prosperity fund investment has enabled further work to be undertaken to support vulnerable young people in community settings by connecting them to community groups. This has included young carers, care experienced young people and children with disabilities or additional needs.

We have **worked with corporate colleagues to understand options to address energy financial risks**. Work has progressed to understand more cost effective ways of funding energy through longer term contracted partnerships and further advice is being sought on any legal considerations. There have been a range of investments to support reduction in energy usage including LED lighting, building energy management systems, improved heating systems and insulation. Further work is progressing on opportunities for further investment into energy efficiency measures.

Promoting and Improving the Wellbeing of those we help

Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

We **continue to work with people living with dementia or cognitive impairment and carers to co-design services and opportunities** and held a number of sessions to identify the range of community based support available. Opportunities to support wellbeing are being delivered in line with the national dementia standards with support in place for the provision of information, advice and assistance as well as bespoke support and other opportunities to integrate into more universal activities. By working with Cwmpas a new social innovation approach was implemented to work with unpaid carers in

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in regard to short breaks to maintain resilience and review how information and advice is being made available.

Investment to increase the knowledge and skills of co-production amongst our workforce and teams with key staff attending a range of training events and then supported with opportunities to apply this learning in the delivery of support programmes. This practical approach is highly valued and effective, enabling the service to utilise co-production to shape and design community led networks, activities and opportunities. The Prevention and Wellbeing team and third sector network groups and partnerships will further adopt this approach in regards to support for older adults, people with disabilities, unpaid carers, people with autism spectrum disorder and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.

The design of the new **Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service** has strengthened **engagement with unpaid carers to connect them to community based support**. The service responded to the views of unpaid carers and has seen high levels of demand with many being able to access the information they need within the community and via the third sector. The volumes of people requesting further support, including full carers assessments, has been relatively small. The overall picture as to how and where unpaid carers are getting their support needs met is being tracked within quarterly performance reviews.

Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

To identify how direct payment based approaches can support people to have more voice and control in regard to their wellbeing, the directorate has developed a new more flexible approach. We have reviewed and updated our policy to enable people to use their direct payments more broadly to maintain their individual wellbeing. As this is in the early stage of implementation, opportunities to use such an approach more

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creatively will be reviewed as this work progresses. The Connecting Carers programme in partnership with Cwmpas has been identifying how more collaborative approaches involving the pooling of resources could be further progressed. This has included connecting with unpaid carers based on their lived experience as part of a social innovation approach. The partnership with TuVida has also seen local unpaid carers benefit from 127 grants to support carer wellbeing via short breaks investments.

To **rebuild and expand capacity to support people to live well in their communities**, support for community navigator roles has continued **with over 200 community anchor organisations and partners** supporting the diverse needs that were presented. There has been specific investment in developing volunteer skills to sustain the third sector and also supporting community groups to tackle loneliness and isolation through new approaches. Links between partner organisations and the directorate's Common Access Point supported triage to meet people's needs in community settings.

Young Adult Group Achieve Success!!!

As part of our Young Adult group sessions based within the Prevention and Wellbeing services, we consulted with our Young Adult group to discuss opportunities individuals would like to participate in.

Our young adults expressed interest in training and opportunities to enhance their progress with life skills, Independence and possible future employment or studies.

Working In partnership with Maxine Barratt, Engagement and Marketing Team Co Ordinator within Employability, five disabled young adults undertook their QA Award in food safety level 1 with support from members of our staff team, with training provided by CCE Training Services.

Clare Caddy Edwards, who facilitated the training stated, "I'm

Prevention and Wellbeing



so glad they all enjoyed themselves whilst learning new skills, you were all a joy to train.”

We undertook the training at an evening session and learned new skills as well as being able to participate and contribute to the session with some very interesting observations and feedback!

The group worked hard and focused on topics which they had not considered previously such as correct procedures for food preparation, recognising hazards within the kitchen environment, awareness of allergies etc.

Congratulations to all in passing their QA Award in Food Safety Level 1.

We are now looking to the future and other training which will provide our young adults with the opportunity to learn, participate and achieve in their chosen courses.

Well done all!!!!

Wellbeing Manager Play and Family Support. Prevention and Wellbeing

Over the year we have continued to build on our partnerships with third sector organisations to **increase our engagement in regard to people with diverse needs to shape and develop community based opportunities**. Our continued partnership with Bavo has further developed networks to support carer wellbeing, mental health, food security, children and families and health, social care and wellbeing. We also worked in partnership with

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Bridgend Inclusive Network Group (BING) to support children and young people with disabilities and their households to have more voice and choice in the opportunities that matter to them.

The young carers network has been led by young adult carers with lived experience who help design opportunities for and with others and provide peer support.



Quality Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

We reviewed key population information including significant findings from the population needs assessment to help **progress** a baseline assessment in line with the 8 domains of the WHO **Age Friendly Communities Framework**. In line with a **one council collaborative approach** BCBC produced its own Age Friendly Communities survey for residents. A draft action plan on areas of focus will be created and this will support engagement with stakeholders in 2024-25. There has been **positive work continuing with the older persons forum** and a range of community programmes developed.

In line with the new **National Dementia standards** an **approach to supporting people living with dementia or cognitive impairment has been developed** including a stronger interface with social work practice and the needs of adult social care. A newly specified service has been developed, supported by RIF funding and includes community opportunities. This will see the

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partnership working with the Alzheimer's Society continue to grow.

To develop the next stage of the Connecting Carers programme Cwmpas have engaged with stakeholders on the key challenges being faced and have identified IAA and carer resilience via short breaks as areas for attention. A new social innovation approach including unpaid carers and a broader range of stakeholders who can support **innovative practice has commenced** with a network group in place. A 12 month programme is in place for 2024/25 that will test new approaches.

Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

There has been **growth** in the **collaborative links between social work practice and more community based support opportunities to meet the needs of vulnerable people** in different ways. The benefits of joint working across sectors has become more visible, with some people seeing some or all of their needs being met outside more formal services. There are specific examples linked to dementia and cognitive impairment, physical and mental wellbeing improvements, support for carers and households with children and young people with additional needs, This work has continued to develop partnership approaches with the third sector.

The **Bridgend Community Transport** programme continues to offer the Town Rider scheme that **supports day opportunities and broader social activity engagement**. The service supports access to partner led activities such as Feel Good for Life and local community co-ordinator initiatives also. Transport is however still identified as a significant barrier to engagement. **Work has commenced on identifying opportunities for integrated health and social care community hubs** with a regional review commissioned by RPB. The use of **digital approaches** has continued in the Feel Good for Life programme, developing skills and confidence amongst carers and including equipment loans.

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Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy, domestic, family and personal relationships

1249 unpaid carers have been supported by the carers wellbeing service and are being provided with relevant information and advice with proportionate assessments being conducted in the community. Only 70 unpaid carers have sought referral for full carer assessment and 3571 instances of additional signposted to broader support available in the community. The **collaborative working between community support and social care services continues to develop to understand and develop** appropriate pathways for carers.

Joint working between children and family services, and the healthy living service area has seen a new “step up step down ” approach created where teams can refer individuals or families to a range of wellbeing support opportunities. Individuals or families are assessed via a tiered approach which correlates to the level of support/intervention they require. The approach involves utilising activities geared towards improving wellbeing, with the aim of **transitioning individuals and families onto a Community Pathway**. Work continues to develop with local groups, community, and 3rd sector organisations to build capacity to provide for our most vulnerable, ensuring the breadth of inclusive needs are considered when designing a programme, activity or session – i.e., trauma informed and disability confident.

The evidence is suggesting this is well received and supporting many personal improvements that are creating benefits in other aspects of daily life also.

84 PREVENTATIVE REFERRALS



- 41 Child Disability & Transition Team
- 31 Edge of Care Team
- 6 Care Experienced Team (1 of which in residential)
- 6 Locality Hubs (4 North, 1 East, 1 West)

160 number of individuals supported

64 number of families supported

6 Community partnerships developed

Prevention and Wellbeing

I just wanted to let you know that X's mum Y was so positive about your Discovery Days for X and could not compliment your personally enough. Thank you for your support with this family, it's made a really positive impact.

The Discovery Days service has continued to support children and young people with more complex needs to have social connections and develop life skills and a young adults transition programme has been created also.

Staff represent Bridgend in the regional “foundations and participation” partnership network and the Bridgend network meetings. A range of programmes have been developed and supported for partners to deliver across Bridgend to support families wellbeing and resilience. Pop up Pods activity sessions (holiday times).

SUPPORTING FAMILY WELLBEING & RESILIENCE



- Active Baby at Home 6 week courses
- Prenatal nutrition 6 week course
- Aqua natal sessions run by midwives and halo staff
- Pre and post-natal qualification (10 settings delivering mum and baby sessions)
- Early Years FAZ Bags

Training, mentoring and support have been offered to partners with, Early Years Wales – Active Baby, Active toddler and Active child courses and also pre and post-natal and aqua natal yoga qualifications.

Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets needs

The service has successfully **secured Shared Prosperity** investment that has been used to **co-produce opportunities**

Prevention and Wellbeing

amongst our more vulnerable young people and to invest into community network development. These networks are being led by people with lived experience who can co-design support that meets their needs. Examples include young carers, people living with disabilities, people living with dementia and people with chronic conditions. There is also a growth in partnership working with the Older Persons Forum.



We have **developed** a number of **programmes** aimed at **supporting young people to develop their leadership, life and employability skills** alongside giving them opportunities and experiences in a safe environment.

A new leadership plus programme has been developed to support more vulnerable young people and this is being developed in partnership with local schools. A further programme Ascent is supporting people to build skills and confidence beyond school settings and also being piloted in the community. The mainstream leadership pathway is active in every secondary school with two strands to the pathway – Sport and Physical Activity and now includes Wellbeing leaders. A new young leadership programme has been developed in partnership with Youth Sport Trust and will be piloted with primary schools.

Prevention and Wellbeing

The ambassador programme continues to be successful with Sport and Physical activity Ambassadors and now also wellbeing ambassadors.

The Stepping Stone programme is being delivered to young people 16 plus who are not in education, training or employment. A referral network has been developed with internal and external partners to support the referral process onto the programme.

Prevention and Wellbeing

Key Service Priorities for 2024/25

Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co- produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.	Local community co-ordinators to work at the edge of care and support people to reduce their needs for more formal services.
Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing	Link with our healthy living and cultural partnerships to increase usage and support by more vulnerable people and groups.
Quality Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm	Work with the third sector and in line with safeguarding considerations of the BCBC volunteering policy to grow community based support.
Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society	Continue to develop and support community led networks where people with lived experience can shape the support they need most.
Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy, domestic, family and personal relationships	Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service to support unpaid carers to get the support that they need in community settings.
Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets needs	Continue to work in partnership with BAVO and the third sector to connect people to community opportunities and support.

6. How we work

Workforce

Our workforce are our most valued resource and as highlighted throughout this report the recruitment and retention of the social work and social care workforce continues to have the highest priority in adults and children's social care.

Key Achievements in 2023/24

Good progress is being made in children's social work recruitment with a reduction in agency workers improved retention, successful recruitment including 10 international recruits and some agency workers applying for permanent roles.

As indicated below our **overall** directorate **headcount increased** by approximately 5%. The greatest increase was within children and family services which increased by approximately 19% with the additional recruitment of 45 staff, partially due to improved recruitment of permanent staff and reduction in agency staff. Adult Social Care remained stable with a small decrease 5 staff members.

Service Area	31st March 2023		31st March 2024	
	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount
Adult Social Care	602.09	783	604.64	778
Children's Social Care	189.82	244	245.06	289
Business Support	61.31	64	67.12	71
Prevention & Wellbeing	20.70	28	28.21	33
DIRECTORATE TOTAL	873.92	1119	945.03	1171

As noted below, there has been a significant **improvement in sickness absence** and the impact of focussing on wellbeing and support is evident in the table below with sickness absence decreasing by 34.4%.

How we work

Unit	FTE 31.03.23	QTR4 2022/23			QTR4 2023/24			Cumulative Days per FTE 2022/23	Cumulative Days per FTE 2023/24
		Number of FTE days lost	No. of Absences	Days per FTE	Number of FTE days lost	No. of Absences	Days per FTE		
Adult Social Care	605.66	3207.95	406	5.32	3009.40	357	4.97	23.06	17.00
Business Support - SS&W	67.12	169.51	17	2.76	227.32	16	3.39	9.40	12.15
Children's Social Care	245.06	1162.40	76	6.12	749.70	75	3.06	25.51	10.27
Prevention and Wellbeing	28.21	60.35	2	2.85	24.27	5	0.86	3.41	1.50
Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate Total	946.05	4600.21	501	5.25	4010.69	453	4.24	22.23	14.59

We understand the importance of training and staff development and its impact on the **retention and wellbeing** of our workforce as it builds support, teamwork, trust and respect not only to empower staff but make them feel valued. Throughout 2023/24 a number of training, learning and support events, activities and actions have taken place.

To **increase opportunities for students** at school and further education establishments **to access work experience placements** within social care, students on health and social care courses at the local college have been offered work placements and casual employment opportunities to support their academic studies. We have recruited an **additional workforce development officer to support and assess** the competence of our hosted student social workers

To continue to **support the Social Services Practitioner programme** and work with the **Local Authority Consortium, City and Guilds/WJEC and Further Education Colleges**, 8 social services practitioners are undertaking the SSP (Social Services Practitioner) Qualification, with 3 due to qualify later in 2024. The qualification will be accepted by the Open University Wales as accreditation towards the first year of the Social Work Degree. Bridgend intends to second staff onto the degree programme for entry in the 24/25 academic year.

The Local Authority **continued to work** alongside partner **Higher Education Establishments (HEI's)** on the development of social work degree part-time routes at both undergraduate and post-graduate level.

How we work

In addition to the three social work trainees who have progressed through to the second year of the BSc Social Work at Cardiff Metropolitan University, we have **extended the social work trainee programme** to include the **Master of Social Work degree**, with 5 trainees commencing the programme in the 23/24 academic year.

Other Key Highlights:

Further actions completed to strengthen and develop our workforce are noted below.

- Six staff who work within Adult Social Care direct care services have become WeCare Wales social care Ambassadors. They attend schools, colleges, careers and jobs fairs to help raise the profile of social care.
- The directorate has co-produced, with the Institute of Public Care (IPC), a bespoke management and leadership development program to support managers to develop their skills in leading teams and services. 115 colleagues attended workshops, with positive feedback received '[The session was] informative, encouraging, reflective and a safe space to talk to others in similar positions'.
- Managers have an opportunity to undertake a Management Qualification such as Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) levels 3 & 5 in Leadership and Management and the Post Graduate Certificate in Managing Practice Quality in Social Care.
- The directorate provided 37 statutory practice learning opportunity placements for student social workers, and co-ordinated 1 hosted by an Independent Fostering Agency and 3 within third section organisations.
- We provided a comprehensive programme of induction and support in social worker's first year in practice, which

How we work

includes core training, mentoring and support groups. 12 newly qualified social workers completed their first year in practice and are able to progress onto the Consolidation Programme.

- The Authority has upgraded its learning platform, to improve the learning experience. In addition to easier access and enhanced e-learning content, the system provides individuals and managers with tailored training data.
- A hybrid model applies for delivery of training, with e-learning, on-line resources such as Community Care inform, webinars, on-line facilitated training and in-person courses available.

Priorities for 2024/25

- Continuously improve our recruitment processes, drawing on marketing expertise to enhance campaigns and ensure the most efficient selection processes.
- Ensure learning from all inspection and reviews is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review.
- Provide programmes of training to support the implementation of practice frameworks across the directorate. Adult social care 'Strength-based model of practice – Working to achieve outcomes' and children social care 'Signs of Safety'.
- Implement our workforce plan and review the impact of the 'Grow Our Own Social Work Programme'.
- Implement our plans to improve the experience of our workforce so they feel consistently well supported and valued, get the right balance of skills and experience in our teams and to retain and recruit a high standard of practitioner to our

How we work

service.

- Deliver and review an ongoing management and leadership development pathway and programme to support all managers in adult social care to develop their skills in leading teams and services.
- Direct care services (BCBC and Independent providers)- to offer and deliver a range of underpinning knowledge and skills sessions to support completion of the core qualification and training areas.
- Develop a bespoke Learning and Development Pathway for Children's Social Care Residential services.

“Signs of Safety Training Events”

As part of the Signs of Safety Practice Implementation within Children's Social Care, all practitioner's within Children's Social Care have been offered training with a Licenced Signs of Safety consultant.



The training consisted of two day training - Risk Assessment and Next Steps training and Five Day – Signs of Safety Approach to create a family safety plan. To date 178 practitioners have attended two day training and 107 have attended five day, with a further 35 practitioners expected to attend five day training in June.

How we work

The training consisted of two day training - Risk Assessment and Next Steps training and Five Day – Signs of Safety Approach to create a family safety plan. To date 178 practitioners have attended two day training and 107 have attended five day, with a further 35 practitioners expected to attend five day training in June.



The photographs included show practitioners attending the training, the Senior management Team who attended Risk Assessment and Next Steps Training.

We all came in with fuzzy heads,
all talking about His mother always being
in bed.
^{used to think}
What should we do? but now we know
we need to involve the family too and get
them to think it through.
Mum & dad weren't doing well
so family needed to include gran, auntie and
even the two dogs too.
We needed to all agree safety goals
and identify all the little holes.
At first it was quite a task,
but in their achievements the family could
bask.
To our trainer we must thank
without you our signs of safety efforts
would have sunk.
Off we go with our tods & plans
and now we are signs of safety biggest
fans!

As part of a group exercise, within the five-day training, practitioners composed a poem.

How we work

A Strengths-based model of practice: working to achieve outcomes

A summary of the introduction of BCBC's model of practice in Adult Social Care 2023/24

1. Context

Back in Spring 2022, the Institute of Public Care was commissioned to assist the directorate to consider its future direction in terms of a defined practice model. Across the directorate, it was agreed that practice should be shaped by:

- How professionals behave.
- What values and principles are important in their work
- How they interact with individuals, families and carers.
- How they interact with colleagues and professional partners
- What techniques and methods are used in their work

The model should describe the key behaviours and activities for practice across the directorate - a common approach based on dignity, respect, within a collaborative relationship. The focus is upon an understanding of people's strengths and abilities, and how these can be harnessed to assist people to achieve their personal wellbeing outcomes.

Adult Social Care has invested in and developed a strength based, outcome focussed approach since the SSWBA was implemented in 2016. From hosting the SSIA pilot of the skills-based training 'Collaborative Conversations' with the West Network Team, a version of this training has since been delivered across Adult Social Care's assessment and care and support

How we work

planning teams.

The approach has been very well received, has proven to be popular, resonates with best practice, and has added direction and energy in reinvigorating how we approach assessment and care and support planning.

It was a logical conclusion to reach by Adult Social Care to continue to build on this position and further embed the principles of practice in the directorate's culture. The contribution of other disciplines in our integrated teams is now embraced so that we seek to achieve consistency of practice and approach whether provided by a nurse, an OT, or a social worker, and of course direct care workers.

The model is consistent with how professionals should behave and approach people we support as presented by the Code of Professional Practice that is the pillar of registration for social workers, and our own social work charter.

The model is not entirely new. The directorate is mainstreaming and embedding best practice as required by the Social Services and Wellbeing Act as described in Part 2 General Duties of that Act.

The model can be placed in this legal framework and whether staff are working under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act, the Mental Health (Wales) Measure, or the Mental Capacity Act, the strengths-based, outcome-focussed practice model must be the way to deliver these duties in practice.

2. Purpose of the launch events: 12th April and 6th June (for community teams) and 15th November (for BCBC and independent sector direct care domiciliary care services)

How we work

Managers and staff in Adult Social Care had collaborated to produce the model and the following vision statement within it:

“Your wellbeing is important to us in Bridgend Adult Social Care. We will strive to empower people to live an independent life, exercise choice and control, and be fully informed. We will work with you, with openness and honesty, listening to you, supporting you to live the life you want to live and the goals you want to achieve.”

The events were arranged as a celebration of practice over many years since the SSWBA was implemented and to acknowledge the progress that has been made in BCBC. That practice is now underpinned by the model and forms a waypoint to support the understanding of the approach to staff working in our multi-disciplinary teams, and to direct care staff within BCBC and across the independent sector. The ambition is to shape a common shared approach to supporting people regardless of the agency been represented or the tasks being delivered.

The model introduced can be used to assist staff with their explanations of what can be expected to those being supported, to assist staff new to BCBC, to assist experienced staff by way of refreshing practice, and to form the basis of future learning and development activity.

3. Target Group – numbers attended

Staff in our multi-disciplinary teams, regardless of profession: 12th April – 65 attended, 6th June – 60 attended

How we work

Profession/Job Role	Number
Social work (includes GMs,TMs, SPs Agency, Student SW)	60
Social Work Assistants/SCO	18
Occupational Therapy (including Manager)	12
SCWDP	7
Project Officer/Policy Officer	4
Dementia Support worker	3
Rehab Officers (sensory)	3
Community Coordinator	3
District Nurse	3
Care Navigator	2
Dietician	2
Physiotherapist	2
S.A.L.T	1
Direct Care Manager	2
Total Declared	122

How we work

Direct care staff: 15th November – 45 attended

Agency	Number
BCBC (Supported Living, Extra Care, Domiciliary Care, Senior Management)	26
Independent Provider (6 Agencies represented)	13
BCBC Commissioning	3
Total Declared	42

4. Example of comments received from evaluations:

Interesting ClearPractical Empowering UsefulValuable Inspiring Thought-provoking

5. How we are Embedding the Model in Practice

- Staff to be invited to present a case study at the beginning of each Continuous Improvement Group meeting that reflects the model of practice.
- Induction Framework to be reviewed to include practice models.
- First Year in Practice (Consolidation Route, New Starters, Social Service Practitioners also to be invited)— Workshops on the model in the FYIP programme to be delivered

How we work

- Delivered three courses for leaders of practice (managers, snr. practitioners) to enable them to better support/mentor their staff to deliver the model in practice and how to evaluate how it is being delivered.
- Re-design a skills-based course to build on the former Collaborative Communications course – to include communication skills, strengths based/outcome focussed approach, engaging with families, diversity and inclusion, challenging conversations, working in communities. This course will be open for multi-disciplinary staff working in BCBC teams. For delivery from April – July 2024 (6 courses)
- Engagement with Independent Care Sector and BCBC Direct Care. An event for direct care providers was held in Civic on the 22nd November 2023 attended by 45 people representing BCBC and independent sector domiciliary care services. This event introduced the model to providers.
- Further opportunities to work in partnership with providers will be developed in 2024 The ambition is to shape a shared approach to supporting people regardless of the agency been represented or the tasks being delivered.
- Community Care Inform has included the Practice Model and related content within its bespoke BCBC pages.
- Reviewed Supervision Policy, Case Recording Policy, and Quality Assurance Framework now established as vehicles for supporting delivery of the model in practice. Training has also been delivered.
- Review and populate Adult Social Care pages on the Intranet. -in progress.

How we work

Financial Resources

In 2023/24 the directorate has continued to experience unprecedented service and financial pressures in meeting statutory duties with a backdrop of a continued exponential increase in demand in Children and Family Services which impacts on the workforce required and a further increase in the number of independent residential placements in Children and Family Services. Alongside this, there continues to be pressures in learning disabilities, mental health, physical disabilities and older people's services driven by increase in cost and complexity of need. The net budget for the directorate for 2023/24 was £99.386 million and the actual outturn was £111.213 million following planned draw down of £5.660 million from earmarked reserves, resulting in an over spend of £11.827 million. The over spend has decreased since the projected over spend reported at quarter 3 of £12.584 million. This is mainly due to the full draw down in quarter 4 of the £2.5 million earmarked reserve as part of the Children's Services sustainability plan.

The main reasons for the £11.827 million over spend are:-

- The directorate has continued to experience both service and financial pressures in meeting statutory duties with a backdrop of a continued exponential increase in demand in Children's social care which impacts on the workforce required and a further increase in the number of independent residential placements in Children's services. This includes a small number of placements at any time which are Operating Without Registration (OWR). Given the additional risks of children living in settings without the protection accorded by regulation, these placements are risk managed and have higher staff ratios, which drive the cost of the service. A 3 year sustainability plan to improve the way that children and families are supported in Bridgend was agreed by Council on 20th September 2023 with a budget virement of £1 million approved for Children's services and the additional use of up to £2.5 million of

How we work

earmarked reserves whilst a more permanent funding solution was sought.

The £2.5 million earmarked reserve was drawn down in full during quarter 4 against Children's Social Care Commissioning and Social Work and Management and Administration budgets.

- Council approved £2.5 million as the balance of the £3.5 million budget pressure on the 28th February as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28. This permanent budget pressure for 2024/25 replaces the temporary earmarked reserve funding draw down in 2023/24. Progress is being made with implementing the plan, particularly to progress the steady and safe reduction of agency workforce, through improved retention and recruitment of a permanent workforce, including international recruits. A new emergency residential assessment service has been opened and is avoiding the costs of additional placements. However, even one additional placement can have massive budgetary implications meaning, despite progress, spend has been contained, rather than reduced.
- There continues to be pressures in learning disabilities and older people's services driven by the complexity of need. The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing a number of actions to address the growth in the adult services budget. These include accelerating the work to transform learning disabilities. An independent review highlighted the need to invest to save to 'right size and right price' care packages to support people to live as independently as possible. Also to support people to retain and regain independence, a target of 80% of all assessments where long term care and support at home is indicated to go through short term service including enabling and reablement has been set. The pathways between care and support and preventative services to maximise the opportunity for people to have wellbeing outcomes met through community connection and resources in their community. Further actions for 2024/25 are being developed into a 3 year service and financial strategic plan for adult services to be

How we work

considered by Cabinet in Autumn 2024.

- Council approved £1.970 million towards the increased costs of home care for adults with learning disabilities and £1 million towards additional residential/nursing placement costs due to new admissions for older people and older people with mental health needs as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28.

Whilst there are pressures funded in the 2024/25 budget being proposed to Council these do not cover all areas of underlying pressures which is evident in the overspend. The areas where pressures are being addressed are children's services workforce, homes for older people and learning disability homecare. The pressure in children's placements could not be addressed through recurring budget within the resources available to the Council. There is a significant transformation programme underway across the directorate to fundamentally change operating models, practice and commissioning in light of the financial context. There remains significant risk, and requirement for close monitoring of the social services and wellbeing budget given the level of demand, high cost of services and reduction in specific grants which had for many years underpinned the directorate budget. The Council remains committed to meeting statutory duties in social care but the costs of so doing are outweighing the finances available causing huge challenge in determining how to balance statutory duties in 2024/25.

The end of year annual Social Services and Wellbeing financial summary can be found [here](#) in the Council Report outlining the revenue budget outturn for 2023/24.

Partnership, Governance & Accountability

Partnerships

How we work

Partnership and multi-agency working continues to be integral in supporting the delivery of our services. At a regional level the directorate continues to work closely with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Merthyr County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to form the RPB. The directorate is also a member of the RSB who in May 2023 published their 3-year Strategic Plan setting out safeguarding priorities for the region.

At a local level several of our services are co-located with key agencies. 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 across the borough.

“Can I take this opportunity to thank your team for the below feedback. . I appreciate getting here has not been easy and Children Services have unique work force pressures, which require strong leadership to mitigate and sustain the current operating model. The below feedback highlights not only an effective model of colocation, something I believe we should aspire to across the region, but a healthy relationship and culture which in my view are a bi-product of colocation. You will have been present in the MASH exec group meeting where it became clear that not all agree that this is the direction to follow. I will persist in using Bridgend as a case study and advocating for this model. I also acknowledge however that there is much to do, and look forward to those opportunities.

For reassurance I know that healthy professional challenge still exists, but I believe the data is evidencing the efficacy of the processes we have.

Sorry for contributing to a probably endless inbox, but felt it would be remiss of me not to comment on some really good partnership work.”

Detective Superintendent, South Wales Police

How we work

Morgannwg University Health Board delivering services to people within the community and our Prevention and Wellbeing Service works with third sector partners, AWEN and HALO in the delivery of leisure, cultural and wellbeing services.

Governance & Accountability

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meet 4 times a year to examine our decisions and developments making recommendations on future delivery of our services. The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting Committee, chaired by the Deputy Leader, meets on a quarterly basis and is responsible for making important policy decisions on service provision for care experienced children and care leavers.

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing is a member of the Council's weekly Cabinet Corporate Management Board and fortnightly Cabinet and Corporate Management Board. Corporate Leaders have further oversight of the directorate's progress and performance against each of the Council's key objectives via the Council's Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA). These meetings and reporting mechanisms ensure robust corporate leadership and clear link between the directorate's strategic and operational priorities and the Council's overall objectives. We monitor key performance and management information of all 3 service areas on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis at team, service and directorate level. This provides the Corporate Director and Heads of Service with managerial oversight ensuring we are on-track to achieving not only directorate priorities but also Corporate and Regional priorities.

Links to all 2022/23 Cabinet, Council, Corporate Parenting and Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports and minutes that relate to social care can be accessed [here](#).

Mwy na Geiriau / More Than Just Words

How we work

“Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Just Words” is a strategic framework produced by Welsh Government and along with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 promotes Welsh language and culture in Social Services, Social Care and Health across Wales. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 further strengthens the support of the Welsh language by ensuring that Social Services across Wales promote the “Active Offer”. This means that we actively provide services in the Welsh language without someone having to ask.

Of the assessments completed during 2023/24 within Adult Social Care, 74 evidenced the active offer, whilst in Children and Family Services 88% evidenced the active offer. Overall 46 people took up the active offer.

To continue to promote the Welsh language and ensure our systems accurately reflect the active offer, we have developed an action plan for the directorate. The action plan will support us in continuing to promote and roll out awareness of the active offer in line with the “Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Just Words” framework.

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Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 & 2023/24
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of the report is to present the Committee with the draft Scrutiny Annual Report over a two year period 2022/23 and 2023/24 and to ask the Committee to consider and endorse the Report for submission to Council.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with the draft Scrutiny Annual Report over a two year period 2022/23 and 2023/24.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees oversee the decision making of the Cabinet Members and support the work of the Cabinet and the Council. They allow citizens to have a greater say in Council matters by holding public meetings into matters of local concern. These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Cabinet and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery. Within their Terms of Reference, Overview and Scrutiny Committees will: a) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions; b) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint Committee in connection with the discharge of any functions; c) consider any matter affecting the County Borough or its inhabitants; and d) exercise the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made by or on behalf of the Cabinet but not yet implemented.
- 3.2 Scrutiny is required to submit an Annual Report to Council with a review of how the function has operated for the previous period. The review is a useful tool for reviewing the effectiveness of Scrutiny, providing an opportunity to reflect properly

on how Scrutiny has operated, the challenges and outcomes. The report provides commentary on scrutiny activity for the period.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The draft Scrutiny Annual Report attached as **Appendix A** provides detail on the challenges and outcomes for Scrutiny Committees and Panels for the period, as well as identifying some areas of focus for improvement to ensure Scrutiny continues to develop and achieve positive outcomes for the residents of Bridgend.

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 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.
- 5.2 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 scrutiny function contributes to the 5 Ways of Working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and how they contribute to the Council developing its own five ways of working, driving and measuring those ways of working.
- 5.3 The scrutiny arrangements assists in the achievement of the Council's 7 Well-being Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, listed below:
1. A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
 2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
 3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
 4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
 5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
 6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
 7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and endorse the Scrutiny Annual Report attached as **Appendix A**, for submission to Council.

Background documents

None.

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SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

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CHAIR'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this Report of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function over the period 2022/23 & 2023/24. The report provides an overview of the work undertaken by our Committee Members during this period. This includes work undertaken as part of our Committee Meetings as well as on our Panels in considering services essential to residents of the local community.

During this period, the four overview and scrutiny committees have undertaken 54 meetings and considered 80 reports (and an additional 5 Call-ins) covering a variety of work undertaken by the Council which in turn contributes to the Council's vision to act as "one Council working together to improve lives". In addition, the Committees collectively made 227 Recommendations and 199 requests for information.

During my time as the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it has been my ambition to ensure that the Committees don't only provide constructive challenge as a critical friend to the administration in an effort to improve outcomes for the people and communities which we represent, but also to have a laser focus on the "big ticket" items which will be affecting our local authority in the months and years to come.

Since 2022, we have been in the challenging situation whereby we have seen an in-take of 31 new Councillors from across the local authority who have had to quickly get up to speed and comprehend detailed policy areas. In 2023-24, as their knowledge and skills have developed, these Members have been able to make a fuller contribution to the debate about the future direction of our local authority and I have no doubt that the engagement and participation of Members in the scrutiny process will develop even further as this term of office progresses.

Here in BCBC, we are no different than any other local authority in that we have to confront significant budget pressures and, as a result, make some tough political choices and budget reductions. Scrutiny provides a crucial forum for the administration to test its ideas and policy proposals. It also provides an invaluable and rewarding opportunity for backbench and Opposition Members to play a role in the policy-making process through providing recommendations to Cabinet in an effort to assist them in making measured and considered decisions which can gain the support of the majority of Councillors.

A development which I think enhances the scrutiny process and is a credit to the scrutiny function here in Bridgend is the increase in the usage of pre-scrutiny prior to any Cabinet decision. It is welcome to see the willingness of both the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board to be open to Members' views and recommendations before a decision is made. Working in a collegiate way alongside Cabinet Members, Corporate Directors and the Scrutiny Team, I (and my fellow Committee Chairs) have all endeavoured to carefully construct our respective Committees' Forward Work Programmes with an eye on the future rather than the past while also being flexible to unexpected occurrences which require our immediate attention. I see this as best practice and is a development which I would like to see grow further as we go forward into uncharted territory.



**Cllr Alex Ulberini-Williams, Chairperson,
Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee (May 2022 - May 2024)**

OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES AND OUTCOMES 2022-23 AND 2023-24

Budget and Training

The backdrop to this reporting period has included the scrutiny of successive challenging draft Medium Term Financial Strategies (MTFS) / budget positions for 2022-23 and 2023-24, later receipt of the draft Local Government Finance settlements by the Authority and the need to concentrate the scrutiny process into a shorter period to enable Scrutiny Recommendations to be coordinated by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) and reported to Cabinet within the condensed timetable.

As mentioned in the Chair's Foreword above, the Local Government Elections on 5 May 2022, resulted in the Council receiving a cohort of new Elected Members. Consideration was given to the range of support available and the training needed. High quality, comprehensive scrutiny training was made available to Members by Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officers, the Welsh Local Government Association and experienced external trainers. The Member Induction Programme and Member Development Programmes for 2022-23 and 2023-24 was extensive and covered related areas such as governance, decision making, effective chairing skills, questioning skills, etc. New and returning Members were encouraged to take advantage of the full offer. A full list of training provided is included on pages 31 to 32 of this report.

In addition, changes of Chairpersons required specific training and the development and establishment of new professional working relationships. Similarly, changes to Cabinet Members and Cabinet portfolios needed to be taken account of in the planning of meetings, documentation and processes.

Staffing

Despite advertising a vacant Scrutiny Officer post from November 2021, it was not successfully recruited to until March 2022. Following the appointment of a Scrutiny Officer, and also the appointment of the Democratic Services Manager with extensive Scrutiny and Democratic Services experience, there followed a period of significant training for the Scrutiny Officers by the Manager and the Senior Democratic Services Officer - Scrutiny, in order for the Scrutiny Officers to be able to lead meetings and provide advice. In Autumn 2023, the Scrutiny Team were impacted by periods of staff absence and maternity leave that commenced in December

2023. To minimise pressure on service delivery to Scrutiny Chairs / Committees, a Democratic Services Officer was seconded temporarily into the role of Interim Scrutiny Officer to cover the maternity leave period, and the Democratic Services Manager provided support where necessary, to maintain the number of Scrutiny meetings and the level of support to Scrutiny Chairs and Members.

Call-Ins

In addition, there were an unprecedented number of Call-Ins during the reporting period, due in part to the initial limited use of Pre-Decision scrutiny for this reporting period. Where possible, the Call-Ins were reported to a scheduled upcoming Scrutiny Committee meeting which sometimes placed pressure on the time to consider the scheduled reports for those meetings. However, some additional Extraordinary Meetings were convened for Call In reports to be considered, if there was not an upcoming meeting scheduled, using additional resources.

Requests to change Meeting Dates

Given the number of invitees to Scrutiny meetings, requests to change meeting dates were a challenge after the calendar of meetings had been agreed at the Annual General Meeting of Council and meetings scheduled in calendars, but these were accommodated where possible. The death of the late HM Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022 led to two meetings being cancelled for the National Period of Mourning which placed some additional pressure on the work programming of the remaining meetings scheduled for 2022-23.

Registered Representatives

The terms of office of the Secondary School Parent Governor Representative and the Church in Wales Registered Representative who attended Scrutiny Committees for the consideration of Education items came to an end in Autumn 2023. In addition, there was a vacancy for Primary and Special School Parent Governor Representative for Education items and nominations were therefore sought for all positions. Nominations for the Church in Wales Registered Representative and the Special School Parent Governor Representative were received and approved by Council on 20 September 2023. Nominations were sought and have been re-sought for the Primary and Secondary School Parent Governor Representative vacancies and are awaited.

Key Outcomes/Achievements 2022-23 and 2023-24

The Key outcomes and Achievements for the reporting period include:

- The Development, preparation and delivery of a targeted Member Induction Programme and ongoing training and development programme for Members, a high proportion of whom were newly elected Members was promptly and efficiently delivered during an intensive initial training period, including training on Committees, Scrutiny, Questioning Skills, Chairing Skills, roles and responsibilities, etc. This has been followed by ongoing training and development throughout the reporting period, including subject specific training for Committees during increasingly emerging budget and staffing pressures across the Authority in 2023-24.
- Training and development of newly appointed Scrutiny Officers appointed in September 2021 and March 2022 and an Interim Scrutiny Officer in January 2024 seconded to cover maternity leave period, all of which has built and strengthened Team resilience and support to Scrutiny Committees, Scrutiny Chairpersons, Scrutiny reporting processes and the forward work planning process, as confidence has grown.
- Increasing the number of external Invitees to Scrutiny Committees for related reports as part of our work towards the targets set out in the Council's Engagement and Participation Strategy, thereby gaining additional stakeholder views via the Scrutiny process.
- Supporting the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) process and preparing concise and clear Budget reports including context in the Recommendations to COSC for consolidation, and to the Cabinet, following consideration of which a significant number of Recommendations were accepted which impacted on these two extremely difficult budgets.
- The Team has continued to drive the benefit of Pre-Decision Scrutiny, and there has been an increase across the period, as can be seen later in the report in each Committee's Performance table lists of reports, including for example, pre decision reports on the: Education Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-26, Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022-23, and Future Waste Service Options. This will continue to be raised to strive to increase the opportunity for Scrutiny Committees to contribute to more pre-decision items.
- Working with the Performance Team on the optimal scheduling timetable for reports upon Quarterly Performance Monitoring looking back and Pre Decision reports upon the draft Corporate Plan, draft Corporate Plan Delivery Plan, Performance Indicator (PI) Targets and Self-Assessment, while the changes in Performance requirements resulting from the Local Government and Election (Wales) Act were being implemented.
- Forward Work Planning (FWP) Meetings have been strengthened and are held regularly between the Scrutiny Chair, Corporate Director and the relevant Cabinet Member(s) to ensure that FWPs are up to date, that report timings are both robust and realistic and whether there are any emerging priority and pre-decision items needing to be scheduled.

CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Role of the Committee



Chairperson
Cllr Alex
Ulberini-Williams

The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) considers the service provision, planning, management and performance, policies, protocols and plans relating to corporate performance and governance reports and the Corporate Plan. The Committee contributes to the annual budget consultation and coordinates the response of all the Scrutiny Committees to the Cabinet's draft budget proposals and the MTFs budget consultation process. The Committee also has responsibility for coordinating the Forward Work Programmes of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Quote from the Chairperson – *“During this challenging time, the Committee’s overarching strategic role in holding the administration to account cannot be underestimated and it is therefore one of the most important Committees of Council. I would like to thank Members of the Committee for the thorough and effective way in which they have exercised their duties over the last two years, leaving politics at the door. I would also like to thank Cabinet Members; officers and external invitees for the constructive way in which they have engaged with the scrutiny process, and the Democratic Services Team for all of their support and hard work during my time as Chair of the Committee.”*

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	17	18	19
Number of Pre-Decision reports	*	5	8
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	7	9
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	2	0
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	3	2
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	1	0
Number of Recommendations made	35	41	48
Number of requests for information	2	41	36
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	0	3	0

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Revenue Budget Outturn 2021-22
- Budget Monitoring 2022-23 Q1, Q2 and Q3 Revenue Forecast
- Council's Performance against its Commitments for the Year 2021-22 and Q2 of 2022/23
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021/22

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27 and Draft Budget Consultation Process
- Corporate Plan 2023-28
- Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 23-24
- Capital Strategy 2023-24 to 2032-33

Policy Review/Development

- Temporary Accommodation
- Cost of Living Payment Scheme

Information Report/Progress Update

- Workforce, Recruitment and Retention
- Re-Development of Maesteg Town Hall
- Disabled Facilities Grants – Progress Report and Position Statement

Call-in

- Recycling and Waste Service Post 2024

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Revenue Budget Outturn 2022-23
- Budget Monitoring 2023-24 Q1, Q2 and Q3 Revenue Forecast
- Corporate Plan / Delivery Plan Review 2024-25-2022
- Corporate Self-Assessment 2022-23
- Quarter 4 Performance 2022-23 and Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Performance 2023-24

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28 and Draft Budget Consultation Process
- Corporate Plan Delivery Plan 2023-24 and Performance Framework
- Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Targets
- Performance Management Improvement Plan
- Capital Strategy 2024-25
- Strategic Workforce Plan
- Engagement and Participation Strategy

Information Report/Progress Update

- ICT Resilience

Call-in

- Cabinet's Response to the Committee's Recommendations on the Recycling and Waste Service Post 2024

External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Trade Union Representatives:
 - UNISON
 - GMB
 - Unite

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Role of the Committee

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 is the first forum for Education which includes in its membership Registered Representatives, nominated by Church in Wales, Roman Catholic Church, and Parent Governor Representatives from a Primary, a Secondary and a Special School. The Committee scrutinises reports upon related service provision, planning and performance, contributes to the Annual MTFS budget consultation process for service areas within the remit of the Committee and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme.



Chairperson
Cllr Alex
Ulberini-Williams

Quote from Chairperson – *“Since 2022, it has been a pleasure to have chaired Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1. It has been particularly helpful to hear from frontline staff from the education sector; young people; registered representatives and other invitees, the contributions of which have informed our work and have been invaluable in developing our final recommendations on the broad range of items which we have considered.”*

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	6	5	7
Number of Pre-Decision reports	*	3	2
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	1	1
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	1	3
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	0	1
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	0	0
Number of Recommendations made	6	21	40
Number of requests for information	0	23	27
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	31	23	24

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Annual Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium 2021-2022

Pre-Decision

- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)
- New Framework for Evaluation, Improvement and Accountability to support the Curriculum for Wales
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

Policy Review/Development

- Pupil Attendance, Exclusions, Health and Safeguarding

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Annual Local Authority Scrutiny Report Central South Consortium 2022-2023

Pre-Decision

- Education and Family Support Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28

Policy Review/Development

- Bridgend Youth Justice Service Update and Operational Plan
- Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) and Operational Issues within the Catering Service
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (2022-2032)

Information Report/Progress Update

- Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing

External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Registered Representatives
- Primary School Headteachers:
 - Afon Y Felin
 - Brackla Primary
 - Bryncethin Primary
 - Cefn Glas Infants
 - Llangynwyd Primary
 - Mynydd Cynffig Primary
 - Nantyffyllon Primary
 - Penybont Primary
 - Pen Y Fai Church in Wales Primary School
 - St. Robert's Catholic Primary School
 - Ysgol Cynwyd Sant
 - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd
- Secondary School Headteachers:
 - Brynteg Comprehensive
 - Bryntirion Comprehensive
 - Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen
 - Porthcawl Comprehensive
 - The Bridge Alternative Provision
 - Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Llangynwyd
 - Ysgol Maesteg
- Central South Consortium Representatives
- Public Health Wales
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Role of the Committee

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 is the first forum for Social Services and Wellbeing items (but not exclusive to) and scrutinises reports upon Children Services, Adult Services and Wellbeing service provision, planning and performance, in order to respond to issues relating to the Care Inspectorate Wales and the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Committee contributes to the Annual MTFS budget consultation process for the service areas within the remit of the Committee and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme.



Chairperson
Cllr Freya
Bletsoe

Quote from Chairperson – *“We have seen some challenging times in Social Services recently but despite the heavy workload the Committee has faced as a result, it has been really good to hear from service users of their personal experiences of services being scrutinised and from representatives from our partners in the Integrated Health Service. They have added a wealth of information which has been invaluable to our scrutiny meetings, and I look forward to this continuing to increase further participation from our stakeholders in the scrutiny of future topics.”*

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	8	9	10
Number of Pre-Decision reports	1	1	4
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	4	4
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	1	0
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	2	2
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	1	0
Number of Recommendations made	2	11	16
Number of requests for information	3	21	20
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	5	11	10

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Performance Evaluation of Children's Social Care Services 23-27 May 2022
- Update on the Care Inspectorate Wales Inspections of Bridgend County Borough Council's Regulated Services in Adult Social Care for 2022
- Annual Report – Safeguarding of Children and Adults
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement Check Visit to Children's Social Care Services – 21-24 November 2022

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

Policy Review/Development

- The Development of Learning Disability Services

Information report/Progress Update

- Adult Social Care Pressure Areas
- Support for Young Carers and Adult Carers

Call-in

- Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Performance Monitoring

- Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend 12-16 June 2023
- Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2022/23
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23
- Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection of Bridgend County Borough Council's Regulated Services in Adult Social Care

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28
- 3 Year Sustainability Plan to Improve Outcomes for Children and Family Services in Bridgend
- The Learning Disability Transformation Programme
- Social Services and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategies 2023-28

Information Report/Progress Update

- Prevention and Wellbeing, Leisure (Halo) and Cultural Trusts (Awen) and Further Integration with BAVO
- Adult Community Mental Health Services

External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection Team Representatives
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg
- People First Bridgend
- Learning Disabilities Services Users
- TuVida Representatives (Bridgend Carers Wellbeing)
- Young Carers and Adult Carers Service Users
- Halo Leisure Representatives
- Awen Representatives
- Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) Representative
- Public Speakers/Representations from:
 - A Voice for the Future of Porthcawl;
 - Porthcawl Civic Trust Society; and
 - Sustainable Walesfor consideration of the Call-In Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay.

SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Role of the Committee

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 is the first forum for Communities (but not exclusive to) and considers reports upon related service provision, planning, and performance, contributes to the Annual MTFS budget consultation process for the service areas within the remit of the Committee and proposes items for its Forward Work Programme.



Chairperson
Cllr Paul Davies

Quote from Chairperson – *“I would like to thank Officers and Invitees who have contributed, provided requested information and attended meetings, which assisted with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s work over this period and the breadth of topics scrutinised. Looking ahead to the challenges of the next 12 months and the contribution the scrutiny function can make to contribute to the Council, I encourage Members of the public to get involved where possible.”*

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 Performance

Highlights	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total number of substantive reports considered across the Committee	6	7	8
Number of Pre-Decision reports	*	1	3
Number of Performance Monitoring reports	*	0	0
Number of Policy Review/Development reports	*	1	0
Number of Information reports/Progress Updates	*	4	3
Number of Cabinet decisions debated under ‘call-in’	0	1	2
Number of Recommendations made	5	22	28
Number of requests for information	0	23	8
Number of external representatives attending a scrutiny meeting	5	8	1

* New Indicator for Reporting Period

Key items looked at during 2022 – 2023 included:

Pre-Decision

- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-27

Policy Review/Development

- Play Sufficiency Duty, Assessment and Action Plan to Secure Sufficient Opportunities in Bridgend County Borough

Information Reports/Progress Updates

- The United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund
- Levelling Up Fund Priority Projects
- Porthcawl Regeneration
- Housing Position Statement *

*Combined Meeting with Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Call-in

- Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy

Key items looked at during 2023 – 2024 included:

Pre-Decision

- Housing Support Programme Strategy (Homelessness Strategy) 2022-2026
- Future Waste Service Options
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28

Information Reports/Progress Updates

- Update on Shared Prosperity Fund
- Update on Communities Directorate Position and Challenges
- Strategic Transport Projects

Call-in

- Hybont Project Gateway Review
- Proposed Use of Land Transaction Transfer Protocol with Cardiff Capital Region for Land at Brynmenyn and Bryncethin

External Stakeholders and Representatives

- Awen Representatives
- Registered Social Landlord Representatives:
 - Coastal Housing Group
 - Hafod Housing
 - Linc Cymru Housing Association
 - United Welsh
 - Valleys to Coast
 - Wales and West Housing
- Crisis Cymru Representative
- Maple Cone Representative

CALL-IN

Call-In of Cabinet Decision: Recycling and Waste Service Post 2024

In June 2022, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 14 June 2022. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Insufficient information for Cabinet to make a fully informed decision.
- No presentation of the alternative options that could be considered.
- No indication of the procurement costs or a cost benefit analysis.
- No consideration given to alternatives to procuring the plant and existing fleet from Kier.
- Cabinet made a decision without a full understanding of the costs.
- Cabinet failed to challenge the assumptions made in the paper.
- The decision had not been properly considered and required further scrutiny.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members considered the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and the Committee agreed by majority that it would not refer the matter back to Cabinet for further consideration but to send a report to a future Cabinet meeting recommending the following:

- a) That any future consideration of the Waste contract be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a suitable time so as to enable pre-decision scrutiny and effective input into any forthcoming decision. The Committee requested that this incorporate any specialist advice that is commissioned for the future waste service model, before referring on to Cabinet, as mentioned at paragraph 9.5 of the Cabinet report;
- b) That going forward, contingency measures as well as a deeper look at other possible options for waste service provision is fully and openly considered and deliberated;
- c) That the other options that were considered in order for Cabinet to arrive at the current decision for a short-term waste contract from 2024 to 2026, be published in the public domain to ensure full openness and transparency.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 30 June 2022.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Porthcawl Waterfront Regeneration: Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay

In October 2022, five Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chairs of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2

requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 18 October 2022. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Following representations from members of the public and responses to the public consultation were overwhelmingly against the appropriation of land.
- To provide public assurance as to why the appropriation of all of the land was necessary and to explore why Cabinet did not discuss the option of a reduction in the area of the land proposed for appropriation.
- The Cabinet report did not make reference to the survey which expressed a desire to retain a suitable and sufficient area of land which would protect it from permanent development.
- How Cabinet considered The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the 5 ways of working embedded in this Act (including involvement and collaboration with the community), and Planning Policy Wales guidance.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members of the Committee heard from 3 members of the public on how Appropriation of Land at Griffin Park and Sandy Bay could have a potential impact on them or their organisations.

Following consideration of the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and examination of the decision, The Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:

a) That having regard to concerns expressed to Members by Porthcawl residents, views shared by public speakers and questions from Members, that Cabinet be requested that going forward for the next stages in the process that they involve Porthcawl Town Council, all stakeholders and the public in further consultation and engagement.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 3 November 2022.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Bridgend 2030 Net Zero Carbon Strategy

In December 2022, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 13 December 2022. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Financial implications and a need for profiling of estimated costs over the next 7 years.
- Performance and Monitoring –insufficient clarity as to how the strategy would be monitored and on what frequency.
- Appropriateness of the oversight and governance arrangements and the resources required to support the Strategy.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members considered the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and following its examination of the decision, the Committee recommended that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration for the following reason:

Concerns were expressed about the lack of costing information contained in the original Cabinet report and Members felt that Cabinet needed to consider the wider financial costs before making the decision, with indicative longer term financial implications and more detail on the costs of achieving the 2024 milestones.

At a special meeting of Cabinet held on the 12 January 2023, Cabinet re-affirmed its previous decision made at the meeting dated 12 December 2022 with it noted that costings up to the period of 2024 will be outlined in the Action Plan that supports the Strategy.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Hybont Project Gateway Review

In September 2023, four Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 19 September 2023. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Insufficient information for Cabinet to make a fully informed decision, no critical questioning to support the decision making and no consideration of alternative options.
- Incomplete and confusing financial and technological information.
- Lack of information regarding the arrangements around the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Insufficient information regarding the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy reliance on the project.
- The decision gave greater weight to financial considerations than carbon reduction in line with the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 Strategy to counter the climate emergency.
- Lack of detail regarding the 'small stake' in the 'JVCo' in return for land.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Members considered the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and the Committee agreed by majority that it would not refer the matter back to Cabinet for further consideration.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 2 October 2023.

Call-in Of Cabinet Decision: Proposed Use of Land Transaction Transfer Protocol with Cardiff Capital Region for Land at Brynmenyn and Bryncethin

In March 2024, three Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 requested to Call-In the Cabinet decision of 12 March 2024. Details as to the reasons for the Call-In were summarised as follows:

- Insufficient information for Cabinet to make a fully informed decision, no critical questioning to support the decision making and no consideration of alternative options.
- Lack of information regarding the reference to surplus land, whether or not there had been any third-party approach for the land either for a commercial sale or for a community use and information regarding the future of the land.
- Whether the Council ought to have sought independent legal advice and awaited consents and permissions prior to Cabinet making a decision.
- Lack of information regarding the value to be paid and the financial implications of possible abortive costs.
- The transfer did not protect the land for public use as the wider public would understand that phrase.
- Strong local opposition to the Scheme and the lack of consideration of the public interest.

Full details of the Call-In can be read in the report to the Committee [here](#).

Following consideration of the evidence presented to them by Officers and Cabinet Members and examination of the decision, the Committee concluded that the Decision would not be referred back to Cabinet but made the following Recommendation to Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet consider receiving a further report at the appropriate time on further information including the length of the lease and the terms of the value of the lease.
2. That Cabinet note the concerns raised in the Committee as contained in the Notice of Call-In and take them into account during any further deliberation.

Therefore, the decision of the Cabinet would take effect from the date of the Scrutiny Committee on the 26 March 2024.

PANELS

Budget Research and Evaluation Panel

The role of the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel (BREP) is to:

- a) Achieve consensus on the direction of the budget over the life of the medium term financial strategy;
- b) Achieve a detailed overview and assessment of the budget proposals where the expertise and knowledge of each Committee contributes to a Corporate understanding and appreciation of the draft budget proposals;
- c) Assist the Council to develop a budget for the forthcoming year that aims to meet the needs of the communities of Bridgend County Borough;
- d) Facilitate firmer understanding of the budget setting process and the draft proposals in order to assist the Committees in making informed comments, constructive challenge or recommendations to Cabinet as part of the budget consultation process.



Chairperson
Cllr Tim Thomas

The BREP process provides a unique opportunity, outside of traditional scrutiny arrangements, to undertake a cross-party approach to support strategic leaders in financial planning, compliance with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and identify and support potential areas of growth.

The BREP met 5 times between August 2023 and January 2024 and submitted its [report](#) including 4 Recommendations upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2027-28 including the proposed budget pressures and draft budget proposals for 2024-25, to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 January 2024. The Recommendations from BREP were endorsed and consolidated by COSC and reported to Cabinet on 6 February 2024, together with the coordinated Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. A response from the Cabinet was reported to the meeting of Cabinet on 20 February 2024, details of which can be viewed in the Appendix to the report [here](#).

This reporting period included difficult budget rounds with challenging budget pressures and draft budget savings, and for 2023-24 some postponement of meetings for more timely

information to be provided. During the consultation process with Scrutiny Committees in January 2024, the role and function of BREP was discussed and several Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees called for the future BREP purpose and process to be reviewed. The response to Recommendations advised that the issues would be picked up in the review of BREP for the following year.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) Public Services Board (PSB) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC)

A report on the new Public Service Board (PSB) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) arrangements to scrutinise the regional newly merged CTM PSB was submitted to Council on 19 July 2023. Please click on following link to see the: [**Council Report.**](#)

In accordance with statutory requirements and guidance Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Service Board was created. A Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, comprising elected members from Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend local authorities and co-opted citizen members, was set up in May 2023 on the same footprint of the newly merged CTM PSB.

In September 2023, ahead of the JOSC's inaugural meeting, the nominated JOSC Members attended in-person training session facilitated by the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner, bringing the Members of the newly formed Joint Committee together in an informal environment to meet. The training supported members of the JOSC in their understanding of the seven Well-being Goals and the 'Five Ways of Working', the long-term impact of decisions within Cwm Taf Morgannwg, and how to tackle persistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change, through the lens of the Act. Important points were also raised for each local authority to ensure their overview and scrutiny has the power to: *'review or scrutinise the decisions made or actions taken by the Public Services Board and review or scrutinise the board's governance arrangements'*.

The Committee convened on 6 October 2023 and Councillor Robert Bevan (Rhondda Cynon Taf), was appointed as Chair, having previous experience as chair of the Cwm Taf PSB scrutiny with Councillor Simon Griffiths (Bridgend) as Vice Chair. The Committee met on 3 occasions.

Core principles have been established in the first year of the regional arrangements, and a priority noted to ensure good collaboration across the partnership. The agreed aim for the JOSC was to look at 'how' the PSB measures own success in delivering against the Objectives

set out in the Well-being Plan, as well as taking a proactive approach and undertake 'pre-scrutiny' so that the Committee is involved early in the decision-making process. The JOSC also carried out their role within the context of budgetary pressures facing public services, promoting the sharing of good practice, better joint working and reducing the potential for duplication. The JOSC will produce their own annual report, which will be available from each of the Local Authorities on publication later in 2024.

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal was a programme agreed in 2016 between the UK Government, the Welsh Government and the ten local authorities in South East Wales to bring about significant economic growth in the region through investment, upskilling, and improved physical and digital connectivity. A Joint Committee of all ten local Authorities of South East Wales was established for the purpose of overseeing and co-ordinating the discharge of the Councils' obligations in relation to the City Deal. The CCR City Deal was a programme for accelerating growth by maximising significant government investment in a long-term goal to improve economic conditions in South East Wales.

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JOSC) comprised one non-executive Member from each appointing Authority (and a Deputy to attend in their absence). The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee met to monitor the CCR City Deal's progress against its Programme plan and make reports and recommendations to the Regional Cabinet and / or to any of the Appointing Authorities and any of their Executives in respect of any function delegated to the Regional Cabinet in accordance with the Joint Working Agreement. The Committee met 4 times during 2022/23 and 3 times during 2023/24, chaired by Cllr Andrew Whitcombe, a Caerphilly County Borough Councillor.

Welsh Government legislation introduced in April 2021, led to the establishment of the South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC), in place of the CCR City Deal and has powers to aid regional economic wellbeing and is responsible for regional transport and strategic development plans. The Corporate Joint Committee Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been created in place of the CCR City Deal Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise the CJC.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCRUTINY IN 2024-25 AND BEYOND

Detailed below are the areas summarised as future priorities:

- **Scrutiny Review** – following Recommendations from the Budget Research and Evaluation Panel and Scrutiny Committees an independent Scrutiny Review was commissioned, following which an outcome was that a Scrutiny Protocol/Charter should be drafted and Scrutiny Chairs and Members be consulted and asked to sign up to its principles. It was also established that questioning summaries should be more thematic and that reports should be made available in a timely manner to ensure efficient scrutiny of Agenda Items, which are being taken forward this year.
- **Training** – as part of the above independent review, the following training needs were identified: Chairing, Questioning, Roles and Responsibilities and Call-In and consideration is being given to arrangements for the training.
- **BREP** – following a Member Briefing from the Section 151 Officer, a round of Group Briefings is underway, following which a meeting of BREP will be convened in September 2024 to formally start the process.
- **An Audit Wales Review of Governance** has recently been undertaken and the report is awaited, following which any issues identified and recommendations will be considered and a response provided.
- **Research and Evaluation Panels** – consideration will be given to how we can engage more partner organisations and identify and scope Research and Evaluation Panel topics in greater detail including potential research to be undertaken to support the work of a Scrutiny Panel.
- **Voice of Children and Young People** – Members have identified a need for young people to be involved in Scrutiny and the possibility of how to take this forward as a pilot will be explored, before potentially formalising it via nominations for Young Person Co-optees to Scrutiny Committees.
- **Explore more efficient methods of gathering/measuring the impact of Scrutiny** – Research commissioned by Scrutiny and undertaken by Graduates in the Performance Team regarding Methodologies and Performance Indicators, found that the Councils who responded believed Pre-decision scrutiny to be the most impactful method due to the understanding it provides Members, and that it challenges assumptions and assesses risks that may arise from the implementation of a decision, providing an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are finalised. Scrutiny will

continue to promote the benefit of Pre-Decision. Again, of those Councils who responded, performance measurement of the scrutiny function was under developed with most Councils having no Performance indicators for scrutiny, and a few Councils having some performance indicators. In this report, performance data has been included in a table for each Scrutiny Committee and in the coming year potential performance measurement / indicators will be considered for Scrutiny.

- **Better Public Engagement** - The Scrutiny Forward Work Plan for 2024-25 will be published on the Council's website to enable members of the public to engage and contribute to the work of Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Annual Report will also be published on the website to enable members of the public and other stakeholders to look at recent work and outcomes.
- **South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**— The First Meeting of the CJC JOSC was held in July 2024 and Cllr Simon Griffiths has been nominated from Bridgend and Cllr Jon-Paul Blundell as Deputy. Looking ahead, there will be training on the CJC JOSC and forward work planning to identify and prioritise the topics to be scrutinised of the Corporate Joint Committee.
- **Cwm Taf Morgannwg PSB JOSC** – it is being explored how to take forward meaningful Scrutiny of the Public Service Board, as requested by Members of COSC.
- **Evaluation and Feedback** - an annual Survey of Members will be explored and developed to contribute to the evaluation of Scrutiny and feed into future Scrutiny Annual reports, and the performance self-assessment requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP 2022-23

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Heidi Bennett
Cllr Freya Bletsoe
Cllr Paul Davies
Cllr Richard Granville
Cllr Simon Griffiths
Cllr Martin Hughes
Cllr Martyn Jones
Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
Cllr Tim Thomas
Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr Alex Williams (Chair)
Cllr Amanda Williams

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1

Cllr Richard Collins
Cllr Melanie Evans
Cllr Heather Griffiths
Cllr David Harrison
Cllr Martyn Jones
Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins
Cllr Ellie Richards
Cllr Tim Thomas
Cllr Jeff Tildesley
Cllr Alex Williams (Chair)
Cllr Amanda Williams
Cllr Elaine Winstanley

Registered Representatives:

Rev Canon Edward Evans
Lynsey Morris

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2

Cllr Sean Aspey
Cllr Freya Bletsoe (Chair)
Cllr Eugene Caparros
Cllr Paul Davies
Cllr Paula Ford
Cllr Della Hughes
Cllr Maxine Lewis
Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins
Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas
Cllr Alan Wathan
Cllr Amanda Williams
Cllr Richard Williams

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3

Cllr Steven Bletsoe
Cllr Norah Clarke
Cllr Colin Davies
Cllr Paul Davies (Chair)
Cllr Melanie Evans
Cllr Philip Jenkins
Cllr Mike Kearn
Cllr William Kendall
Cllr Jonathan Pratt
Cllr Graham Walter
Cllr Ian Williams
Cllr Martin Williams

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBERSHIP 2023-24

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee		Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1	
Cllr Heidi Bennett Cllr Freya Bletsoe Cllr Paul Davies Cllr Richard Granville Cllr Simon Griffiths Cllr Martin Hughes Cllr Martyn Jones Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas Cllr Tim Thomas Cllr Graham Walter Cllr Alex Williams (Chair) Cllr Amanda Williams		Cllr Richard Collins Cllr Melanie Evans Cllr Heather Griffiths Cllr Della Hughes Cllr Martyn Jones Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins Cllr Ian Spiller Cllr Tim Thomas Cllr Jeff Tildesley Cllr Alex Williams (Chair) Cllr Amanda Williams Cllr Elaine Winstanley	
		Registered Representatives: Angela Clarke Samantha Lambert-Worgan	
Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2		Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3	
Cllr Sean Aspey Cllr Freya Bletsoe (Chair) Cllr Eugene Caparros Cllr Paul Davies Cllr Paula Ford Cllr Dave Harrison Cllr Della Hughes Cllr Maxine Lewis Cllr Johanna Llewellyn-Hopkins Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas Cllr Alan Wathan Cllr Richard Williams		Cllr Steven Bletsoe Cllr Norah Clarke Cllr Colin Davies Cllr Paul Davies (Chair) Cllr Melanie Evans Cllr Philip Jenkins Cllr Mike Kearn Cllr William Kendall Cllr Jonathan Pratt Cllr Graham Walter Cllr Ian Williams Cllr Martin Williams	

LIST OF TRAINING AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2022/23 AND 2023/24

Scrutiny Specific Training

Overview and Scrutiny
Scrutiny Chairing Skills
Scrutiny Financial Monitoring
Scrutiny Questioning Skills
Scrutiny Performance Monitoring Training
Effective Engagement in Scrutiny
Questioning Skills

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Workshops

Performance Reporting Member Session

Chairperson Training

General Chairing Skills (meeting management)
Chair's Hybrid Meeting Training

All Member Training

General and Mandatory

Induction Sessions
Welcome Briefing
Microsoft Teams Training
How to Hit the Ground Running
Standards in Public Life / Code of Conduct & Refresher Training
General Outline of Committees
Equalities & Diversity
Safeguarding
Handling Online Abuse and Intimidation Webinar
Personal Development
Data Protection and Data Protection Act
Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse
Personal Safety & Self-Care
Fraud Awareness
Cyber Ninjas Training
Same Resident Event – Anti-social behaviour, waste enforcement, parking, fire service and arson reduction
Drop in Sessions – Member Surgeries – all Directorates

Corporate

Corporate Plan
Capital Strategy
Effective Decision Making in an Executive Governance System
Future Service Delivery Model

Corporate Health and Safety
Corporate Development Plan
Self-Assessment Member Training
Financial Awareness
Introduction to Treasury Management & Training
Local Government Finance
Housing Services
Public Services Board and the Wellbeing Plan

Education and Family Support

Support Services
Lifelong Learning Services
Learner Support Services
Family Support Services
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
Relationships and Sexuality Education

Social Services and Wellbeing

Overview – Social Services & Wellbeing Directorate & Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding / Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy - Member Awareness Session
Members' Rota Visiting Scheme/Direct Care Service
Mental Health Matters
Wellbeing (including relationship with Halo and Awen)
Adult Social Care
Children's Social Care
Access Standards for Primary Care
Drug/alcohol guidance for Elected Members

Communities

City Deal and City Region
Bridgend CBC and Local Places for Nature
20MPH Speed Restriction Rollout
One.Network (Roadworks Map System)
Local Development Plan Update & 20 min towns
Employability Bridgend
Cardiff Capital Region Briefing
StreetSnap Training for Councillors
Invasive Non Native Species
Climate Change and Flooding

Scrutiny Training for Officers/Report Authors

Education and Family Support Directorate

Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 & 2023/24

Democratic Services

Chief Executive's Directorate

Bridgend County Borough Council

**For further details on the contents of this
report please email: scrutiny@bridgend.gov.uk**



Published September 2024

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Meeting of:	CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	9 SEPTEMBER 2024
Report Title:	FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL & REGULATORY SERVICES, HR & CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MERYL LAWRENCE SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER – SCRUTINY
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	The work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees relates to the review and development of plans, policy or strategy that form part of the Council's Policy Framework and consideration of plans, policy or strategy relating to the power to promote or improve economic, social or environmental wellbeing in the County Borough of Bridgend. Any changes to the structure of the Scrutiny Committees and the procedures relating to them would require the Bridgend County Borough Council Constitution to be updated.
Executive Summary:	<p>The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.</p> <p>The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight and refer any cross-cutting topics to a Committee or Research and Evaluation Panel.</p> <p>The Committee is asked to consider and agree its Forward Work Programme, identify any specific information it wishes to be included in and any invitees they wish to attend for the reports for the next two Committee meetings, identify any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the criteria set out in the report, note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for this Committee and the Forward Work Programmes for each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p> <p>The Committee is also asked to note the content of the Regulatory Report Tracker 2023-24 as reported to the Governance and Audit Committee on 19 July 2024.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- a) Present the Committee with the Forward Work Programme attached as **Appendix A** for consideration and approval;
- b) Request any specific information the Committee identifies to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend;
- c) Request the Committee to identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 3.6 of this report;
- d) Present the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet for this Committee attached as **Appendix B** to track responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings;
- e) Present the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices C, D and E** following consideration in their respective Committee meetings; and
- f) To present, for information, the Regulatory Report Tracker 2023-24 as reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 19 July 2024 - **Appendix F**. A further update to the Tracker will be reported to a future meeting for information, following an updated report to the Governance and Audit Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution requires the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to develop and implement a Forward Work Programme for the Committee.
- 2.2 The Council's Constitution also provides for each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee to propose items for the Forward Work Programme having regard for the Council's Corporate Priorities and Risk Management framework, for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have oversight and refer any cross-cutting topics to a Committee or Research and Evaluation Panel.

Best Practice / Guidance

- 2.3 The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's (CfGS) Good Scrutiny Guide recognises the importance of the forward work programme. In order to 'lead and own the process', it states that Councillors should have ownership of their Committee's work programme, and be involved in developing, monitoring and evaluating it. The Good Scrutiny Guide also states that, in order to make an impact, the scrutiny workload should be coordinated and integrated into corporate processes, to ensure that it contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives, and that work can be undertaken in a timely and well-planned manner.
- 2.4 Forward Work Programmes need to be manageable to maximize the effective use of the limited time and resources of Scrutiny Committees. It is not possible to

include every topic proposed. Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members need to be selective, while also being able to demonstrate clear arguments for including or excluding topics.

- 2.5 The CfGS's guide to effective work programming 'A Cunning Plan?' makes the following reference to the importance of good work programming:

'Effective work programming is the bedrock of an effective scrutiny function. Done well it can help lay the foundations for targeted, incisive and timely work on issues of local importance, where scrutiny can add value. Done badly, scrutiny can end up wasting time and resources on issues where the impact of any work done is likely to be minimal.'

3. Current situation / proposal

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programme

- 3.1 Following the approval of the schedule of Scrutiny Committee meeting dates at the Annual Meeting of Council on 15 May 2024, the standing statutory reports to this Scrutiny Committee of: the Corporate Plan, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Budget, Performance and Budget Monitoring, etc. have been mapped to the appropriate timely meeting dates into a draft Forward Work Programme.
- 3.2 The draft outline Forward Work Programme for each Scrutiny Committee have been prepared using a number of difference sources, including:
- Corporate Risk Assessment;
 - Directorate Business Plans;
 - Previous Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme report topics / Minutes;
 - Committee / Member proposed topics;
 - Policy Framework;
 - Cabinet Work Programme;
 - Discussions with Corporate Directors;
 - Performance Team regarding the timing of performance information.
- 3.3 There are items where there is a statutory duty for Policy Framework documents to be considered by Scrutiny, e.g., the MTFS including draft budget proposals scheduled for consideration in January 2025, following which the Committee will coordinate the conclusions and recommendations from each of the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a report on the overall strategic overview of Cabinet's draft Budget proposals to the meeting of Cabinet in February 2025.
- 3.4 An effective Forward Work Programme will identify the issues that the Committee wishes to focus on during the year and provide a clear plan. However, at each meeting the Committee will have an opportunity to review this as the Forward Work Programme Update will be a standing item on the Agenda, detailing which items are scheduled for future meetings and be requested to clarify any information to be included in reports and the list of invitees. The Forward Work Programme will remain flexible and will be revisited at each COSC meeting with input from each Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported and any updated information gathered from Forward Work Programme meetings with Corporate Directors.

- 3.5 The Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee Draft Forward Work Programmes will be reported to the next meeting of COSC, with the comments from each respective Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee for coordination and oversight of the overall Forward Work Programme. The SOSC Forward Work Programmes will be included in the standing Forward Work Programme Update report from then on with any feedback from each SOSC meeting included.

Identification of Further Items

- 3.6 The Committee are reminded of the Criteria Form which Members can use to propose further items for the FWP which the Committee can then consider for prioritisation at a future meeting. The Criteria Form emphasises the need to consider issues such as impact, risk, performance, budget and community perception when identifying topics for investigation and to maximise the impact scrutiny can have on a topic and the outcomes for people. Criteria which can help the Committee come to a decision on whether to include a referred topic, are set out below:

Recommended Criteria for Selecting Scrutiny Topics:

PUBLIC INTEREST:	The concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny;
ABILITY TO CHANGE:	Priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence, and add value to;
PERFORMANCE:	Priority should be given to the areas in which the Council is not performing well;
EXTENT:	Priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the County Borough, or a large number of the Authority's service users or its population;
REPLICATION:	Work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.

Reasons to Reject Scrutiny Topics:

- The issue is already being addressed / being examined elsewhere and change is imminent.
- The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and can be referred there).
- Scrutiny involvement would have limited / no impact upon outcomes.
- The topic may be sub-judice or prejudicial.
- The topic is too broad to make a review realistic and needs refining / scoping.
- New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected within the next year.
- The topic area is currently subject to inspection or has recently undergone substantial change / reconfiguration.

Corporate Parenting

- 3.7 Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the responsibility of a local authority towards care experienced children and young people. This is a legal responsibility given to local authorities by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004. The role of the Corporate Parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Council as a whole is the 'Corporate Parent', therefore all Members have a level of responsibility for care experienced children and young people in Bridgend.
- 3.8 In this role, it is suggested that Members consider how each item they consider affects care experienced children and young people, and in what way can the Committee assist in these areas.
- 3.9 Scrutiny Champions can greatly support the Committee in this by advising them of the ongoing work of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting and particularly any decisions or changes which they should be aware of as Corporate Parents.
- 3.10 The Forward Work Programme for COSC is attached as **Appendix A** for the Committee's consideration.
- 3.11 The Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet to track outstanding responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 3.12 The Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees are attached as **Appendices C, D and E** for coordination and oversight of the overall Forward Work Programme.
- 3.13 The Regulatory Report Tracker 2023-24 as reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 19 July 2024 is attached as **Appendix F** for information. A further update to the Tracker will be reported to a future meeting for information, following an updated report to Governance and Audit Committee.
- 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 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:

- Long-term - The approval of this report will assist in the planning of Scrutiny business in both the short-term and in the long-term on its policies, budget and service delivery.
- Prevention - The early preparation of the Forward Work Programme allows for the advance planning of Scrutiny business where Members are provided an opportunity to influence and improve decisions before they are made by Cabinet.
- Integration - The report supports all the wellbeing objectives.
- Collaboration - Consultation on the content of the Forward Work Programme has taken place with the Corporate Management Board, Heads of Service and Elected Members.
- Involvement - Advanced publication of the Forward Work Programme ensures that stakeholders can view topics that will be discussed in Committee meetings and are provided with the opportunity to engage.

5.2 When setting its Forward Work Programme, the Committee should consider how each item they propose to scrutinise assists in the achievement of the Council's 7 Wellbeing Objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** as follows :-

1. A County Borough where we protect our most vulnerable
2. A County Borough with fair work, skilled, high-quality jobs and thriving towns
3. A County Borough with thriving valleys communities
4. A County Borough where we help people meet their potential
5. A County Borough that is responding to the climate and nature emergency
6. A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community
7. A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives

6. **Climate Change Implications**

6.1 The Committee should consider how each item they scrutinise affects climate change, the Council's Net Zero Carbon 2030 target and how it meets the Council's commitments to protect and sustain the environment over the long term. There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report.

7. **Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 The Committee should consider how each item they scrutinise affects care experienced children and young people, and in what way the Committee can assist in these areas. Safeguarding is everyone's business and means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Consider and approve the Forward Work Programme for this Committee in **Appendix A**.
- b) Identify any specific information the Committee wishes to be included in the items for the next two meetings, including invitees they wish to attend.
- c) Identify whether there are presently any further items for consideration on the Forward Work Programme having regard to the selection criteria in paragraph 3.6 of this report.
- d) Note the Recommendations Monitoring Action Sheet in **Appendix B** to track outstanding responses to the Committee's recommendations made at previous meetings;
- e) Note the Forward Work Programmes for the Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committees attached as **Appendices C, D and E** following consideration in their respective Committee meetings; and
- f) Note the content of the Regulatory Report Tracker 2023-24 as reported to Governance and Audit Committee on 19 July 2024 - **Appendix F** and that a further update to the Tracker will be reported to a future meeting for information, following its report to Governance and Audit Committee.

Background documents

None.

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Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
2024-25 Forward Work Programme

Monday 25 July 2024 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Revenue Budget Outturn 2023-24		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy
Budget Monitoring 2024-25 – Quarter 1 Revenue Forecast		As above
Quarter 4 Performance 2023-24		As above plus: Head of Partnership Services Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager; Corporate Performance Manager;
Corporate Self-Assessment 2023-24		As above plus: Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager; Corporate Performance Manager.
Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination		N/A
Nominations to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements following Transition to a Single Public Services Board (PSB) for Cwm Taf Morgannwg		N/A

Monday 9 September 2024 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children's Social Care; Group Manager - Sports and Physical Activity; Group Manager - Commissioning

APPENDIX A

Corporate Plan PI Targets (Date to be confirmed)		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal; <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change; and Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Scrutiny Annual Report		N/A

Thursday 24 October 2024 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Budget Monitoring 2024-25 – Quarter 2 Revenue Forecast		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy
Using Service User Perspectives Update	May be an information report or Briefing	TBC

Monday 16 December 2024 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Quarter 2 Performance Report 2023-24		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager; Corporate Performance Manager; and Head of Partnership Services

APPENDIX A

Wednesday 15 January 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Budget Proposals		<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy;</p> <p>Deputy Head of Finance; Head of Partnership Services; and Finance Manager – Social Services & Wellbeing / Chief Executive's Directorate</p>

Tuesday 28 January 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Scrutiny Recommendations on Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Draft Budget Consultation Process		<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance</p> <p><u>Officer</u> Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change</p>
Capital Strategy 2025-26 onwards		<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance;</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change; and Group Manager – Chief Accountant</p>
Budget Monitoring 2024-25 – Quarter 3 Revenue Forecast		<p><u>All Cabinet Members</u></p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change; Corporate Director – Education, Early Years and Young People; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; and Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy</p>

APPENDIX A

Monday 17 March 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Refresh 2024-25		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Finance, Housing and Change; and Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager
Quarter 3 Performance Report 2023-24		<u>All Cabinet Members</u> <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer - Finance, Performance and Change; Corporate Director - Education and Family Support; Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing; Corporate Director – Communities; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy; Corporate Policy and Public Affairs Manager Corporate Performance Manager; Head of Partnership Services.

Reports to be Scheduled		
Report Topics	Any Specific Information Requested	Invitees
Digital Strategy Review	Potentially Autumn 2024	TBC
Review Progress of Disabled Facilities Grants – <i>To be reviewed following receipt of Briefing report</i>	Updated Briefing Paper to be provided in first Instance and then to be scheduled for COSC or a SOSOC if required.	TBC
Engagement and Participation Strategy Action Plan	Update to be provided within 12 months	TBC
Workforce Strategy Monitoring Action Plans	To monitor progress / implementation of Action Plans	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council; Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Chief Officer Legal and Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy; Group Manager – Human Resources Organisational Development
Cessation of Ukrainian Refugee Host Sponsorship	Information report	N/A

APPENDIX B**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING ACTION SHEET 2023-24**

Date of Meeting	Agenda Item	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Response
21 March 2024	Q3 Performance 2023-24	The Committee made recommendations / requests for additional information.	Scrutiny	Circulated for response.	
21 March 2024	Corporate Plan Delivery Plan Review for 2024/25	The Committee requested that a Workshop be arranged for Members of COSC to consider how best to measure service user perspectives as part of the Council's performance management framework and to discuss and identify potential areas that could be explored.	Scrutiny/ Performance	Actioned - Workshop held on 3 June 2024 to develop areas for potential exploration.	Further work to be carried out and included in a future report / information report or briefing to be scheduled on the Forward Work Programme.
21 March 2024	Strategic Workforce Plan	<p>The Committee requested that more information be included in future reports on the Plan including data examples and details of actions taken for each theme to demonstrate progress, future targets for the Plan, and the use of graphics to show progress and staffing levels.</p> <p>The Committee requested that the monitoring of progress on the implementation of the Plan be scheduled on the Forward Work Programme for 2024.</p>	Scrutiny/ Chief Officer – Legal & Regulatory Services, HR & Corporate Policy		

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Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1
2024-25 Forward Work Programme

18 July 2024 at 11.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Home-to-School/College Transport Policy	<p>Outcome of the HTST policy public consultation.</p> <p>To include aspects relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe routes to schools • Implications of revised LDP • School catchment areas • Pupils' admission numbers • New school builds 	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services.</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director for Education, Early Years and Young People. Head of Education and Family Support Group Manager (Strategy, Performance and Support)</p> <p><u>Headteacher Nominees</u> Headteacher Maesteg Comprehensive Headteacher Nottage Primary</p>

Monday 16 th September 2024 at 11.00am –		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate Strategic Plan 2023-26 Update	To include update on ALN and Budget implications from 2024-25	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services.</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director for Education, Early Years and Young People.</p> <p><u>CSC</u></p> <p><u>Headteacher Nominees - TBA</u></p> <p><u>External</u></p>

Monday 18 th November 2024 at 11.00am		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
School Modernisation Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-decision Scrutiny • The Committee agreed to consider Welsh Medium Education under their future item on School Modernisation and requested that they receive evidence 	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services.</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director for Education, Early Years and Young People.</p> <p><u>CSC</u></p> <p><u>Headteacher Nominees - TBA</u></p>

	<p>that the Local Authority had gathered on the 'demand' for additional Welsh education and childcare provision, as part of this report, particularly in those areas such as Porthcawl where there were proposed developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information to be requested regarding the childcare hubs, facilities on the areas in need based on the LDP evidence to be made available for the School Modernisation Update scheduled on the FWP. <u>To include the upgrading of older school facilities</u> – Scope to include an update from the Corporate landlord in order to consider the current situation with the whole school estate (Area to be covered in Questioning Summary). 	<u>External</u>
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Thursday 16 th January 2025 at 11.00am		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29		<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services.</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director for Education and Family Support</p> <p><u>CSC</u></p> <p><u>Headteacher Nominees - TBA</u></p> <p><u>External</u></p>

APPENDIX C

Monday 3rd March 2025 at 11.00am –

Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Behaviour, Attendance and Exclusions		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services. <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director for Education and Family Support <u>CSC</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees - TBA</u> <u>External</u>

Thursday 8th May 2025 at 11.00am

Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Safeguarding		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Services. <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director for Education and Family Support <u>CSC</u> <u>Headteacher Nominees - TBA</u> <u>External</u>

Members Briefing sessions.

- Reporting of exam results - Session to be held to update Members on recommencing of reporting exam results.
- Leadership and Safeguarding – How they are being audited.
- Secondary School meal Provision - Either an information report or a briefing session arranged as soon as possible to further explore issues raised by Members on this subject. Members have also requested more visits to schools, focusing on secondary school meal provision in this instance, and the capacity of the catering service to meet this need.
- New Estyn Inspection Framework
- Governing Bodies – Support and funding. Invitation to be extended to representatives and the Governors Association

Information reports to be provided.

- English Language School's catchment areas / capacity
- Appointment of Local Education Authority (LEA) governors – Policy and rules
- Criteria and procedure for the appointment and removal of local authority school governors'
- Corporate performance

Potential Items to be scheduled.

- ALN Provision and Implementation Update
- Review of school improvement services
- Review of post inspection plan
- School mergers
- Reduction in Nursery Education Provision
- Update on UPFSM Rollout (to include pupils' views and be invited to meeting)
– possibly taken up by BREP
- Delegated budgets, monitor the implications of any proposed reduction to school delegated budget – on school budgets, staffing structures, redundancies, and any resulting impact on pupils – possibly taken up by BREP

Scrutiny Panel

- Potential research and evaluation panel comprising a few members of the Committee to consider the subject of Governing Body support and funding in more detail with any recommendations reported back to the main committee.

Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2
2024-25 Forward Work Programme

Monday 8 July 2024 at 10.00am		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Building on Strengths, Improving Lives – A Three-Year Plan for Sustainable Care and Support for Adults in Bridgend County Borough Council.	<p>Pre-decision.</p> <p>The purpose of the report is to provide Members of the Committee with an opportunity to scrutinise the three-year plan for sustainable care and support for adults in Bridgend County Borough Council.</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing.</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and the Head of Adult Social Care; and Head of Adult Social Care; Social Work Lead in Adult Social Care; Group Manager - Direct Care Provider Services; Group Manager – Integrated Cluster Network Service; Group Manager - Learning Disability, Mental Health, and Substance Misuse.</p>
Corporate Parenting Champion Nomination Report	To nominate one Member as its Corporate Parenting Champion to represent the Committee as an invitee at meetings of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting in addition to the Chairperson of SOSOC 2 who is automatically appointed.	N/A

Monday 23 September 2024 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Delayed Pathways of Care	To consider the current issues being experienced in the County Borough and specifically how the Authority is working with the Health Service to support individuals who require support at home including reablement care when discharged from hospital.	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and partner representatives, including health colleagues - TBD.</p>
Extension of the Healthy Living Partnership	<p>Pre-decision.</p> <p>The report offers Members the opportunity to scrutinise the benefits of an extension to the existing healthy living partnership agreement with GLL/Halo Leisure. The current agreement is due to end in March 2027 and the report will provide information on the legal and procurement considerations that the Council may need to make. The report will identify how the current partnership has delivered on outcomes for the Council and supported its wellbeing objectives whilst improving the leisure facilities and delivering financial savings. The report will identify the reasoning as to why an extended relationship may be a cost-effective way forward for the Council in comparison to alternatives.</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and others TBD.</p>

Thursday 14 November 2024 at 10.00am		
Theme/ Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Substance Misuse	To evaluate the effectiveness of the current arrangements and to provide an opportunity for Members to advise on future developments.	<p><u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing.</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and the Head of Adult Social Care; and service users/ partners – Police and Health colleagues - TBD.</p>

APPENDIX D

Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2023-24	To include an update on Child Exploitation, placement sufficiency, and staffing challenges.	<u>Cabinet Member</u> Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing. <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; and the Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children's Social Care; Group Manager, IAA & Safeguarding; Team Manager – Older People - Mental Health.
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Friday 17 January 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 and Budget Proposals		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of Council; Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share). <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing; Chief Officer - Finance, Housing and Change; Chief Officer - Legal and Regulatory Services, HR and Corporate Policy; Head of Adult Social Care; Head of Children's Social Care; Deputy Head of Finance; and Finance Manager – Social Services & Wellbeing / Chief Executive's Directorate.

Thursday, 13 March 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Library and Cultural Services	Pre-decision.	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of Council; Deputy Leader/ Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing; Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance; Cabinet Member for Resources (Job Share). <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive; Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing.

Thursday, 1 May 2025 at 10.00am		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
TBD		<u>Cabinet Member</u> <u>Officers</u>

Briefings and Workshops:

Briefing/ Workshop: September 2024		
Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
The Elimination of Private Profit from the Care of Looked After Children	The Welsh Government introduced legislation, The Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill, on 20 May 2024. Amongst a number of aims, the Bill contains provisions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restrict the making of profit by providers of children's homes services, secure accommodation services and fostering services for looked after children. 	Members and officers for the Briefing and Workshop – to be finalised.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require local authorities to submit a sufficiency plan to Welsh Ministers in respect of accommodation for looked after children, and to take all reasonable steps to secure sufficient accommodation provided by not-for-profit entities, either within or near to its areas to meet their needs. <p>The aim is to ensure that public money invested in accommodation for care experienced children is not extracted as profit, but instead is reinvested back into the system to support sustainable and better outcomes, services and professional development.</p> <p>The initial briefing for all Members, and the subsequent Workshop for Members of SOSC 2, will explore what this could mean for the future care of children in the Borough.</p>	
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Other Items:

15 April postponed reports:

- A 3 Year Sustainability Plan to Improve Outcomes for Children and Family Services in Bridgend: Year 1 Report on Progress – 2023/24 - updated version to be provided during 2024-25.
- Information Report for Noting – Quarter 3 Performance 2023-24 (and Dashboard) – updated version to be provided during 2024-25.

Reports requested by the Committee:

- Child Exploitation – To be covered in the Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report 2023-24.
- Reablement Care – To be covered in the Delayed Pathways of Care Report – 23 September 2024.
- Progress on the Learning Disability Transformation Programme – 6 monthly updates to be provided during 2024-25.
- Direct Payments – TBD.
- Post 18 Housing and Financial Support for Care Experienced Children (Post Basic Income Pilot) – A report, Basic Income Pilot Scheme Exit Strategy, was considered by the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting at its meeting on 8 May 2024. This could be provided for information to Members.

Other Potential Items:

- Social Services Transport Policy.
- The Social Partnership.

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Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3
2024-25 Forward Work Programme

Monday 16 July 2024 4.00pm		
Report Topic	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Valleys Regeneration Strategy	<p>The development of a commercial property enhancement grant for the Valley high streets to make them look better and bring properties back into commercial use.</p> <p>The development of funding bids for Valleys to enhance the economy and stimulate new job opportunities.</p> <p>The increase in the amount of land and premises available for businesses including industrial starter units, in the Valleys.</p> <p>Accessibility for people from the Valleys to wider public transport.</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Housing</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Corporate Director Communities</p> <p><u>External</u></p>

Monday 30 September 2024 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Housing and Homelessness Update	<p>Affordable; Accessible; Social; Energy efficiency housing; Registered Social Landlords</p> <p>Progress on Empty homes in the County Borough, including the number, the Empty Homes Policy and Grants available – as requested by Members of SOSC 3 at 22 April meeting.</p> <p>The Committee requested the above to also include churches and chapels – asked for by Members of SOSC 3 at 16 July meeting.</p>	<p><u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Chief Officer – Finance, Housing and Change Head of Partnerships</p> <p><u>External</u></p>

APPENDIX E

	Officers view on all social housing landlords (including V2C) operational practices (positive and negative) – requested by members of SOSC 3 at 16 July meeting.	
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Monday 2 December 2024 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Future Waste	Setting out of future direction. What is going to be done. How the future service will look. Outcome of consultation.	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director Communities Head of Operations - Community Services <u>External</u>

Monday 20 January 2025 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29		<u>Cabinet Members</u> Leader of the Council Deputy Leader of Council and Cabinet Member of Social Services and Health Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Legal Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration <u>Officers</u> Chief Executive Chief Officer Finance, Performance and Change Corporate Director Communities

Monday 17 February 2025 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Maesteg Town Hall Review Or Valleys to Coast	Lessons Learned - COSC delegated the Lessons Learned report to SOSC 3 to consider, when the project has been completed. (Possible information report or member briefing)	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Wellbeing <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director Communities <u>External</u>

Monday 7 April 2025 4.00pm		
Report Topics	Information Required / Committee's Role	Invitees
Climate Change Decarbonisation	Update on progress and future priorities given current and future budget implications Electric charging points update	<u>Cabinet Members</u> Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment <u>Officers</u> Corporate Director Communities <u>External</u>

Member Briefing sessions

- Infrastructure Delivery - including specifically condition of the highways in include; repairs and maintenance, road resurfacing and potholes, network management of utilities, and the development of internal metrics for repairs and closing referrals – all Members Briefing
- Corporate Joint Committees Regional Responsibilities – all Members Briefing
- Communities Directorate Target Operating Model (TOM)
- Porthcawl Regeneration Update / along with an update on the Porthcawl Grand Pavilion – October / November all Members Briefing
- Community Transfers (CAT) - Position Update

Information reports

- Audit Wales 'Springing Forward Asset Management Inspection Report' – including associated Action Plan
- Update on the Shared Prosperity Funding (how grants are progressing in terms of spend, who the recipients are, feedback on the process) - November / December

Potential Items

- Heat Network projects Update
- Scrutinise the regeneration of Bridgend Town Centre
- Sickness levels in the Authority and its effect on decision-making in the Directorate

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Name of Audit / regulator	Report issued	Oversight and Date	Recommendation / proposal for improvement	Responsible Officer	Delivery Date	Action Update Q4 2023-24	RAG Q4	Open/ Closed
CIW Inspection Report on Foster Wales Bridgend	Jan-24	SOSC2 TBC	R3 Safeguarding procedures are not consistently followed. Information sharing between teams, consideration of risks and decision making is not robust.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Mar-24	Mandatory training on Part 5's (professional concerns referrals) took place in February 2024 with the fostering team, a Significant events form has now been introduced to record issues and decision making. Workshops to be held across children's services to support the Part 5 process. New delivery date 30/09/2024	AMBER	Open
			R7 Some children have experienced high numbers of moves, which impacts their stability and outcomes	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Mar-25	Placement stability support to be expanded via restructure report – awaiting sign off. Unable to secure an organisation to create the Placement support service, therefore an in-house service is being developed, however there are recruitment issues. A board is in place to oversee the project plan	AMBER	Open
			R9 As part of the matching process key information is shared during planning meetings, however, these meetings are not completed consistently.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Quarterly, next due April 24.	Placement planning meetings are now a form on WCCIS to measure compliance. Need for children's teams to understand and comply with process.	AMBER	Open
			R10 Children who need long term care, are matched with carers, without a thorough assessment of their long-term needs, how these change over time, carers commitment and understanding of these needs.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Mar-24	The Fostering Service will seek to collaboratively produce a local authority process for agreeing long term matches for care experienced children. New delivery date 30/09/2024	RED	Open
			R12 Feedback from foster carers has been mixed regarding the foster carer charter implementation, information sharing and decision-making needing to be improved.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Jun-24	Whole service approach needed with engagement and commitment from children's teams. Liaison carer and fostering team members to attend team meetings.	AMBER	Open
			R16 Evidence of updated DBS checks for staff needs strengthening.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Mar-24	There is a robust system for ensuring that DBS are current which is monitored via Corporate Safeguarding Group. In addition, DBS compliance is monitored via Supervision. New delivery date 30/09/2024	AMBER	Open
			R17 Quality assurance and learning framework has not been implemented consistently.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Apr-24	Further work needed to fully embed QA Meeting to take place with QA officer re implementation in Q4 to support progress.	AMBER	Open
			R20 Additional guides for children reflecting different ages and needs to be developed.	Group Manager Placement and Provider Services	Nov-24	Will be updated following National Handbook exp. Sept 24	AMBER	Open
CIW Improvement Check Children's Social Care Services	Nov-22	SOSC2 27 March 2023	Pe9 - Continue to work towards ensuring a sufficient and sustainable workforce, with the capacity and capability to consistently meet statutory responsibilities	Director and Workforce Board	Continuous	Monthly workforce planning meetings take place to closely monitor the workstreams and their impact. There is an improving picture with a reduction in agency workforce from 73 to 41 children's social workers in the last year, with further reductions planned as the 'managed team' supporting the IAA service has been given notice. A number of actions have been critical in the progress made: Growing our own Social Work Programme continues with preparations for cohort graduating in June 2024 to join the permanent workforce, and advertising for further candidates for 2024-2025 academic year due to roll out. A project group continues to oversee international recruitment and to date 13 social workers have been offered posts with 11 having started in post. 8 have passed their probation period successfully with the remaining who are in post still in their probation period. Currently awaiting confirmation of 2024 team establishment to determine whether continuation of project, strong applications continue to be received. Continuous effort to reach the wider workforce market through targeted campaigns, including an online session attended by over 40 people, re-writing of adverts, promotion of vacancies and working in the borough, improvements to online website, and improving the application/ new starter experience. Steady increase of applications and appointed candidates indicates positive impact of the above.	AMBER	Open
			Pr6 - Continue to closely monitor the position of children's social services and early help services to ensure any indicators of risks to achieving and sustaining improvement and compliance with statutory responsibilities, and pressure/ gaps in service provision are quickly identified and the required action is taken	Director/HoS/Dep uty HoS	Jun-23	Bronze and silver meetings are taking place as indicated where comprehensive data/dashboards are presented by every part of the service. In addition, monitoring and analysis of cross directorate activity and performance is monitored by the shared dataset that is presented at every Early Help and Safeguarding Board meeting. With the change of directorates the Social Services Improvement Board will monitor early help performance from Q1 of 2024/25 onwards. New delivery date 31/03/2025	AMBER	Open

Name of Audit / regulator	Report issued	Oversight and Date	Recommendation / proposal for improvement	Responsible Officer	Delivery Date	Action Update Q4 2023-24	RAG Q4	Open/ Closed
			PR8 - Ensure children are not placed in unregistered services and must continue its efforts to identify suitable, registered placements	GM Commissioning	Continuous	A Children and Young People Commissioning Strategy has been developed and approved by Cabinet in April 2024Children are only placed in unregistered services in exceptional circumstances and when this does happen the arrangements are closely monitored and reported to CIW for consideration by their enforcement panel. Meadow's View children's home is open and in-house provision is being used optimally to meet needs. Children are only placed in unregistered services in exceptional circumstances and when this does happen the arrangements are closely monitored and reported to CIW. A priority in the commissioning strategy are the developing sufficient residential provision in the County Borough to meet needs and ensure the Council is well placed to meet the requirements of the eliminating profit legislation being progressed by Welsh Government. Business Cases are being progressed for consideration by the Regional Partnership Board. A second priority is development of sufficient foster carers to meet needs of care experienced children and prevent escalation of needs to residential care. There has been a net loss of foster carers in the last year but significant efforts through Foster Wales Bridgend in the areas of marketing, recruitment and support to foster carers to support an improved position. A key element of the Commissioning Strategies has been the updating of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy – which is a standalone document with the key findings included in the above strategies – as required	AMBER	Open
Audit Wales, Springing Forward – Strategic Workforce Management	Oct-22	COSC	R2 The Council should develop a suite of strategic quantitative and qualitative measures to enhance its ability to understand the impacts and affordability of its workforce plans and actions.	Kelly Watson	Sep-23	The current budget position has meant that all services have had to review how they deliver in the future, it is envisaged that this will be the immediate workforce priority. Whilst we have developed some revised data, we are continuing to grow this to support directorate requirements. Revised delivery date September 2024.	AMBER	Open
Transformational Leadership Programme Board – Baseline governance Review – Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board	Aug-22	SOSC2	R4 Risk Management Our work found areas of risk management that need to be improved, particularly in relation to regional workforce planning. The TPLB should strengthen regional risk management arrangements by improving the identification and prioritisation of shared risks and ensuring mitigating actions are robust and clearly articulated.	Head of Regional Commissioning Unit	ongoing	There remains uncertainty over any additional resource to implement further faster (noting Allied Health Professional funding being received) and recognition that there exists an ever-increasing financial challenge the need to accelerate the rebalancing of the health and care system, ensuring that existing resources are utilised most effectively and stive towards the Further Faster ambitions remains. Effective transformation of our existing model of care including engagement, understanding resistance to change, create a learning environment that studies each change and is flexible to respond to new knowledge and data is needed.	AMBER	Open
			R5 Regional Commissioning Unit Our work found that the lack of capacity within the RCU was leading to some delays in progressing actions. The work of the RCU is crucial to the continuing success of the TPLB. The TPLB needs to consider how it can build capacity and maximise resources to support the TPLB and minimise overreliance on a small team.	Head of Regional Commissioning Unit	2023-24	Additional Capacity Secured - Director for Integration post commenced Nov 2023 Capital planning officer post commenced October 2023. NEST Co-ordinator / Children and young people Commenced March 2024. 3x Capital Project manager roles (Funded through Integrated Care Capital Resource for 2 year fixed term), Currently being shortlisted expected in post by June 2024 (Note one post to focus on digital/assistive tech development). New delivery date 31/12/2024	AMBER	Open
			R6 Use of Resources Improving the health and social care outcomes of the region will require efficient and effective use of combined resources. Our work found that there had been some limited examples of pooled budgets and other arrangements for sharing resources. The TPLB needs to explore more innovative ways of sharing and pooling core resources across the region to maximise its impact and outcomes for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg population	Head of Regional Commissioning Unit	2023-24	Welsh Government officials are currently working to review Part 2 and Part 9 Codes of Practice (Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014) which will further strengthen partnership arrangement and collaborative service delivery (Consultation planned Autumn 2023). As part of the amendments to codes of practice the duty to co-operate will be established as lying equally on Local Authorities and Health Boards and the role of the RPB as a key vehicle through which that duty should be exercised. Furthermore within chapter 5, pooled funds positioned more clearly within joint commissioning context and greater flexibility given in relation to pooling resources at Regional, sub-regional pan cluster, cluster and individual levels. Exploring both the maximum potential of a Section 33 structure and the practicalities of a formal public sector Joint Venture agreed as the best options for further exploration as part of the enablers within the Integrated Pathways implementation Programme. New delivery date 31/03/2025	AMBER	Open

Name of Audit / regulator	Report issued	Oversight and Date	Recommendation / proposal for improvement	Responsible Officer	Delivery Date	Action Update Q4 2023-24	RAG Q4	Open/ Closed
			R7 Regional Workforce Planning Like many parts of the public sector, the region is experiencing significant workforce challenges. The TLPB needs to consider how it can facilitate a regional and strategic approach to addressing these challenges and to help it deliver its priorities.	Head of Regional Commissioning Unit	ongoing	One of the four quadruple aims outlined in the document, ‘A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care’, is to have a motivated and sustainable health and social care workforce that delivers a truly seamless system of health and care, and calls for a fundamental shift in our understanding of who constitutes the workforce, and how we support the contribution that each individual makes. Requiring not only ‘greater parity of esteem’ between health and social care professionals, but also recognising and supporting the vital role played by the informal workforce of unpaid carers and of volunteers. New seamless models of health and care that emerge, require a clear and coherent approach to developing and planning the whole workforce. To meet this need, WG commissioned Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW) and Social Care Wales (SCW) to develop a long-term workforce strategy, in partnership with NHS and Local Government, the voluntary and independent sectors, as well as regulators, professional bodies, and education providers. The workforce strategy aims to address the Parliamentary Review’s call for joint regional workforce planning. The workforce strategy also identifies dynamic leadership will be needed to instigate change, empower others and lead by example, as well as create conditions for continuous innovation and improvement, to drive up the quality and value of services.	AMBER	Open
CIW, Performance Evaluation Inspection of Children’s Services	May-22	SOSC2 Nov 2022	PR3 - Placement sufficiency and support	HoS/GM Placeme	Mar-23	Meadows View (assessment and emergency residential provision) has been registered and opened. Radical reform funding from WG has also been granted for us to establish a Placement Support team for fostering and residential care and this project is underway. This funding is short term so it is anticipated there will be challenges in recruiting to short term contracts. In house fostering numbers have reduced during the year as numbers leaving have exceeded new recruits which is a cause for concern. Foster carer retention. The regional children’s programme board has an accommodation workstream which is driving the development and bids for associated funding for specialist provision. Business justification case has been developed for additional in-house residential provision which will be submitted to the Regional Capital Board for consideration. New delivery date 31/03/2025 - Welsh Government have now introduced their Eliminating Profit Bill. There are significant risks for the Local Authority in identifying suitable placements for children currently accommodated in for-profit providers. Should these providers exit the market, there would be a significant shortage of placements for these children in Bridgend and across Wales.	RED	Open
Audit Wales, Review of Arrangements to Become a ‘Digital Council’	Jun-21	COSC	P1 The Council could improve its digital strategy	Martin Morgans	Dec-23	The new digital strategy is currently being developed and will be completed by December 2024. Audit Wales have recently conducted a separate Digital Strategy Review which was published in April 2024, and these findings and recommendations will be used to support the development of the new strategy.	AMBER	Open
			P3 - The Council should consider improving communication with staff / members to evoke the culture necessary to change	Martin Morgans	Dec-23	A Peer assessment of our communications and marketing function was carried out during 2022-23, a part of which relates to improving communication with staff and members. Following on from the review, work is now ongoing to improve internal comms. This is being informed by feedback from the recent staff survey and from staff focus groups which should take place over the summer. This work will be complete by October 2024	AMBER	Open

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