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

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



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

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please 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: Gwasanaethau Democrataidd

Ein cyf / Our ref:
Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Dydd Mercher, 17 Medi 2025

Annwyl Cyngorydd,

CYNGOR

Cynhelir Cyfarfod Cyngor Hybrid yn Siambr y Cyngor Swyddfeydd Dinesig Stryd yr Angel Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr, CF31 4BW / O bell trwy Microsoft Teams ar **Dydd Mercher, 24 Medi 2025 am 16:00.**

AGENDA

- 1 Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb
Derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb gan Aelodau.
- 2 Datganiadau o fuddiant
Derbyn datganiadau o ddiddordeb personol a rhagfarnol (os o gwbl) gan Aelodau / Swyddogion yn unol â darpariaethau'r Cod Ymddygiad Aelodau a fabwysiadwyd gan y Cyngor o 1 Medi 2008.
- 3 Cymeradwyaeth Cofnodion
I dderbyn am gymeradwyaeth y Cofnodion cyfarfod y 23/07/2025 7 - 20
- 4 Cyflwyniad i'r Cyngor gan Gomisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddau (De Cymru)
21 - 22
- 5 I dderbyn cyhoeddiadau oddi wrth:
(i) Maer (neu'r person sy'n llywyddu)
(ii) Prif Weithredwr

6	<u>Derbyn cyhoeddiadau gan yr Arweinydd</u>	
7	<u>Archwiliad Gwella Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru (AGC) o Wasanaethau Plant a Theuluoedd Mehefin 2025</u>	23 - 54
8	<u>Adroddiad Blynnyddol Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol 2024-25</u>	55 - 132
9	<u>Canllawiau Cynllunio Atodol Datblygu Manwerthu a Masnachol Canllawiau Cynllunio</u>	133 - 182
10	<u>Adroddiadau Gwybodaeth i'w Nodi</u>	183 - 200

11 Derbyn y Cwestiynau canlynol gan:

Cwestiwn gan y Cyngorydd Ian Williams i'r Aelod Cabinet Newid Hinsawdd a'r Amgylchedd

Pa bwysau mae Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr yn ei osod ar SRS, CNC a LIC i olrhain ffynhonnell y llygredd sy'n effeithio ar ein traethau a'n hafonydd (Afon Ogwr, Afon Newton, Bae Sandy, Treco a Bae Gorffwys)? Mae ein trigolion bellach yn dioddef yr halogiad hwn yn rheolaidd ac mae'n achosi problemau meddygol amrywiol ac mae hyn yn hollol annerbyniol! Mae hefyd yn cael effaith negyddol ar economi ein sir gyda thrigolion yn chwilio am foroedd a thraethau glanach i ffwrdd oddi wrth draethau Porthcawl.

Cwestiwn gan y Cyngorydd Ian Spiller i'r Aelod Cabinet Adfywio

Nid oedd y postyn yng nghanol y dref ar Stryd y Frenhines yn gweithio o ddydd Iau 26 Mehefin tan ddydd Mawrth 29 Gorffennaf 2025, sy'n golygu er gwaethaf y gorchymyn traffig fod ceir wedi gallu cyrraedd canol y dref yn ystod y cyfnod hwn.

Fedrwch chi gadarnhau, os gwelwch yn dda, faint o ddigwyddiadau traffig yr adroddwyd amdanynt rhwng 10a.m. a 6p.m yn ystod y cyfnod hwn a natur y digwyddiadau hynny?

12 Hysbysiad o Gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cyngorydd Tim Thomas

Cynnig i'r Cyngor Llawn – Diwygiadau Cynllunio i godi'r gwastad o ran anghenion cymunedau gyda datblygwyr mawr.

Mae'r Cyngor hwn yn nodi:

- Bod Llywodraeth Cymru ar hyn o bryd yn ystyried cynigion ar gyfer diwygiadau cynllunio yng Nghymru.
- Pwysigrwyd y system gynllunio wrth ddarparu datblygu cynaliadwy, tai fforddiadwy, a seilwaith cymunedol.
- Bod cytundebau Adran 106, caniatâd cynllunio, ac ansawdd a safonau adeiladau newydd yn ganolog i gynnal hyder y cyhoedd yn y system gynllunio.
- Bod cyflawni gwael yn erbyn rhwymedigaethau y cytunwyd arnynt, neu safonau gwael yn ansawdd cartrefi newydd, yn tanseilio ymddiriedaeth ac yn niweidio cymunedau.

Mae'r Cyngor hwn yn credu:

- Bod cyflawni cytundebau Adran 106 yn gadarn, caniatâd cynllunio, a safonau cyson uchel mewn datblygiadau tai newydd yn hanfodol.
- A lle mae cyflawniad rhwymedigaethau cynllunio wedi bod yn wael, neu lle mae ansawdd a safonau adeiladau newydd wedi bod yn annigonol, dylid trin hyn fel ystyriaeth berthnasol wrth benderfynu ar geisiadau cynllunio yn y dyfodol gan yr un datblygwr neu bartion cysylltiedig.
- Y dylai tramgwyddwyr difrifol a mynych sy'n parhau i fethu â bodloni rhwymedigaethau neu safonau ansawdd dro ar ôl tro gael eu rhoi ar gofrestr o berfformwyr gwael a'u gwahardd rhag cyflwyno cynigion datblygu pellach am gyfnod penodol.
- Rhaid i'r diwygiad cynllunio hwnnw yng Nghymru gryfhau atebolrwydd a gorfodaeth er mwyn sicrhau bod datblygwyr yn cyflawni ar eu hymrwymadau ac o ran ansawdd.

Mae'r Cyngor hwn, felly, yn penderfynu:

1. Galw ar Arweinydd y Cyngor i ysgrifennu at Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Lywodraeth Leol a Thai, ac at Brif Weinidog Cymru, gan groesawu gwaith Llywodraeth Cymru ar ddiwygio'r maes cynllunio ac annog bod yn rhaid i hyn gynnwys:
 - o Monitro a gorfodaeth gryfach ar gytundebau Adran 106 a chaniatadau cynllunio.
 - o Gofyniad i awdurdodau cynllunio lleol ystyried record datblygwyr wrth gyflawni rhwymedigaethau blaenorol ac ansawdd y datblygiadau a gwblhawyd ganddynt fel ystyriaethau cynllunio perthnasol.
 - o Mwy o bwerau i gynghorau wrthod ceisiadau cynllunio lle mae datblygwyr wedi methu ag anrhydeddu ymrwymadau neu lle mae safon adeiladau newydd blaenorol wedi bod yn wael.
 - o Creu cofrestr genedlaethol o ddatblygwyr sy'n perfformio'n wael, gyda phwerau i wahardd tramgwyddwyr difrifol a mynych rhag ymgymryd â datblygiadau newydd am nifer o flynyddoedd.
2. Dosbarthu'r cynnig hwn i Gymdeithas Llywodraeth Leol Cymru (CLILC) ac i bob Aelod Lleol o'r Senedd ac Aelodau Seneddol sy'n cynrychioli Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr, gan annog iddynt ei gefnogi.

13 Hysbysiad o Gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cynghorydd Jane Gebbie

Mae'r Cyngor hwn yn nodi'r canlynol:

1. Mae gweithwyr Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Rhondda Cynon Taf yn gallu ymuno â Chronfa Bensiwn Rhondda Cynon Taf, sydd, fel rhan o Bartneriaeth Pensiwn Cymru (PBCC), yn rheoli dros £3 biliwn ar ran gweithwyr llywodraeth leol a phobl sydd wedi ymddeol.
2. Mae buddsoddiadau presennol yn cynnwys daliadau mewn cwmnïau tanwydd ffosil, gweithgynhyrchwyr arfau, a chorfforaethau rhyngwladol sydd wedi eu cyhuddo o gyfrannu at dorri hawliau dynol neu ddirywiad amgylcheddol.
3. Mae gan gronfeydd Cynllun Pensiwn Llywodraeth Leol (CPLIL) ddyletswydd ffyddlon i weithredu er budd hirdymor gorau yr aelodau, sy'n cynnwys rheoli risgiau amgylcheddol, cymdeithasol a llywodraethu (ESG).

4. Mae nifer o gyrff cyhoeddus eraill, gan gynnwys cynghorau dinesig a sirol ledled y DU, wedi mabwysiadu polisi Buddsoddi Cyfrifol gydag ymrwymïadau cryfach i dynnu allan o sectorau niweidiol a chyd-fynd â nodau hawliau dynol a hinsawdd rhyngwladol.

5. Mae Partneriaeth Pensiwn Cymru wedi mabwysiadu polisi Buddsoddi Cyfrifol ond ar hyn o bryd yn caniatáu disgresiwn sylweddol i reolwyr cronfeydd dros feini prawf moesegol ac eithriadau sector.

14 Hysbysiad o Gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cynghorydd Rhys Goode

Mae'r Cyngor hwn yn cydnabod y pwysau cynyddol a osodir ar Heddlu De Cymru o ganlyniad i gynnal digwyddiadau cenedlaethol a rhyngwladol mawr yng Nghaerdydd ac yn y rhanbarth ehangach.

Yn aml, mae digwyddiadau fel gemau chwaraeon mawr, cyngherddau, uwchgynadleddau gwleidyddol a chynullïadau diwylliannol yn gofyn am bresenoldeb heddlu ychwanegol sylweddol, cynllunio ac adnoddau, gyda chostau a phwysau gweithredu yn cael eu dwyn yn lleol.

Nodwn ymhellach fod dinas-ranbarthau eraill y DU, yn enwedig Belfast a Chaeredin, yn cael eu cydnabod gan y Swyddfa Gartref fel ranbarthau Prifddinas ac yn derbyn cyllid a chefnogaeth ychwanegol gan y Swyddfa Gartref i adlewyrchu'r gofynion plismona unigryw sy'n gysylltiedig â chynnal digwyddiadau proffil uchel.

Ar hyn o bryd, nid yw Heddlu De Cymru yn derbyn lefelau cyfatebol o gefnogaeth, er gwaethaf wynebu heriau a gofynion adnoddau cymharol, megis bod yr ail ardal uchaf ar gyfer ymweliadau Brenhinol, rhaglenni Rygbi a Chriced Rhyngwladol a lleoliadau cyngherddau mawr. (i'w gadarnhau)

Felly, mae'r Cyngor hwn yn penderfynu:

1. Galw'n ffurfiol ar Swyddfa Gartref Llywodraeth y DU i gydnabod Caerdydd fel Dinas-ranbarth yn yr un modd â Belfast a Chaeredin ar gyfer cyllid yn y dyfodol.

2. Ysgrifennu at yr Ysgrifennydd Cartref ac at Aelodau Seneddol perthnasol o Gymru ac Aelodau Senedd Cymru, yn eu hannog i gefnogi'r achos dros gydnabod Caerdydd fel dinas-ranbarth a galw am gyllid teg a chynaliadwy i Heddlu De Cymru.

3. Gofyn am adolygiad o fformwlâu cyllido presennol y Swyddfa Gartref, er mwyn sicrhau cefnogaeth deg a chyson i holl heddluoedd Cymru, yn seiliedig ar lwyth digwyddiadau, statws dinas- ranbarth, a phwysau plismona.

4. Gwahodd Prif Gwnstabl Heddlu De Cymru a'r Comisiynydd Heddlu a Throseddu i roi cyflwyniad i'r Cyngor ar effeithiau gweithredu ac ariannu plismona digwyddiadau mawr ac i drafod ymdrechion eiriolaeth ar y cyd posibl.

Credwn fod dull teg a chyfartal o ddyrannu adnoddau plismona yn hanfodol i gynnal diogelwch cymunedol, lles swyddogion, a hyder y cyhoedd, ac i sicrhau nad yw De Cymru dan anfantais o'i gymharu â dinas-ranbarthau eraill y DU.

15 Materion Brys

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



I ystyried unrhyw eitemau o fusnes y, oherwydd amgylchiadau arbennig y cadeirydd o'r farn y dylid eu hystyried yn y cyfarfod fel mater o frys yn unol â Rhan 4 (pharagraff 4) o'r Rheolau Trefn y Cyngor yn y Cyfansoddiad.

Nodyn: Bydd hwn yn gyfarfod Hybrid a bydd Aelodau a Swyddogion mynychu trwy Siambr y Cyngor, Swyddfeydd Dinesig, Stryd yr Angel, Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr / o bell Trwy Timau Microsoft. Bydd y cyfarfod cael ei recordio i'w drosglwyddo drwy wefan y Cyngor. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiwn am hyn, cysylltwch â cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk neu ffoniwch 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159

Yn ddiffuant

K Watson

Prif Swyddog, Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddio, AD a Pholisi Corfforaethol

Dosbarthiad:

Cynghorwr:

Pob Aelod

Ffon/Tel: 01656 643643

Facs/Fax: 01656 668126

Ebost/Email: talktous@bridgend.gov

Negeseuon SMS/SMS Messaging: 07581 157014 [Twitter@bridgendCBC](https://twitter.com/bridgendCBC)

Gwefan/Website: www.bridgend.gov

Cyfnewid testun: Rhwch 18001 o flaen unrhyw un o'n rhifau ffon ar gyfer y gwasanaeth trosglwyddo testun

Test relay: Put 18001 before any of our phone numbers for the text relay service

Rydym yn croseawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg. Rhwch wybod I ni os yw eich dewis iaith yw'r Gymraeg

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Please let us know if your language choice is Welsh.

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COFNODION CYFARFOD Y CYNGOR A GYNHALIWDYD YN RHITHWIR YN SWYDDFEYDD DINESIG SIAMBR Y CYNGOR, STRYD YR ANGEL, PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR, CF31 4WB DDYDD MERCHER 23 GORFFENNAF 2025 AM 16:00

Yn bresennol:

Cynghorydd HJ David – Maer a Chadeirydd

H T Bennett
Clatworthy
S Easterbrook
R M Granville
M Jones
J E Pratt
J H Tildesley MBE

A R Berrow
R J Collins
M J Evans
G C Haines
W J Kendall
J C Spanswick
I Williams

J P D Blundell
C Davies
N Farr
D M Hughes
M Lewis
I M Spiller
E D Winstanley

E L P Caparros
P Davies
J Gebbie
M R John
J Llewellyn-Hopkins
T Thomas
T Wood

Yn Bresennol yn Rhithwir:

S Aspey
C L C Davies
M L Hughes
A Ulberini-Williams
M J Williams

F D Bletsoe
P Ford
R M James
G Walter
R Williams

S J Bletsoe
S J Griffiths
R L Penhale-Thomas
A Wathan

N Clarke
D T Harrison
R J Smith
A J Williams

Swyddogion:

Mark Galvin
Laura Griffiths
Lindsay Harvey
Rachel Keepins
Carys Lord
Claire Marchant
Jake Morgan
Martin Morgans
Michael Pitman
Kelly Watson

Uwch Swyddog Gwasanaethau Democrataidd – Pwyllgorau
Rheolwr Grŵp – Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democrataidd
Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol – Addysg, Blynyddoedd Cynnar a Phobl Ifanc
Rheolwr Gwasanaethau Democrataidd
Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid
Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol – Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a Lles
Prif Weithredwr
Pennaeth Gweithrediadau Dros Dro – Gwasanaethau Cymunedol
Swyddog Cymorth Technegol – Gwasanaethau Democrataidd
Prif Swyddog – Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddiol, AD a Pholisi Corfforaethol

166. Ymddiheuriadau am Absenoldeb

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Derbyniwyd ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb gan y Cynghorwyr W R Goode, H Griffiths, H Williams a P W Jenkins.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

167. Datganiadau o Fuddiant

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Gwnaed y datganiadau canlynol o fuddiant personol gan yr Aelodau:- Y Cyngorydd H Bennett – Eitem 6 ar yr Agenda, fel aelod o'r Bwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus ar ran ei chyflogwr. Y Cyngorydd J Pratt – Eitem 12 ar yr agenda, fel aelod o Gyngor Tref Porthcawl. Y Cyngorydd JP Blundell – Eitem 7 ar yr Agenda, fel aelod o Gorff Llywodraethu Ysgol a grybwyllir yn yr adroddiad. Y Cyngorydd E Winstanley – Eitem 7 ar yr agenda, gan mai ei chyflogwr sy'n gyfrifol am Neuadd y Dref Maesteg a Phafiliwn y Grand, Porthcawl ac oherwydd ei bod yn Gyngorydd Cymunedol. Y Cyngorydd I Williams – Eitem 7 ar yr Agenda, fel llywodraethwr ysgol yn Ysgol Gynradd Oldcastle ac Ysgol Gyfun Brynteg. Eitem 12 ar yr agenda, fel aelod o Gyngor Tref Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr Gwnaed y datganiadau canlynol o fuddiant rhagfarnus gan Aelodau/Swyddogion. Y Cyngorydd M Evans – Eitem 7 ar yr Agenda, fel Llywodraethwr Cymunedol yn Ysgol Gynradd Croesty ac Ysgol Gyfun Pencoed. Y Cyngorydd Amanda Williams – Eitem 7 ar yr Agenda, fel Cadeirydd Bwrdd y Llywodraethwyr yn Ysgol Gynradd Coety. Y Cyngorydd T Thomas – Eitem 7 ar yr Agenda, wrth iddo ymdrin â Llywodraeth Cymru ar bwnc Cartrefi Gwag drwy ei gyflogwr. Prif Weithredwr – Eitem 9 ar yr Agenda, fel y cyfeirir at ei safbwynt yn yr adroddiad.
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	Prif Swyddog – Polisi Cyfreithiol, Adnoddau Dynol a Chorfforaethol – Eitem 9 ar yr Agenda, fel y cyfeirir at ei safbwynt yn yr adroddiad. Gadawodd yr holl Aelodau/Swyddogion uchod y cyfarfod tra bod yr eitem yr oeddent wedi datgan buddiant rhagfarnus ynddi yn cael ei ystyried.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

168. Cymeradwyo Cofnodion

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	<u>PENDERFYNWYD:</u> Bod cofnodion cyfarfod y Cabinet dyddiedig 25 Mehefin 2025, yn cael eu cymeradwyo fel cofnod gwir a chywir.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

169. Derbyn cyhoeddiadau gan:

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Derbyniwyd cyhoeddiadau gan yr enwogion canlynol (nid oedd angen neu wneud penderfyniadau):- • Y Maer; • Y Prif Weithredwr
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

170. Derbyn cyhoeddiadau gan yr Arweinydd

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Derbyniwyd cyhoeddiadau gan yr Arweinydd (nid oedd angen neu wneud penderfyniadau).
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Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025
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171. Siarter Teithio Iach

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cyflwynodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid adroddiad, a'i bwrpas oedd rhoi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf i'r Cyngor ar waith Bwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cwm Taf Morgannwg ar Siarter Teithio Iach. Cadarnhaodd yr adroddiad:- • Roedd Bwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cwm Taf Morgannwg wedi datblygu Siarter Teithio Iach i achosi effeithiau cadarnhaol pellgyrhaeddol ar iechyd a'r amgylchedd. • Llofnodwyd y Siarter gynt yng nghyfarfod Bwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Gorffennaf 2025. • Mae Grŵp Defnyddwyr Teithio Llesol wedi bod yn rhan o'r gwaith gan Gyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr (BCBC) a gellir ei ehangu ymhellach i symud y Siarter ymlaen a sicrhau parhad. • Y Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol - Cymunedau yw'r swyddog arweiniol ar gyfer BCBC mewn perthynas â'r Siarter Gofynnodd Aelod pam nad oes mwy o leoedd parcio beiciau ar gael ar hyn o bryd yn adeiladau'r Cyngor. Sicrhaodd yr Aelod Cabinet – Newid Hinsawdd a'r Amgylchedd y byddai'n edrych yn weithredol ar y mater hwn ymhellach y tu allan i'r cyfarfod. Cododd Aelod y pwynt bod adborth gan Glybiau a Chymdeithasau a beicwyr ynddynt eu hunain, yn awgrymu nad oedd nifer o lonydd beicio wedi'u cysylltu â'i gilydd ac felly eu bod ychydig yn ddigyswllt mewn rhai lleoliadau. Fe wnaeth yr Aelod Cabinet – Newid yn yr Hinsawdd a'r Amgylchedd roi sicrwydd i'r Cyngor drwy gadarnhau bod y Grŵp Defnyddwyr Teithio Llesol yn mynd i'r afael â materion fel yr un yn union uchod, gyda chymorth ar ffurf cyllid gan Lywodraeth Cymru.
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	Ychwanegodd yr Arweinydd fod y Siarter Teithio iach yn ddogfen ehangach nad oedd yn canolbwyntio ar feicio yn unig, ond mathau eraill o drafnidiaeth gan gynnwys cerdded a defnyddio dulliau eraill o drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus i hyrwyddo mathau mwy iach o deithio. Ychwanegodd ymhellach fod y Siarter, sydd ynghlwm yn Atodiad 1 o'r adroddiad, yn canolbwyntio ar newidiadau y gellir eu gwneud i'r ffordd yr ydym yn gweithio fel sefydliad a all alluogi teithio mwy llesol ac iach a bod rhai o'r amcanion a gynhwysir yn y Siarter yn cael eu hystyried yn weithredol i sicrhau bod y nodau hyn yn cael eu cyflawni. Nododd Aelod wrth groesawu pwyntiau gwefru cerbydau yng nghanol tref Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr, nad oedd y rhain yn perthyn i'r categori 'gwefru cyflym iawn' ac felly gofynnodd a allai rhagor gael eu darparu o'r math hwn, fel y gellid gwefru cerbydau mewn amser byrrach. Cynghorodd yr Arweinydd y gellid ystyried hyn, gan ychwanegu fodd bynnag, y byddai cost uwch yn gysylltiedig â'r modelau gwefru cyflymach. Daeth Aelod â'r ddatl ar yr eitem hon i ben, drwy ddweud y dylai pwyntiau gwefru fod ar gael yn ehangach mewn mannau o angen a/neu lle mae'n amlwg eu bod yn cael eu defnyddio mwy, er mwyn gwneud y gorau o'r cyllid a dderbyniwyd gan Lywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer darparu taliadau o'r fath. <u>PENDERFYNWYD:</u> (1) Nododd y Cyngor gynnwys yr adroddiad diweddar hwn. (2) Dadleuodd ac ystyriodd y Cyngor sut i gyflawni'r gweithgareddau arfaethedig sydd wedi'u cynnwys yn y Siarter (Atodiad 1).
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

172. Alldro Rhaglen Gyfalaf 2024–25 a Diweddariad Chwarter 1 2025–26

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cyflwynodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid adroddiad ar yr uchod, ac roedd crynodeb ohono fel a ganlyn:- I roi'r wybodaeth ddiweddaraf am sefyllfa alldro'r rhaglen gyfalaf ar gyfer 2024-25, gwariant chwarter 1 a'r gwariant a ragwelir ar gyfer 2025-26 ar 30 Mehefin 2025, y rhaglen gyfalaf
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	ddiwygiedig ar gyfer 2025-26 i 2034-35 a'r Dangosyddion Darbodus ac Eraill a ragwelir ar gyfer 2025-26. • Roedd Atodiad A i'r adroddiad yn adlewyrchu'r cyllidebau a'r gwariant ar gyfer y cynlluniau unigol yn 2024-25. • Dangosodd Atodiad B y cyllidebau, y gwariant hyd yma a'r gwariant diwedd blwyddyn a ragwelir ar 30 Mehefin 2025 ar gyfer y cynlluniau unigol yn 2025-26. • Nododd Atodiad C y rhaglen gyfalaf ddiwygiedig ar gyfer 2025-26 i 2033-35. • Er bod Atodiad D yn darparu manylion y Dangosyddion Darbodus gwirioneddol a Dangosyddion eraill ar gyfer 2024-25 a'r Dangosyddion Darbodus ac Eraill a ragwelir ar gyfer 2025-26. Roedd paragraff 3.5.3 o'r Rheolau Gweithdrefn Ariannol yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i'r Prif Swyddog Cyllid adrodd bob chwarter i'r Cabinet a'r Cyngor gyda diweddariad ar y Strategaeth Gyfalaf a'r Dangosyddion Darbodus. Roedd yr adroddiad yn bodloni'r gofyniad hwnnw. Cynghorodd y Dirprwy Arweinydd, yn absenoldeb yr Aelod Cabinet perthnasol, fod BCBC fel Cyngor yn parhau i reoli Rhaglen Gyfalaf fawr ac uchelgeisiol. Gellid gweld hyn yn ei fuddsoddiad mewn ysgolion, priffyrdd, adfywio economaidd, yn ogystal â mewn adeiladau eiconig, fel Neuadd y Dref Maesteg. Roedd swyddogion wedi cyrchu £85m i gefnogi gwariant cyfalaf yr awdurdod lleol eleni, sy'n cyfateb i oddeutu 56% o gyfanswm cost y gwariant hwn yn cael ei ariannu gan gyllid allanol yn hytrach na BCBC. Lleisiodd Aelod rywfaint o bryder ynglŷn â'r Rhaglen Gyfalaf. Dywedodd fod y Cyngor y llynedd ym mis Chwefror wedi cytuno ar raglen o dros £110m, er mai dim ond tua hanner y swm hwn y gwnaeth ei alldroi. Ychwanegodd, gan seilio hynny ar gyfrifiadau eleni, y byddwn felly yn cyflawni hyd yn oed llai na hyn o ran canran, eleni. Cynghorodd yr Arweinydd fod nifer o resymau pam fod llithriad wedi bod y llynedd. Sicrhodd y Cyngor, fodd bynnag, y byddai mwy o wylidwriaeth yn y dyfodol o ran gwariant mewn perthynas â'r Rhaglen Gyfalaf a chwblhau'r cynlluniau a gynhwysir ynddi yn amserol. Erbyn hyn roedd byrddau Rhaglen Monitro Rhaglenni Cyfalaf misol (yr oedd yn aelod ohonynt), a byddai'r corff hwn yn cadw llygad agos ar y gwahanol brosiectau a oedd yn cael eu cyflwyno fel rhan o'r rhaglen gyda'r nod o gwblhau'r rhain o fewn y gyllideb. Roedd cyfanswm y gost a ymrwymwyd i'r rhaglen bellach oddeutu £156m, ychwanegodd. Yna, rhoddodd grynodeb o rai o'r cynlluniau a glustnodwyd o fewn y rhaglen, a fyddai'n dod â budd enfawr i'r Fwrdeistref Sirol ac yn gwella cyfleusterau o fewn y Fwrdeistref Sirol.
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	Gofynnodd Aelod a oedd amcangyfrif dangosol ar y buddsoddiadau cyfalaf fel y'u manylwyd, o ran a oeddent yn gost refeniw positif i'r awdurdod (neu beidio), yn hytrach na bod yn gost negyddol a fyddai'n rhoi pwysau ar ein cyllideb refeniw. Cynghorodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid fod y gwahanol oblygiadau cyfalaf a refeniw wedi'u hystyried yng ngwaith blaengynllunio'r Cyngor ar gyfer ei gyllideb refeniw. Roedd Aelod o'r farn y byddai'n ddiddorol meincnodi gydag awdurdodau lleol eraill yng Nghymru, i weld sut rydym yn cymharu o ran llithriad cynlluniau ac i gyflawni'r rhain mewn amser, yn ogystal â chymharu'r heriau y mae pob un ohonynt yn eu hwynebu, er enghraifft, a oedden nhw'r un fath neu'n wahanol i raddau helaeth mewn unrhyw ffordd. Cynghorodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid, fod y rhan fwyaf o awdurdodau lleol yn yr un sefyllfa â BCBC i raddau helaeth, o ran wynebu'r heriau uchod yn y Rhaglen Gyfalaf. <u>PENDERFYNWYD:</u> Bod y Cyngor: • Wedi nodi Alldro Rhaglen Gyfalaf y Cyngor ar gyfer 2024–25 (Atodiad A i'r adroddiad). • Wedi nodi diweddariad Chwarter 1 Rhaglen Gyfalaf 2025–26 y Cyngor hyd at 30 Mehefin 2025 (yn Atodiad B) • Wedi cymeradwyo'r Rhaglen Gyfalaf ddiwygiedig, gan nodi'r llithriad o £25.370 miliwn i 205-26, ac yn cymeradwyo'r cyfyngiadau rhwng cynlluniau a chynlluniau/ychwanegiadau newydd o £44.485 miliwn i'r rhaglen gyfalaf (Atodiad C). • Wedi nodi'r Dangosyddion Darbodus ac Eraill gwirioneddol ar gyfer 2024–25 a'r dangosyddion rhagamcanol ar gyfer 2025–26 (Atodiad D).
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

173. Adroddiad Alldro Rheoli'r Trysorlys 2024–25

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cyflwynodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid adroddiad, er mwyn:- • Cydymffurfio â gofynion Rheoli Trysorlys y Sefydliad Siartredig Cyllid Cyhoeddus a Chyfrifeg (CIPFA) yn y Cod Ymddygiad Gwasanaethau
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	Cyhoeddus (y Cod TM) i adrodd trosolwg o weithgareddau'r trysorlys ar gyfer y flwyddyn ariannol flaenorol. - Adrodd ar y Dangosyddion Rheoli Trysorlys gwirioneddol ar gyfer 2023-24. Amlinellodd yr adroddiad weithgaredd Rheoli'r Trysorlys ar gyfer y cyfnod blynyddol o 1 Ebrill 2024 – 31 Mawrth 2025. Cadarnhaodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid fod gan y Cyngor £103.80 miliwn o ddyled hirdymor ar 31 Mawrth 2025, £15.66 miliwn o rwymedigaethau hirdymor eraill a sefyllfa ddyled net gyffredinol o £82.71 miliwn. Y gyfradd llog gyfartalog ar gyfer dyled oedd 4.73% (gan gynnwys benthyca Salix a oedd yn ddi-log). Ar gyfer buddsoddiadau yn ystod y flwyddyn, roedd yn 4.39%. Mae gan y Cyngor strwythur aeddfedrwydd benthyca y gellir ei reoli, gyda'i ddyled bresennol yn ad-daladwy ar wahanol adegau dros y 30 mlynedd nesaf. Mae'n ofynnol i'r Cyngor osod ac adrodd yn erbyn Dangosyddion Rheoli Trysorlys, y cynhwyswyd manylion amdanynt yn Atodiad A i'r adroddiad. Roedd y rhain yn adlewyrchu bod y Cyngor yn gweithredu o fewn y terfynau cymeradwy trwy gydol y flwyddyn. Cynghorodd y Prif Swyddog – Cyllid, Tai a Newid bod y Cyngor hefyd wedi cydymffurfio â Chod Rheoli Trysorlys y Sefydliad Siartredig Cyllid Cyhoeddus a Chyfrifeg a Chanllawiau Buddsoddi Llywodraeth Cymru. <u>PENDERFYNWYD:</u> Bod y Cyngor: - Wedi nodi gweithgareddau rheoli'r trysorlys ar gyfer 2024–25 am y flwyddyn 1 Ebrill 2024 i 31 Mawrth 2025. - Hefyd wedi nodi'r Dangosyddion ar gyfer Rheoli'r Trysorlys ar gyfer y flwyddyn sy'n dod i ben 31 Mawrth 2025 yn erbyn y rhai a gymeradwywyd yn Strategaeth Rheoli'r Trysorlys 2024–25.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

Swyddog Cofrestru Etholiadol a Swyddog Canlyniadau

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cyflwynodd Rheolwr y Grŵp – Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democrataidd adroddiad, er mwyn ceisio cymeradwyaeth y Cyngor i benodi'r Swyddog Cofrestru Etholiadol (ERO), y Swyddog Canlyniadau a'r Dirprwy ERO. Mewn cyfarfod blaenorol, penododd y Cyngor Jake Morgan fel Prif Weithredwr a Phennaeth Gwasanaeth Taledig y Cyngor. Mae'n ofynnol i'r Cyngor gydymffurfio â'r gofynion o dan Ddeddf Cynrychiolaeth y Bobl 1983, mewn perthynas â phenodi Swyddog Canlyniadau a Swyddog Cofrestru Etholiadol y Cyngor. Roedd y rhain yn rolau statudol y mae'n rhaid i'r Cyngor eu penodi iddynt. Mae'r rolau hyn wedi'u cynnwys yn Swydd-ddisgrifiad y Prif Weithredwr ac felly argymhellir bod y Prif Weithredwr newydd yn cael ei benodi'n ffurfiol i ymgymryd â'r rolau hyn. Roedd penodi Dirprwy Swyddog Cofrestru Etholiadol ERO hefyd yn swyddogaeth y Cyngor ac mae'n ofynnol i sicrhau y gellir gweithredu'r penderfyniadau etholiadol angenrheidiol pan nad yw'r ERO ar gael. Heb benodiad o'r fath, mae risg y gall etholwyr fod dan anfantais. Felly, argymhellwyd bod y Prif Swyddog – Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddio, Adnoddau Dynol a Pholisi Corfforaethol yn cael ei benodi'n Ddirprwy ERO gyda phwerau llawn, gan ei galluogi i weithredu yn analluogrwydd neu absenoldeb yr ERO yn ôl yr angen. Ychwanegodd Rheolwr y Grŵp – Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Democrataidd, er mwyn caniatáu mwy o hyblygrwydd, cynigiwyd rhoi awdurdod dirprwyedig i'r Prif Weithredwr i benodi mwy o ddirprwyon ac i ddirymu neu amrywio penodiadau o'r fath yn ôl yr angen. Yng ngoleuni'r ddadl a ddilynodd yn y cyfarfod a chyfres o gwestiynau gan yr Aelodau a ymatebwyd iddynt gan y Swyddog Arweiniol, cytunodd y Cyngor i beidio â chefnogi Argymhelliad (3) yr adroddiad, h.y. bod y Cyngor 'yn dirprwyo awdurdod i'r Prif Weithredwr i benodi mwy o ddirprwyon ac i ddirymu neu amrywio penodiadau o'r fath yn ôl yr angen.' Felly, <u>PENDERFYNWYD:</u> Bod y Cyngor: (1) Yn cymeradwyo penodi'r Prif Weithredwr fel y Swyddog Cofrestru Etholiadol a'r Swyddog Canlyniadau.
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	(2) Yn cymeradwyo ymhellach benodiad y Prif Swyddog – Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddio, Adnoddau Dynol a Pholisi Corfforaethol fel y Dirprwy Swyddog Cofrestru Etholiadol.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

175. Penodiadau i'r Pwyllgor Safonau

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cyflwynodd y Swyddog Monitro adroddiad, a'i bwrpas oedd cynghori'r Cyngor am ddau benodiad Aelod Annibynnol (cyfetholedig) i'r Pwyllgor Safonau, gan fod dwy swydd wag o'r fath ar y Pwyllgor. Nododd aelod y pwynt bod panel o'r Pwyllgor Safonau wedi argymhell penodi'r ddau Aelod Annibynnol fel y cyfeirir atynt yn yr adroddiad a bod y penodiadau wedi'u hadrodd i'r Pwyllgor Safonau llawn ar 22 Gorffennaf 2025. Fodd bynnag, gofynnodd a ddylid rhannu addasrwydd unrhyw ymgeiswyr posibl ar lefel uwch, o bosibl gyda'r Cyngor, yng ngoleuni'r ffaith bod aelodau'r Pwyllgor hwnnw yn eistedd ac yn gwneud dyfarniadau a phenderfyniadau o natur ddisgyblu weithiau, ar aelodau'r Fwrdeistref Sirol a'r Cyngorau Tref a Chymunedol. Wrth awgrymu y gellid ystyried hyn ymhellach yn y dyfodol, ychwanegodd y Swyddog Monitro mai'r broses uchod a ddilynwyd oedd y broses fel yr argymhellir yn y rheoliadau priodol, gan gadarnhau hefyd bod cynrychiolaeth Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol ar y panel penodi a'r Pwyllgor Safonau. <u>PENDERFYNWYD:</u> Bod y Cyngor yn cymeradwyo penodiadau Janet Evans a Martyn Daley i'r Pwyllgor Safonau.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

176. Derbyn y Cwestiwn canlynol gan:

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Y Cyngorydd Colin Davies i'r Aelod Cabinet dros Addysg a Gwasanaethau Ieuencid (cylchredwyd yr ymateb yn flaenorol i'r Aelodau). Gofynnwyd cwestiwn atodol gan y Cyngorydd Davies a gafodd ymateb iddo yn y cyfarfod.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

177. Hysbysiad o gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cyngorydd Martin Williams

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Derbyniwyd yr Hysbysiad o Gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cyngorydd Williams fel y'i manylir yn eitem 12 ar Agenda'r cyfarfod, yn amodol ar ei welliant arfaethedig a roddwyd ar lafar yn y cyfarfod, a eiliwyd ac a gefnogwyd yn briodol gan y Cyngor. Roedd y Cynnig diwygiedig fel a ganlyn:- 'Bod y Cyngor hwn yn cydnabod yr heriau a wynebwyd gennym wrth recriwtio gweithredwyr i dorri glaswellt yn dilyn y penderfyniad i drafod y mater yn fewnol a'r effaith a gafodd hynny ar ein cymunedau. O dan yr ethos o weithio ar y cyd, rydym felly yn penderfynu gofyn i'r Cabinet ystyried cysylltu â phob cyngor tref a chymuned cyn gynted â phosibl a chynnig eu talu i gyflawni'r gwasanaeth yn eu hardal i gefnogi'r Awdurdod hwn os ydynt yn fodlon ac yn gallu, pe bai heriau i'r gwasanaeth yn y dyfodol yn cael eu hwynebu eto.'
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

178. Hysbysiad o Gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cyngorydd Ian Spiller

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cytunodd y Cyngor yn unfrydol ar yr Hysbysiad o Gynnig fel y'i cynigiwyd gan y Cyngorydd Spiller fel y manylir yn eitem 13 ar Agenda'r cyfarfod.
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Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025
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Hysbysiad o Gynnig a gynigiwyd gan y Cynghorydd Tim Thomas

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Cynigiwyd Hysbysiad o Gynnig gan y Cynghorydd Thomas, fel y manylir yn eitem 14 ar Agenda'r cyfarfod. Cynigiwyd diwygiad i'r Hysbysiad o Gynnig. Ar ôl iddo gael ei eilio'n briodol ac yn dilyn rhywfaint o ddadl, cytunwyd arno gan y Cyngor. Cytunwyd ar yr Hysbysiad o Gynnig felly, fel y'i diwygiwyd, fel a ganlyn:- 'Bod y Cyngor hwn, 1.Yn cefnogi Llywodraeth y DU i wrando ar y cyhoedd a gwrthdroi'r diwygiadau lles arfaethedig a fyddai wedi effeithio'n andwyol ar drigolion anabl ledled y wlad, gan gynnwys ym Mwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr. 2. Yn cydnabod yr effaith negyddol sylweddol ac anghymesur y byddai'r newidiadau lles hyn wedi'u cael ar les, diogelwch ariannol, ac urddas pobl anabl leol a'u teuluoedd. 3. Yn croesawu penderfyniad y Llywodraeth i wrthdroi'r diwygiadau lles hyn fel cam cadarnhaol i ddiogelu hawliau a bywoliaethau trigolion anabl ym Mhen-y-bont ar Ogwr. 4. Yn cydnabod gwaith caled grwpiau eiriolaeth anabledd, ymgrychwyr, a thrigolion sydd wedi lleisio eu pryderon ac wedi dylanwadu ar y penderfyniad hwn. 5. 'Yn galw ar Arweinydd Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr i ysgrifennu at Brif Weinidog y DU, Prif Weinidog Cymru, ac i barhau i lobïo ein Haelodau Seneddol lleol i: • Sicrhau pwysigrwydd parhaus ystyriaethau lles ym mholisiau Llywodraeth y DU a Llywodraeth Cymru yn y dyfodol • Pwysleisio pwysigrwydd cymorth ac amddiffyniad parhaus i breswylwyr anabl. • Annog y ddwy Lywodraeth i barhau i ymgysylltu'n agos â Chynghorau lleol, sefydliadau anabledd, a chymunedau wrth ddatblygu polisiau lles yn y dyfodol.
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	6. Yn ailddatgan ymrwymiad y Cyngor i gefnogi preswylwyr anabl drwy sicrhau bod gwasanaethau lleol yn hygyrch, yn gynhwysol a bod ganddynt adnoddau digonol.'
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

180. Eitemau Brys

Y Penderfyniad a Wnaed	Nid oedd unrhyw eitemau brys.
Dyddiad y Gwnaed y Penderfyniad	23 Gorffennaf 2025

I arsylwi'r ddadl bellach a gynhaliwyd ar yr eitemau uchod, cliciwch ar y [ddolen](#) hon

Daeth y cyfarfod i ben am 18:23.

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (SOUTH WALES)
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Responsible Officer:	MARK GALVIN SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - COMMITTEES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The report will invite a presentation from the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales Police.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Council of a presentation proposed to be delivered to Council, by the local Police and Crime Commissioner for South Wales Police.

2. Background

- 2.1 Council will be accustomed to receiving presentations from its key partners, stakeholders and other organisations periodically in the past.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The presentation will be led at its September meeting by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Communications Lead and Insight Manager.

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 and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change or nature 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 Council is recommended to note the presentation as referred to at paragraph 3.1 of the report.

Background documents

None.

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) IMPROVEMENT CHECK OF CHILDRENS AND FAMILY SERVICES JUNE 2025
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING
Responsible Officer:	LAURA KINSEY HEAD OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report describes the findings of a Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement Check (IC) visit to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) children and family services in June 2025. The improvement check focused on understand how well the Council has progressed recommendations for improvement set out in a Performance Evaluation Inspection and Improvement Check undertaken in May and December 2022 and a CIW led Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) undertaken in June 2023. The IC found that BCBC leaders have consistently prioritised children and family services, to support sustained and timely improvements. This, in turn, has significantly strengthened the quality and delivery of our social services functions.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Council the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement Check (IC) findings report and to request that the Council considers the report and scrutinises the associated Action Plan.

2. Background

- 2.1 CIW carry out inspection activity in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the quality standards in the *Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales*. This helps them

determine the effectiveness of local authorities in supporting, measuring and sustaining improvements for people.

- 2.2 Further to a Performance Evaluation Inspection in May 2022 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) completed an Improvement Check in December 2022 and noted the *'local authority must continue to assure itself of the priority status, pace, quality, delivery, and impact of its improvement activity'*.
- 2.3 In June 2023 CIW and partner inspectorates carried out a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend. They found leaders and partners had a shared vision and positive approach to safeguarding. The local authority and partners had taken action to instigate learning following critical incidents, there were ambitious plans to drive forward improvements, and it was important to manage these changes with careful oversight. It was a relatively early stage in the Council's improvement journey and whilst there were indication positive changes were being progressed further work was needed to stabilize the workforce and embed a model of practice that would sustainably improve outcomes for children and families.
- 2.4 The most recent IC carried out in June 2025 focussed on progress made in the areas for improvement, which were identified during the inspection activities of 2022 and 2023.
- 2.5 The scope of the inspection included:
- The experiences of people at the time of the improvement check.
 - The outcomes people achieve through their contact with social services
 - Evidence of improvements made following inspections in 2022/2023 and plans for service development and improvement
- 2.6 In advance of the inspection, a range of information/documentation was submitted including:
- Strategy and Structure
 - Key Documents and Operational Protocols
 - Cabinet/Committee Reports
 - Development Work
 - Performance Data and Quality Assurance
 - Workforce and Supervision information
- 2.7 The inspection team reviewed the experiences of people's journey through care and support through review and tracking of their social care record. The team reviewed 25 cases, with more detailed case tracking of 3 of these cases. This included a conversation with the person receiving support and/or their family, carers, advocates, or key workers afterwards interviewing the allocated case worker and their manager.

- 2.8 In addition CIW also sought the views of staff and stakeholders through focus groups and by using a range of surveys to gather information to inform the inspection. The latter included public surveys.
- 2.9 Other activities included observations of meetings and reviews of complaints and compliments.

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 The CIW inspection report is attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.2 Summary of findings

3.2.1 The table below summarises CIW findings and further details are available throughout the full report. It should be noted that there were no areas for improvement from the previous inspection identified where no improvements had been made.

Principle	Areas of improvement identified in 2022-23	Progress identified at this Improvement Check
People	Seeking, hearing and recording the voice of the child	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	People consistently feel listened to and treated with dignity and respect	Some improvements made – further action is required
People	Workforce recruitment and retention	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	Recording demographics and associates	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	Management oversight	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	Staff support, supervision, and training	Improvements made and must be sustained
Prevention	Provision of information, advice, and assistance (IAA). People receive the right support at the right time	Some improvements made – further action is required
Prevention	Placement sufficiency	Some improvements made – further action is required
Partnerships	Thresholds for early help and statutory services	Improvements made and must be sustained
Partnerships	Learning from reviews and audits	Improvements made and must be sustained
Wellbeing	Compliance with statutory responsibilities	Improvements made and must be sustained
Wellbeing	Arrangements for supervised contact between children and their families	Improvements made and must be sustained

Wellbeing	Identification and response to child exploitation	Some improvements made – further action is required
Wellbeing	Ensuring priority status, pace, quality, delivery, and impact of its improvement activity	Improvements made and must be sustained

3.3 Recommendations and Next Steps

- 3.3.1 Overall, the inspection is a positive commendation of the work of the Council to improve the way vulnerable children and families are supported and the quality of outcomes they receive. There are some areas where further work is required, and an Action Plan has been developed in response to the recommendations made by CIW and can be found at **Appendix 2**. The actions in the attached plan are cross-referenced with the actions in the Council's 3 year strategic plan for children and families which was approved by Council in September 2023 to ensure there is alignment and no duplication of effort. The progress to implement the actions will be overseen through the Social Services and Wellbeing Quality and Performance Framework and reported to the Social Services Improvement Board chaired by the Leader of the Council. The improvements required will be integrated into the Council's regulatory tracker which is reported to Governance and Audit Committee and can be scrutinised regularly by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a frequency to be determined by the 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. 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 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 wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:
- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (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, because of rising demographics and increasing complexity, the remodelling and transformation of services continues to be a priority.

- Prevention – one of the four themes within the CIW inspection is Prevention. CIW have identified areas of strength for Prevention in their report. The areas for improvement are also included, and actions for improvement have been addressed within the Action Plan at **Appendix 2**.
- Integration – one of the four themes within the CIW inspection is Partnerships and Integration. CIW have identified areas of strength for Integration and Partnerships in their report. The areas for improvement are also included, and actions for improvement have been addressed within the Action Plan at **Appendix 2**. The SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners, particularly the NHS and the Police, to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. The report refers to work with statutory partners.
 - Collaboration – The collaborative approaches described in the report are managed and monitored through various strategic and collaborative boards across Directorates and with partners
 - Involvement – the key stakeholders are the people who use social care. There is considerable engagement including surveys, stakeholder meetings, feedback forms and the complaints process. The provision of accessible information and advice helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

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

- **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct climate change or nature implications associated with the report and associated action plan at this stage.
- 6.2 The importance of decarbonisation to help protect and sustain the environment over the long term and in line with our climate change ambitions will be considered and promoted as and when strategies identified within the action plan are implemented.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 This report and action plan has a direct link to safeguarding and corporate parenting:
- 7.2 The Council's workforce shares a responsibility both collectively and individually to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from harm. Council employees,

Councillors, volunteers, contractors, and partners who encounter children or adults at risk in the course of their duties are expected to understand their responsibility and where necessary take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of people so that everyone can live their life free from harm, abuse, and neglect. The children we provide with care and support are among the most vulnerable in our community, and the services they receive are vital in keeping them safe. This action plan will ensure we continue to provide a high standard of service.

7.3 When a child or young person enters the care of the Council, the role of being a parent is taken on by the local authority. This constitutes Corporate Parenting. The Council has the responsibility to seek positive outcomes for care experienced children and young adults who are care leavers in the same way a good parent would for their own child. Bridgend's Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out the following commitments:

- We will keep you safe, give you somewhere comfortable to live where you are cared for properly and make sure you have all that you need.
- We will make sure that all of those that work with you and support you are well trained and treat you with dignity and respect
- We will work with you to understand your housing needs and make plans so that we can support you.
- We will help you with the skills and information you need and develop a clear pathway of support for you to live independently.
- We will strengthen the support given by all of your corporate parents; improve the contact we have with you, and we will keep in touch to see how you are doing after you are 18 years of age.

7.4 These will continue to be delivered through the action plan. From early years into adulthood all our children, young people and young adults should be kept safe, happy and have every opportunity to thrive.

8. Financial Implications

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

9. Recommendation(s)

9.1 It is recommended that Council notes the CIW findings report and associated Action Plan.

Background documents

CIW Improvement Check report

Local Authority Action Plan

Claire Marchant
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Civic Offices
Angel Street
CF31 4WB

Ein cyf / Our ref: BCBC IC 23/06/2025

Dyddiad / Date: 04/09/2025

Dear Director,

This letter describes the findings of our Improvement Check (IC) visit to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) children's services, in June 2025.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) completed a Performance Evaluation Inspection in May 2022. In December 2022 we completed an IC to follow-up on areas for improvement and noted the *'local authority must continue to assure itself of the priority status, pace, quality, delivery, and impact of its improvement activity'*.
- 1.2 In June 2023 CIW and partner inspectorates carried out a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Bridgend. We found leaders and partners had a shared vision and positive approach to safeguarding. The local authority and partners had taken action to instigate learning following critical incidents, there were ambitious plans to drive forward improvements, and it was important to manage these changes with careful oversight.
- 1.3 CIW carry out inspection activity in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the quality standards in the *Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvement of social services in Wales*. This helps us determine the effectiveness of local authorities in supporting, measuring and sustaining improvements for people.
- 1.4 This IC focused on progress made in the areas for improvement, which were identified during the inspection activities of 2022 and 2023. The table below summarises our findings and further details are available throughout the report.

Principle	Areas of improvement identified in 2022-23	Progress identified at this Improvement Check
People	Seeking, hearing and recording the voice of the child	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	People consistently feel listened to and treated with dignity and respect	Some improvements made – further action is required
People	Workforce recruitment and retention	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	Recording demographics and associates	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	Management oversight	Improvements made and must be sustained
People	Staff support, supervision, and training	Improvements made and must be sustained
Prevention	Provision of information, advice, and assistance (IAA). People receive the right support at the right time	Some improvements made – further action is required
Prevention	Placement sufficiency	Some improvements made – further action is required
Partnerships	Thresholds for early help and statutory services	Improvements made and must be sustained
Partnerships	Learning from reviews and audits	Improvements made and must be sustained
Well-being	Compliance with statutory responsibilities	Improvements made and must be sustained
Well-being	Arrangements for supervised contact between children and their families	Improvements made and must be sustained
Well-being	Identification and response to child exploitation	Some improvements made – further action is required
Well-being	Ensuring priority status, pace, quality, delivery, and impact of its improvement activity	Improvements made and must be sustained

2. Glossary of Terminology and Quantity Definitions

A glossary of terminology is contained in Appendix one and a table of quantity definitions in Appendix two.

3. Summary of Improvement Check Findings

- 3.1 BCBC leaders have consistently prioritised children's services, to support sustained and timely improvements. This has significantly strengthened the quality and delivery of social services functions. The local authority has moved from having a fragile workforce and critical deficits in capacity, to an overall position of stability. This is the most significant change made since 2022-23, which underpins the local authority's capacity to drive forward and sustain improvements. **This positive improvement has been achieved through sustained focus on workforce well-being and practice quality.**
- 3.2 The local authority promotes learning and takes action to make improvements in a timely way. Following critical events, the local authority has prioritised improvements with safeguarding arrangements. The JICPA 2023 found the Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) facilitates adherence to the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (WSP) and encourages close partnership working between agencies, but further improvements were needed in respect of IT systems which support information sharing and the sufficiency of partner resource. These improvements have been made, with an improved IT system and sufficient partner resource in place.
- 3.3 In 2023-24 leaders developed their 3-year strategic plan for child and family services¹ (entitled 'Think Family') and a detailed business case for additional funding. This received corporate support from council and enabled the development of additional posts, including five Principal Officers (PO) who support case management teams, implement family support strategies, oversee early help services, oversee commissioning and placements, and drive the transformation of child and family services. There is also a Signs of Safety (SoS) consultant and officers to drive forward practice in relation to quality assurance, policy, and corporate parenting/participation. **The robust corporate and political support for child and family is positive practice, which has made a significant contribution to improved outcomes for people.**
- 3.4 The local authority is embedding new arrangements for an integrated IAA, early help, locality (place-based teams working within communities) social work, locality early intervention and edge of care services. **This positive change is supporting to improve outcomes for people, whilst reducing demand for**

¹ Think Family - Improving Outcomes for Children and Families in Bridgend

statutory services. This is creating capacity for an improved focus on practice standards for children who need care and support. In this context, practitioners are consistently meeting statutory duties, and child protection processes are generally in line with requirements of the WSP.

- 3.5 Improvements in practice quality are driven by a 5-stage implementation plan for the SoS methodology. SoS is built on a set of principles and values that are solution focused, strengths based, and safety orientated². Whilst practice remains variable, leaders are working with staff to build skills and confidence, and the consistency of practice is improving. Whilst it will take time to embed this organisational change, practitioners are developing a shared understanding of practice standards. The local authority should strengthen implementation through improved focus on supporting partner agencies to understand and embed approaches within their own organisations. Leaders are aware of this issue and the PO for transformation has plans to strengthen communication strategies and training opportunities, in collaboration with partner agencies.
- 3.6 Leaders and practitioners have demonstrated sustained commitment and focus on securing improvements. This is complimented by constructive relationships with partners and a commissioned programme of independent advice and quality assurance. When combined with robust quality assurance activities, this provides assurance that areas for improvement will be identified and monitored in a timely way.

4. Key Findings and Evidence

Key findings and some examples of evidence are presented below in line with the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

People - We asked:

How well is the local authority ensuring that people have a say in their lives and can achieve what matters to them? How effective are leaders at developing a stable, highly skilled, well qualified, and supported workforce?

Strengths

- 4.1 The local authority has co-produced a corporate parenting strategy with care experienced young people, in the Bridgend Youth Forum. These young people have been fully involved in selecting priorities and the design and content of the strategy. The approach taken is 'nothing about you without you' and BCBC is committed to meaningful participation in all aspects of corporate parenting.
- 4.2 Improvements in practice quality are dependent on the sufficiency and efficacy of the workforce. In 2023 41% of the local authority workforce were agency

² What Is Signs of Safety? - Signs of Safety

staff, including a managed agency team which was in place for over 2 years. Through sustained improvements, the local authority ensures practitioners typically work with fewer than 20 children. 'Think Family' prioritised a 'Grow your Own' programme for social work and there will be 12 Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) appointed next year. Leaders explored opportunities for enhanced marketing campaigns, including international recruitment, and received a Social Care Wales accolade in 2025 for developing and inspiring the workforce³. In August 2024 the local authority successfully exited the arrangement for a managed agency team, and agency staff accounted for 7% of the workforce in June 2025. **This is a significant change which demonstrates their recruitment and retention strategy is delivering desired outcomes.**

- 4.3 Nearly all staff describe a significant culture shift in the last 2-3 years. This is characterised by an increasingly reflective and collaborative approach across all teams. This shift has improved staff morale, with teams developing a strong sense of collaboration and shared purpose. Our staff survey response was highly positive, with 86% indicating they would recommend working in BCBC to a friend. Leaders are described as compassionate, committed, and focused on workforce well-being. **This positive practice has significantly improved workforce recruitment, retention, and workforce stability.**
- 4.4 The workforce includes many international and newly qualified social workers, who need time and support to develop experience. The local authority has implemented a case consultation process, which supports practitioners to access senior management oversight and consultation in complex situations. Operational management complete personal supervision in a timely way and teams consistently use SoS and reflective spaces to promote outcome focused interventions. The quality of case supervision would be strengthened further with improved focus on the child's lived experience, outcome focused actions, follow-up, and evidence of reflective discussions.
- 4.5 Leaders and managers have a strong understanding of service strengths and areas for improvement. The local authority implemented a system for enhanced scrutiny and compliance monitoring following critical events and child practice reviews. Since that time, oversight has been strengthened further with an increasing focus on quality and a quality assurance framework supports oversight of agreed practice standards, reflection, and learning. **This positive practice strengthens the local authority's ability to evaluate how service delivery impacts people's outcomes.**
- 4.6 Practitioners are positive about training and how this supports their professional development. SoS training is valued, and the training department demonstrate an innovative approach to practice improvement. For example, the SoS method has been adapted to use an alternative approach for Care Experienced

³ [2025 Accolades awards ceremony, winners and... | Social Care Wales](#)

Children (CEC), namely Signs of Stability. **This positive practice is valued by staff and supports to develop workforce efficacy.**

- 4.7 Practitioners are increasingly seeking and hearing the voice of the child and leaders have retained focus on improving practice in this area. We found good examples of Signs of Safety being used to promote child centred approaches to direct work with children. This includes regular use of direct work tools, such as 'three houses' and 'words and pictures'. Practice would be strengthened with consistency and increased focus on how the voice of the child is impacting assessments, plans and outcomes.

Areas for improvement

- 4.8 The Signs of Safety methodology promotes a relationship grounded and strength-based approach to practice. Leaders are embedding this organisational change in a phased way and sustained improvements are evident. However, practice remains variable and some teams are further ahead with improvements, than others. This means some children and families are experiencing the impact of improvements more than others. For example, when safeguarding arrangements work well, professionals work with the whole family and their network to co-produce safety plans and reduce risks in a timely way. When it works less well, family strengths are not identified or utilised, and plans become service led. In some files we also found fathers should have been involved sooner in assessments and plans. **Leaders are aware of this issue and should retain focus on achieving consistent practice, across all staff and teams.**

Prevention - We asked:

How well is the local authority preventing the need for care and support and ensuring the best outcomes for people? How effective are service developments at ensuring people receive the right support at the right time?

Strengths

- 4.9 The IAA team is responsible for receiving contacts and referrals, providing advice and assistance, assessing needs, and undertaking safeguarding enquiries. The MASH acts as the single point of contact for all new safeguarding concerns and brings together staff from BCBC, education, police, and health services. IAA and MASH work closely together, with a shared focus on improving access and pathways to support. **The partnership working and collaboration of agencies in the MASH is positive practice.**
- 4.10 In 2023–24, leaders developed their 3-year strategic plan for C&F services, entitled 'Think Family'. This committed the Council to introducing new arrangements for an integrated IAA, early help, locality social work, locality early intervention and edge of care services. A commissioning strategy was

implemented to drive improvement and investment across this continuum of support. Family support services were integrated with Children and Family Services, while education engagement and pupil support services remained the responsibility of the education directorate.

- 4.11 Whilst the impact of these changes is the subject of ongoing review, early indicators appear positive. For example, in November 2023-2024 there was a 16% reduction in the total number of children allocated to specialist teams, including a 48% reduction in child protection allocations. Practitioners reported increased confidence and improved decision-making through shared expertise and closer collaboration. Most importantly, exit surveys indicate nearly all people receiving early help services feel more able to make positive changes, reporting improved resilience, having better emotional well-being and family relationships, and being more confident to support their child's development. Similarly, 92% of children supported by edge of care services in 2024-25 were successfully prevented from entering the care system. **This is positive practice which indicates need is being met in a timely way, whilst reducing the need for care and support.**

Areas for improvement

- 4.12 The local authority works closely with an improvement partner to review service outcomes and areas for development. This process highlighted the need for family support to streamline systems, develop more intensive targeted support, and reform parenting support. There are some vacancies in key posts and gaps in service sufficiency, including services for adolescents, mental health, emotional well-being, neurodiversity, and vacancies for specialist exploitation workers and the integrated family support service. These gaps have led to some delays in people receiving timely support, and we identified examples where contingency planning for ending support could be improved. **Recruitment is underway, and leaders should continue to develop services in line with their Family Support Commissioning Strategy. The local authority should also review its communication strategy to ensure staff and partners are clear about available services and referral pathways.**
- 4.13 Leaders are working through local and national challenges, to develop placement sufficiency for supported accommodation and regulated services. A Children, Young Person and Transition Commissioning Strategy 2023-2028 outlines plans for improvement, but there remains a projected gap in sufficiency beyond 2028. The general shortage of foster carers and the specific shortage of skilled foster carers and residential care homes who can care for children with the greatest needs, are of particular concern. **Leaders should continue to implement plans in the local authority commissioning strategy, to support timely improvements.**

- 4.14 Whilst placements Operating without Registration (OWR) are only used in exceptional circumstances, and their use is reducing, there are a small number of children who are placed in services providing care and support that are not registered as required by law. **The local authority must ensure children are not placed in unregistered services and must continue its efforts to identify suitable, registered placements.**
- 4.15 Placement sufficiency in foster care is partly dependent on the support for carers and the local authority approach to retention. Leaders have plans to improve approaches with matching, training, and placement support. The fostering service and Care Experienced Children Team (CECT) have recently appointed permanent managers, and practitioners report improved practice and morale. Whilst the fostering service and CECT are increasingly working together to strengthen placement stability, foster carers report mixed views about the impact and sustainability of these changes. **Leaders should ensure the fostering service and CECT retain priority focus, to ensure improvements are made in a timely way.**

Well-being – We asked:

How well is the local authority protecting people from abuse and neglect? How effective are service developments at addressing priority areas for improvement to safeguard children?

Strengths

- 4.16 The local authority responds to safeguarding enquiries in a timely way and responds to referrers as required in the WSP. Partners are consistently invited and contribute to the safeguarding process. Nearly all children receive visits in line with the requirements of the WSP, and child protection conferences and CEC Reviews are timely. The local authority has addressed improvements required from the JICPA and ensures minutes and plans are shared following these meetings. Core groups would be strengthened further if meetings were consistently in person and with improved focus on developing the outline plan from conference.
- 4.17 Practitioners mostly identify and make the active offer of advocacy. It is positive the offer of formal advocacy is expanding, and parental advocacy is now considered alongside advocacy for children. We saw examples of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) checking and ensuring children were provided with the active offer. Despite this, the uptake of advocacy is somewhat lower than expected and leaders are working with practitioners to better understand this issue. We identified examples where the offer of parental advocacy would have been appropriate and was not considered. However, informal advocacy is

nearly always available to parents in the safeguarding process, when formal advocacy is not offered or accepted.

- 4.18 The local authority has developed a central contact team who support supervised contact for CEC and children subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) process. This dedicated resource is significantly improving the timeliness and quality of contact, whilst creating capacity for practitioners to focus on care and support planning.
- 4.19 Leaders have developed an effective Assuring Quality and Learning Framework to systemically monitor and evaluate practice. This aims to support learning and development, improved practice, and the best possible outcomes for people. An essential element of the framework is to promote critical thinking and professional curiosity through meaningful feedback from practitioners, partners, and people with lived experience. For example, staff complete appreciative enquiries⁴, and leaders have recently adopted the Most Significant Change⁵ method to hear people's stories and develop an understanding of how and when change happens for people. **This positive practice is rolling out across all teams and leaders should continue to support this advanced approach to learning and quality assurance.**

Areas for improvement

- 4.20 Leaders are aware of increasing concerns regarding the exploitation of children and the impact of online harm. A regional strategy was co-produced with people and partners in April 2025. Regional practice guidance, training, prevention panels, and tools were created for implementation. A local multi-agency plan has clear actions and a governance structure to oversee improvements. This includes exploitation training for the workforce and multi-agency partners. The local authority has invested in 3 specialist posts, which will strengthen the strategic and operational response to these concerns. This is a significant improvement following the JICPA 2023, and these developments are beginning to strengthen practice and management oversight. However, the strategy is not yet fully embedded, and there remains inconsistencies in how exploitation is identified across agencies. **Leaders should continue to embed consistent approaches to safeguarding children from exploitation. This should include continuing to explore opportunities for multi-agency training, reflection, and shared learning.**
- 4.21 Whilst the local authority generally records demographics and associates, we found case recordings were not always completed in a timely or consistent manner. Records should be accurate, objective, understandable, complete, and up-to-date. They should fully reflect and respect the views of the person

⁴ A strengths-based approach to creating change. This involves listening to the experiences of people, exploring what is already working, and how to build on that.

⁵ Deep handbook Eng.pdf

concerned, contain an appropriate level of analysis to support decisions made, and evidence sound professional judgement and decision making. **Leaders should work with practitioners to develop and embed agreed standards for record keeping.**

- 4.22 Whilst many assessments and plans provide a detailed summary of service interventions and next steps, there is a loss of focus on proportionality and analysis of need. Some assessments and plans would be strengthened with an improved focus on risk, harm, strengths, safety, the voice of the child, and outcomes. It is particularly important the child and significant family members are consistently included in this process and plans are co-produced. SoS provides an opportunity for family network meetings and safety plans to reduce escalations through this strength-based approach. Leaders are working with staff to build skills and confidence, and the consistency of practice is improving. **Leaders should continue to review the quality of assessments and plans and share learning to support practice improvements.**
- 4.23 The IRO service is piloting the SoS approach in child protection case conferences. This provides an opportunity to make the conference process more inclusive, and strength based. Parents/caregivers are actively encouraged to attend and contribute. However, the voice of the child, their lived experience and their wishes and feelings could be heard in a more impactful way. **Subject to their age and level of understanding, children must be invited and supported to take part in meetings held in line with the WSP; and all meetings held in line with child protection processes should start with the child's story⁶.**
- 4.24 Recordings for case conference do not sufficiently focus on the information recorded being understood by family members. **The written record of conference is a crucial working document and leaders should ensure record keeping is in line with the requirements of the WSP.**
- 4.25 The IRO service plans to review the SoS pilot and will seek the views of family members, as part of this process. **Leaders should continue to ensure improvements to the conference process are co-produced with people.**

Partnership - We asked:

How well are partners working together to deliver high-quality, sustainable outcomes for people? How well have strategic partnerships continued to work together, to secure continuous improvements?

Strengths

- 4.26 We saw collaborative partnership working at operational and strategic levels. This is critical to ensure improvements are delivered and sustained, and the

⁶ [Full report - Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements FINAL FOR PUBLICATION](#)

well-being of children and families is consistently promoted and protected.
Leaders have a positive professional support network from which it can draw expertise, knowledge, support, and constructive challenge.

- 4.27 Effective and mature partnership arrangements between agencies are supporting a coordinated multi-agency response to safeguarding concerns.
There is a positive focus on safeguarding across the local authority. A culture of safeguarding is promoted as everyone's collective responsibility.
- 4.28 Leaders have responded to areas for improvement identified through inspection activities. The initial response prioritised improvements required with workforce stability and safeguarding arrangements. Subsequent priorities included improvements to early help and prevention, fostering services, and contact arrangements. The local authority has also worked with partners to embed SoS and strengthen commissioned arrangements. Whilst some improvements are more established than others, leaders have retained focus on priorities and sought to maintain and sustain progress. **There has been a positive approach to change management.**
- 4.29 The local authority and multi-agency partners have developed an improved understanding of threshold for referrals into the MASH. MASH have developed a professionals advice line for discussions about safeguarding concerns.
Partners told us the professional advice line has had a positive impact. This is positive practice.
- 4.30 Operational partners work well together and there is confidence in decision making for safeguarding. This is supported by effective systems for escalation and a healthy culture of professional challenge. For example, fortnightly MASH interface meetings and a Joint Operational Group (JOG) provide opportunity for multi-agency reflection and constructive challenge. **This is positive practice and leaders should continue to strengthen these arrangements.**

Areas for improvement

- 4.31 The local authority has brought the majority of early help services into the Child and Family directorate, from the Education directorate. This change has been well received by most staff and is supporting improved discussions about prevention and thresholds for care and support. However, some staff would benefit from an improved understanding of these changes. **Leaders should continue to work with education partners to develop a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.**
- 4.32 There is draft regional guidance on thresholds for care and support. This was developed with multi-agency partners and is nearing publication. **Leaders**

should continue to work with partners locally and regionally, to implement threshold guidance in a timely and robust way.

- 4.33 Partners identified some inconsistent practice in relation to exploitation, professional concerns, and the operational response to the Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020. **Leaders should continue to work with partners and seek feedback on these specific areas of practice, to ensure improvements are made in a timely way.**
- 4.34 Some partners would welcome further multi-agency training in respect of SoS, exploitation, thresholds, and safeguarding. **Leaders should continue to work with partners to develop an agreed approach to multi-agency training and practice.**
- 4.35 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Emergency Duty Team (EDT) covers Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, and Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT). The service must provide help in a crisis to vulnerable adults, children in need and their families. Partners and practitioners reported challenges with staff sufficiency, record keeping, and practice. **Leaders should work with regional partners to review these arrangements and promote improvements in a timely way.**

5. Next Steps

CIW expects the local authority to consider the areas identified for improvement and take appropriate action to address and improve these areas. CIW will monitor progress through its ongoing performance review activity with the local authority. Where relevant, we expect the local authority to share the positive practice identified with other local authorities, to disseminate learning and help drive continuous improvement in statutory services throughout Wales.

6. Methodology

Fieldwork

- Most inspection evidence was gathered by reviewing the experiences of 24 people through review and tracking of their social care record. We reviewed 21 social care records and tracked 3
- Tracking a person's social care record includes having conversations with the person in receipt of social care services, their family or carers, key worker, the key worker's manager, and where appropriate other professionals involved
- We engaged, through interviews, observations and/or focus groups, with 8 people receiving services and/or their carer
- We engaged, through interviews and/or focus groups with 48 local authority employees (this included social workers, team managers, operational and strategic managers, the head of service, and director of social services)
- We interviewed a range of partner organisations
- We reviewed a sample of staff supervision files

- We observed reflective sessions and an initial child protection case conference
- We reviewed supporting documentation sent to CIW for the purpose of the inspection
- We administered surveys to local authority social services staff, partner organisations and people

Our Privacy Notice can be found at <https://careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information>.

7. Welsh Language

CIW is committed to providing an active offer of the Welsh language during its activity with local authorities. The active offer was not required on this occasion. This is because the local authority informed us people taking part did not wish to contribute to this improvement check in Welsh.

8. Acknowledgements

CIW would like to thank staff, partners and people who gave their time and contributed to this inspection.

Yours sincerely,



Lou Bushell-Bauers
Head of Local Authority Inspection
Care Inspectorate Wales

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terminology

Term	What we mean in our reports and letters
Must	Improvement is deemed necessary in order for the local authority to meet a duty outlined in legislation, regulation or code of practice. The local authority is not currently meeting its statutory duty/duties and must take action.
Should	Improvement will enhance service provision and/or outcomes for people and/or their carer. It does not constitute a failure to meet a legal duty at this time; but without suitable action, there is a risk the local authority may fail to meet its legal duty/duties in future.
Positive practice	Identified areas of strength within the local authority. This relates to practice considered innovative and/or which consistently results in positive outcomes for people receiving statutory services.
Prevention and Early Intervention	A principle of the Act which aims to ensure there is access to support to prevent situations from getting worse, and to enhance the maintenance of individual and collective well-being. This principle centres on increasing preventative services within communities to minimise the escalation of critical need.
Voice and Control	A principle of the Act which aims to put the individual and their needs at the centre of their care and support; and giving them a voice and control over their outcomes. This can help them achieve their well-being outcomes and the things that matter most to them.
Well-being	A principle of the Act which aims for people to have well-being in every part of their lives. Well-being is more than being healthy. It is about being safe and happy, having choice and getting the right support, being part of a strong community, having friends and relationships that are good for you, and having hobbies, work or learning. It is about supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.
Co-Production	A principle of the Act which aims for people to be more involved in the design and provision of their care and support. It means organisations and professionals working with them and their family, friends and carers so their care and support is the best it can be.

Multi-Agency working	A principle of the Act which aims to strengthen joint working between care and support organisations to make sure the right types of support and services are available in local communities to meet people's needs. The summation of the Act states there is a requirement for co-operation and partnership by public authorities.
What matters	'What Matters' conversations are a way for professionals to understand people's situation, their current well-being, and what can be done to support them. It is an equal conversation and is important to help ensure the voice of the individual or carer is heard and 'what matters' to them.

Appendix 2

Quantity Definitions Table

Terminology	Definition
Nearly all	With very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
A majority	Over 60%
Half	50%
Around half	Close to 50%
A minority	Below 40%
Few	Below 20%
Very few	Less than 10%

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Children's Social Care

June 2025 – Care Inspectorate Wales – Improvement Check

ACTION PLAN

PRINCIPLE 1 PEOPLE (Pe)					
REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	BRAG
Pe1	Retain focus on implementing Signs of Safety model of practice, achieving consistent ways of working across all staff and teams.	Workforce Transformation workstream meets 6-weekly and governs SofS implementation including QA activity ensure that SofS is embedded across teams. Consultant Social Worker will support specific teams to ensure SofS is embedded across all teams.(RIF funded). SofS Champion event to be held to ensure full understanding of role and responsibility for each team CIG to continue to be used as a practice forum to celebrate good practice and areas for development Reflective Sessions involving partners to continue to be held.	PO Transformation	March 2026	

PRINCIPLE 2 – PREVENTION (Pr)

REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	BRAG
Pr 1	Continue to develop services in line with the Family Support Commissioning Strategy; review the communication strategy to ensure staff and partners are clear about available services and referral pathways	Implement the recommendations and actions contained within the Family Support Commissioning strategy  Family Support Action Plan_05062021 Multi-Agency board to monitor implementation of the strategy	PO Family support	March 2027	
Pr 2	Continue to implement plans in the local authority commissioning strategy, to support timely improvements.	Implement the Eliminate Profit action plan to develop services to prevent children from becoming looked-after and those that need to exit care.  FOSTERING Eliminating Profit and	Head of Service/PO Commissioning	March 2027	
Pr 3	Ensure that children are not placed in unregistered services and continue efforts to identify suitable, registered placements.	To increase foster carer availability and capacity. Increase internal residential provision capacity.	PO Placements and Commissioning, GMs	June 2026	

		Ensure there are clear and timely plans for children's move on from care. Use the re-modelling fostering board to monitor progress linked to the above actions			
Pr 4	Ensure the fostering service and CECT retain priority focus, to ensure improvements are made in a timely way.	To continue to monitor performance, compliance, staff surveys, outcomes, staffing to prevent any impact on service delivery IRO service to continue to monitor quality of care planning and escalate issues to TM's and GMs when required to do so. PO Case Management and Transition to improve practice across CECT and Care leaving teams ensuring that SofS and care planning is evident in all teams	GM Provider Services and GM Case Management and Transition	June 2026	

PRINCIPLE 3 – Wellbeing (W)

REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	BRAG
W 1	Continue to embed consistent approaches to safeguarding children from exploitation. This should include continuing to explore opportunities for multi-agency training, reflection, and shared learning.	To implement the exploitation strategy and develop our exploitation service and then monitor the impact of the service on outcomes for children.  Exploitation Strategy.docx Multi-agency training to be delivered to teams via Regional Safeguarding board. Exploitation Champions to continue to meet and promote the exploitation strategy and approaches to working with children and families.	GM Locality Hubs	June 2026	
W 2	Work with practitioners to develop and embed agreed standards for record keeping.	Refresh record keeping guidance and ensure teams are implementing consistently via QA activity. Training to be developed and delivered to teams to ensure consistency in recording.	QA Officer/PO Transformation	June 2026	
W 3	Continue to review the quality of assessments and plans and share	Continue to implement the QA framework, MSC and service based audits to identify good practice and areas for development.	PO Transformation/SMT	June 2026	

PRINCIPLE 3 – Wellbeing (W)

REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	BRAG
	learning to support practice improvements.	Reflective sessions to continue to be held across teams and partners. CIG to continue to be a forum to promote good practice Action learning sets to continue to be held across teams.			
W 4	Subject to their age and level of understanding, children must be invited and supported to take part in meetings held in line with the WSP; and all meetings held in line with child protection processes should start with the child's story.	To record and reflect that children are being invited to CP conferences and that SofS is being implemented consistently with the voice of the child evident throughout. Implement SofS conferences for all CP conferences. IRO team development to ensure child's story commences a CP conference	PO Transformation and IRO Team Manager/SCWDP	June 2026	
W 5	Ensure case conference record keeping is in line with the requirements of the WSP.	To review the approach to minute taking and that notes are proportionate and reflect the strengths, risks and needs within families clearly.	GM Business Support/IRO Team Manager/GM Locality Hubs	June 2026	

PRINCIPLE 3 – Wellbeing (W)

REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	BRAG
		Training to be provided to business support staff on expectations on minute taking.			
W 6	Continue to ensure improvements to the conference process are co-produced with people	To continue implement SofS conferences consistently and ensure that the voice of children and families are at the centre. Increase the number of children participating in their CP conference through the child's social worker having early discussions with families regarding attendance.	GM IAA/Safeguarding/IRO Team Manager	June 2026	

PRINCIPLE 4 – Partnerships (Pa)

REF	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	TIMESCALE	BRAG
Pa 1	Continue to work with education partners to develop a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities.	To continue with attendance at Team Bridgend, Primary Federation and BASSH. Continue with interface with EEYP directorate SofS multi-agency training to commence with Education services by end of 2025	GM IAA/Safeguarding PO Family Support	June 2026	
Pa 2	Continue to work with partners to implement threshold guidance in a timely and robust way.	To launch local threshold guidance and hold raising awareness sessions of the guidance with relevant partners. Reflective sessions continue to be held with partners to develop shared understanding of thresholds. SofS multi-agency training to delivered to all partners.	GM IAA/Safeguarding	March 2026	
Pa 3	Continue to work with partners and seek feedback on specific areas of practice - exploitation, professional concerns, and the operational response to the Children (Abolition	To review with partners in our multi-agency forums such as JOG progress related to exploitation, professional concern and any other areas of multi-agency practice.	Deputy HOS	March 2026	

	of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020 - to ensure improvements are made in a timely way.	Reflective sessions continue to be held with partners to develop shared understanding of thresholds. SofS multi-agency training to delivered to all partners			
Pa 4	Continue to work with partners to develop an agreed approach to multi-agency training and practice.	To review what multi-agency training is currently delivered and where opportunities present to enhance multi-agency sessions. Develop joint training with Health, Education and SWP on best practice linked to children and family support	SCWDP	March 2026	
Pa 5	Work with regional partners to review EDT arrangements and promote improvements in a timely way.	To attend EDT management board and feed into service development. Create an interface with EDT with the GM IAA/Safeguarding to discuss any operational issues.	GM Locality Hubs GM IAA/Safeguarding	September 2025 September 2025	

BRAG STATUS - KEY	
	Action Complete
	Action On Track
	Action Mainly On Track With Some Minor Issues

	Action Not On Track, Not Yet Meeting Performance Targets
--	--

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25
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 and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The Social Services Annual Report 2024-25 is a statutory requirement providing the Council, the people of Bridgend County Borough, regulators and partners with an overview of the effectiveness of Social Services and Wellbeing in the county borough in the last year. The report reflects on 2024-25, highlighting achievements and challenges whilst outlining priorities for 2025-26. New report guidance has been introduced for the reporting year, with performance being assessed across the 4 areas of People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration and Well-being, with each area focusing on 2 quality standards. As well as the performance assessment section of the report, it also includes a Director's summary, information on leadership, workforce, inspections and reviews and complaints and representations. The report highlights our key risks and financial resources noting the key challenges and pressures the Directorate and the Council faces in fulfilling its statutory social services and wellbeing duties for the people of the county borough.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Social Services Annual Report 2024-25 (**Appendix one**) to Council for approval.

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 local authorities report on and performance evaluate against the well-being outcomes of the SSWBA. 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 strong voice and control.
 - promoting partnership working; and
 - enhancing the preventative role of social care and health, setting out overarching well-being duties to reduce or delay the need for care and support.
- 2.2 Initial guidance for the Social Services Annual Report was published in 2017, however, to reflect developments since 2017, including the new Performance Management Framework, as well as feedback from local authorities and stakeholders, in May 2024, Welsh Government and the Association of the Directors of Social Services Cymru issued the "Local Authority Social Services Annual Report (Director's Report) Guidance".
- 2.3 This new guidance comes into effect in 2025. This means reports reflecting the 2024-25 financial year will need to follow the new guidance. The new guidance clearly sets out what is to be included in the report and how Welsh Government will measure performance.
- 2.4 The draft Annual Report was presented to the Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview Scrutiny Committee on 11th September 2024. The Committee welcomed the report as an excellent picture of the service provision and in highlighting some areas, such as workforce, as an area of excellence. The Committee noted their thanks to Officers within the Directorate for the good work undertaken. The Committee did express concern regarding financial considerations, in particular, the reliance on grant funding and were keen that the Directorate maintain momentum to ensure sustainability of the level of excellence that it is reaching and striving towards within budgetary constraints.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 As outlined in the Annual Report guidance, the SSWBA requires local authorities, health boards and Welsh Ministers to promote the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support. It further adds that the Act seeks to ensure:
- People have control over what support they need, making decisions about their support as an equal partner.
 - There is proportionate assessment that focuses on the individual.
 - Carers have an equal right to an assessment for support to those they care for.
 - Easy access to information and advice is available to all.
 - Arrangements to safeguard people are stronger.
 - A preventative approach to care and support needs.

- Local authorities and health boards work in partnership to drive integration, innovation and service change including new forms of provision.

3.2 Welsh Government has now made the Annual Report an integral part of the Performance Improvement Framework, which focuses on eight quality standards under the four key areas of people, prevention, partnership and integration and wellbeing as noted in Table 1. These areas are addressed in the performance assessment section of the report with previous guidance measuring performance under six quality standards.

Table 1

Area	Quality Standards
1. People	1. All people are equal partners who have choice, voice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them. 2. Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision.
2. Prevention	3. The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented whilst ensuring that the best outcomes for people are achieved. 4. Resilience within communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively supporting people who need care and/or support including carers to learn develop and participate in society.
3. Partnership and Integration	5. Effective partnerships are in place to commission and fully deliver fully integrated, high quality sustainable outcomes for people. 6. People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners.
4. Well-being	7. People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect and any other types of harm. 8. People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible.

3.3 The Annual Report Guidance gives clear instruction on how to structure the report and highlights the key areas to focus on, which as well as the eight quality standards within section 3 of the report, also includes key information on leadership, the workforce, financial resources, inspections and reviews as well as complaints and representations.

- 3.4 The report must begin with a Director's summary focusing on the following areas:
- main achievements.
 - key risks and challenges.
 - priorities and overarching objectives for 2025-26.
- 3.5 Throughout the Annual Report there is evidence of key service developments made throughout the reporting year, the impact made and how we have engaged with the people that access our services. Examples of achievements included in the Director's summary note:
- a strengthened and stabilised workforce.
 - further embedding of the "signs of safety" practice model in Children and Family Services and the "outcomes focused, strengths based" practice model in Adult Social Care.
 - integration of the early help and edge of care services.
 - the remodelling of care and support at home.
 - the range of services provided by our prevention and wellbeing service to support people within a community setting.
- 3.6 The most significant risks the Directorate faces and how they will be mitigated are also included in the Director's summary. Examples include:
- the increasing complexity of need linked to an aging population.
 - ensuring sufficient provision of care and support, including placement sufficiency for care experienced children.
 - the impact of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill (2025) and the challenging timescales and financial implications of the removal of profit for children's social care
 - the replacement of the current social services digital case management system
 - increased pressures on our partners.
- 3.7 Whilst specific priorities are noted in the performance assessment section, under the four areas of people, prevention, partnerships and integration and well-being the Directorate's strategic priorities for 2025-26 are outlined in the Director's summary:
- Supporting workforce wellbeing, retention and recruitment to continue to achieve a highly motivated, well supported skilled workforce.
 - Embedding our models of practice and using our quality assurance and learning and development programmes to address variation in quality.
 - Enhancing our prevention, early intervention and edge of care services to support more people to live independently and well and for children to live safely with their own families.
 - Embedding our operating models in adults, children and families and prevention and wellbeing which have early help and prevention at their core.
 - Hearing and acting upon the voice of the people we work with and alongside.

- Addressing deficits in the sufficiency of services, particularly children's not for profit residential and fostering services and supported living, shared lives and extra care for adults.
- Understanding better current and future needs and projections for social services and wellbeing services, including the impact of new legislation and demographics, to align service and financial plans which mean we are as best placed as possible to achieve sustainable social services at a cost affordable to the Council.
- Investing in partnerships with other public services, the third sector and community groups to improve outcomes for individuals and families in the most effective and cost effective way.
- Implementing a new digital system which will modernise the way our workforce practice, whilst we support them to prepare for social care being at the fore of the Council's digital strategy.

3.8 It is important to note that all priorities are reflected in the Directorate's 2025-26 Business Plan and link to our 3-year strategic plans ("Think Family" in Children and Family Services" and "Building on Strengths, Improving Lives' in Adult Social Care).

3.9 In developing the Annual Report, engagement and consultation activity has taken place via a number of channels including People First Bridgend, the Bridgend Youth Forum, domiciliary care community meetings and the social services complaints and compliments process. It is important the voice of the people we work with is heard so that areas of good practice are shared and areas for improvement addressed.

3.10 Finally, it is important to note that the report acknowledges the support of the whole Council, our partners in South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) and other statutory partners, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg regional partnership, our cultural and leisure partners Awen and Halo, and other third sector partners. It also pays tribute to the exceptional commitment to the most vulnerable people across the borough and the professionalism and commitment of the workforce across both statutory and preventative services.

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 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 Council 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 needs 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. The prevention section of the report demonstrates how we are thinking long term by supporting resilient communities. For example, our prevention and wellbeing service and their partners are ensuring people are connected to their communities and that carers have a range of support and services they can access to support them in their caring role.
- **Prevention:** The report highlights developments by the directorate in line with the SSWBA with the new guidance focussing on prevention as one of its 4 key areas for performance assessment. Key examples noted in report include the integration of early help and edge of care services in Children and Family Services providing timely support to prevent intervention by statutory services. In Adult Social Care the remodelling of the care and support at home service has enabled a more effective response to need to support people in maintaining their independence.
- **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 with another area of the performance assessment section focusing on partnership and integration. Key examples included in the report note how the Integrated Cluster Network Teams in Adult Social care work jointly with CTMUHB to deliver and adapt services to people within the community. The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) co-locates adult and children safeguarding and partners from police, health, education and probation. The prevention and wellbeing service work with third sector partners HALO and AWEN to deliver cultural, leisure and wellbeing services across the borough
- **Collaboration:** The collaborative approaches noted in the report, are managed and monitored through various regional collaborative boards. These include the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTMSB). Working regionally enables the directorate to strategically plan and deliver local services by optimising available resources.
- **Involvement:** Our most important stakeholders are the people who use our services, and it is important their voice is heard and acted upon. One of the 4 key areas within the performance assessment section, focusses on people and ensuring they have a voice, choice and control over their lives and what is important to them. Within Children and Family Services we have implemented the “Most Significant Change” model to gather feedback from people and understand

the impact we are making. In Adult Social Care the “Better Together Bridgend” partnership brings together people with a learning disability to plan service improvements with the Council and providers to work together to plan and co-produce services.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

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

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 Key safeguarding actions are noted within the “Well-being” section and include:

- the implementation of the “no wrong door” approach across Children and Family Services to target early intervention to prevent situations getting worse.
- and the introduction of several panels and groups to support our statutory safeguarding duties within Adult Social Care. These include the complex care panel, the self-neglect panel and the suicide and self-harm prevention group.

7.3 The Directorate’s safeguarding priorities for 2025-26 include:

- the implementation of the Regional Exploitation Strategy.
- ensuring learning from Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews and other in-depth analysis is systematically embedded through learning, training and development.
- and monitoring the attendance and engagement at corporate safeguarding board meetings to ensure the Council is protecting children and vulnerable adults.

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. Whilst the budget outturn position for Adult and Children’s Social Care in 2024-25 was an overspend of £1.009 million against a net budget of £102.916 million, this was only possible due to a one-off funding grant and without this grant, the outturn would have increased the overspend to £2.986 million.

- 8.3 With over 10% of the Social Services and Wellbeing budget being dependent on specific grant funding, there is a significant financial risk to the Council should these grants be reduced or withdrawn.
- 8.4 The annual report also highlights key areas of financial pressure for the directorate including:
- Residential placements within Children and Family Services.
 - The impact of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill (2025) on not for-profit providers.
 - Pressures in adult social care within learning disabilities, mental health, physical disabilities and older people's services driven by increase in cost, volume of people supported and complexity of need
- 8.5 In February 2025, Council approved £8.8 million in budget pressures for 2025-26 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29 to support the Directorate in addressing these ongoing pressures. The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing actions to address the service and financial pressures.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council approves the 2024-25 Director of Social Services Annual Report.

Background documents

None

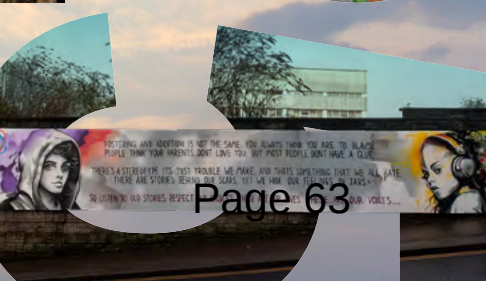
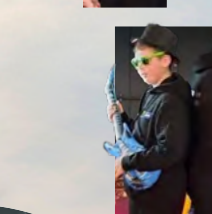
BRIDGEND COUNTY
BROUGH COUNCIL

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF
SIROL PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR

Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25



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1

DIRECTORS SUMMARY

This is my fifth annual report as Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in Bridgend. Preparing this report is one of the most important duties of a Director of Social Services. The annual report sets out the Council's effectiveness in delivering social services and wellbeing for our residents. It helps celebrate what is going well, acknowledge where we need to improve and set out priorities for the coming year.

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).

I must start by thanking our social services and wellbeing workforce - in the Council and commissioned services - who have gone above and beyond to make life better for our most vulnerable citizens. I am proud of how they have supported people with compassion, skill and professionalism. They focus on building relationships and taking time to listen and understand what matters to children, families, adults and carers. It is a privilege for us all to work with individuals and their families at some of the most challenging times of their lives.

We have a clear purpose for social services and wellbeing in Bridgend:

"We exist to exercise our legal and moral duties to help those who need care and support in Bridgend to have the best possible life. We have clear strategic plans and priorities for children and families and adult social care and wellbeing in Bridgend."

The environment we are working in is challenging with a high and growing number of contacts with children and family services and adult social care. Our population is growing and ageing. Poverty, age, disability and illness, domestic abuse and use of substances have a major impact on individuals and communities. Children and young people face challenges unknown to previous generations including a growth in safeguarding related cybercrime.

Alongside changing needs, there is new progressive legislation to remove profit from children's social care in Wales. The financial position of local government remains challenging. The proportion of local authority budgets spent on social services across Wales has increased lessening the proportion available to invest in preventative and wellbeing services which reduce the need for long term care and support.

Despite the challenges, this report is optimistic. Successful workforce planning, succession planning, a focus on workforce wellbeing and learning and development means we have a well-supported, well-motivated workforce. We have reduced our reliance on agency workers which gives more continuity to the people we support. We have strong and effective models of practice and are reducing variability in standards. We have a range of services which are good quality and delivering positive outcomes and have plans to address gaps in services. We have effective early intervention and prevention and aim to support more people earlier and avoid people's needs escalating. We have robust and effective relationships with partners, which we will continue to nurture and invest time in. These relationships have been fundamental in our improvement journey over the last 3 years. They will be central to our continued transformation – as we aim to move our overall assessment of effectiveness from good to excellent.

Children and Family Services

Our 3-year strategic plan for children and families 'Think Family' was published in September 2023, and focuses on:

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

In 2024-25 we have stabilised our workforce, embedded our signs of safety model of practice and integrated prevention and edge of care services. This has helped us have a positive impact for children and families in Bridgend.

We have made significant and sustained improvements in 2024-25. We have progressed at pace from a local authority where there our regulator, Care Inspectorate Wales, had 'serious concerns' in 2022. We developed a 'whole Council approach' to making the improvements needed, took bold action, based on a strong understanding of the local data, and analysis of evidence of what works. Our key improvement actions were:

- Developed a clear business case and strategic plan, supported by investment, to strengthen the children's workforce and early help services in September 2023, unanimously supported across the council.
- Strong and effective governance including a cross-party improvement board chaired by the Leader of Council.
- A focus on the workforce – both innovation

in securing a permanent workforce in the short term through international recruitment and sustainable investment in the 'grow our own' programme of internal succession planning and commitment and practice of compassionate leadership, workforce wellbeing and ongoing learning and development.

- A clear practice model accompanied by low social work caseloads which enable the workforce to build strong relationships with families, building on strengths, whilst acting swiftly to address danger.
- The integration of early help and edge of care services so children and families access the right support from the right person at the right time.
- Effective partnership working based on a clear purpose, appropriate professional challenge and strong mutual support.
- Strong data and intelligence, quality assurance and the support of an independent improvement partner.

An improvement check in June 2025 considered the effectiveness of children's services in Bridgend including progress against previous Care Inspectorate Wales recommendations and found:

"BCBC leaders have consistently prioritised children's services, to support sustained and timely improvements. This has significantly strengthened the quality and delivery of social services functions. The local authority has moved from having a fragile workforce and critical deficits in capacity, to an overall position of stability. This is the most significant change made since 2022-23, which underpins the local authority's capacity to drive forward and sustain improvements. This positive improvement has been achieved through sustained focus on workforce wellbeing and practice quality."

In terms of impact, we have reduced the number and proportion of children and young people who experience care and support and require safeguarding interventions in Bridgend. We have helped more families in Bridgend live well together and raise their children to be resilient and live the lives that they want to live as adults. We still need to do more to focus a greater proportion of our resources on cost-effective preventative support for families with complex needs rather than expensive substitute care experiences. We are working with our partners to make sure more families get the right help at the right time and reduce the number of times we have to intervene in a crisis

It is important to acknowledge the progress made and celebrate the workforce who have improved outcomes for children and families in Bridgend. It is also important to avoid complacency both about the areas where we still need to improve and, the oversight and scrutiny required to assure ourselves regarding the quality of practice. The focus in the next year includes areas identified by CIW as requiring further improvement, as well as areas we have identified ourselves.

We need to:

- Improve the sufficiency of foster carers and residential provision in Bridgend for our most vulnerable children. This includes opening 2 more residential homes for children.
- Continue to improve Bridgend's fostering service, improving how we recruit, support and retain foster carers, match children to the right foster family and improve access to learning and development for foster carers.
- Reduce the variation in our practice and consistently record our work to a high standard.
- Strengthen quality assurance and ensuring more children are actively involved in their own care plans and reviews.
- Address gaps in our preventative services, particularly to meet the needs of adolescents for whom there is a higher risk of entry into the care system.
- Continue to improve practice and outcomes in our care experienced children and our fostering team, as they benefit from more recent workforce stability and consistency of management and leadership.
- Work with partners to improve out of hours emergency duty arrangements, understanding of our practice model, the response to professional concerns, and safeguarding children from exploitation.

Adult Social Care

Our 3-year strategic plan for adult social care 'Building on Strengths, Improving Lives' was published in November 2024 and focuses on:

- Operating Model
- Outcomes-Focused Strengths-Based Practice Model
- Transforming Services
- Learning Disabilities
- Community Mental Health
- Lifelong Conditions or Complex Care Needs
- Supporting Priorities including workforce, learning and development and ICT

The strategic plan builds on our strengths – we have well established, highly performing, integrated teams with a range of health and social care professionals working closely together to meet the needs of 'Mrs Jones' in a way that is seamless for the individual and families.

We work particularly effectively for individuals and families living with long term conditions and age-related frailty. Our focus is on maximising independence and reducing dependency. At the end of March 2025, Bridgend County Borough Council was supporting the second lowest rate of people in Wales in long term care home accommodation.

Overall, the quality of adult social care services in Bridgend are also of a high standard. In 2024-25 Care Inspectorate Wales undertook six regulatory inspections of Bridgend County Borough Council registered care homes and an inspection of the Council's care and support at home service. Overall the inspections demonstrated that staff are highly trained and person centred in their practice and individuals and families can have a

high degree of confidence in the quality of care provided.

There has been a focus in the last year on remodelling care and support at home. More people have retained or regained skills following a period of ill health and prior to receiving a long-term package of domiciliary care in their own home. The majority of people who receive reablement have a positive outcome and their need for long term care is reduced or mitigated entirely. Less people have been delayed in their pathway of care following a hospital admission.

Adult safeguarding is also an area of strength. We have strengthened practice and ensured people get the right response from the right person at the right time. The team has worked effectively with partners to oversee improvements in how people in the secure estate in Bridgend are safeguarded. This is a complex area of work and the leadership of the Council's team has been commended by partners. There has also been an innovative approach with partners to suicide and self-harm prevention. A consultation line has been introduced which ensures referrers

have timely access to information, advice and assistance and we have also improved the way we manage deprivation of liberty safeguards.

We know there are some areas of adult services where further improvements are needed. Our community learning disability team has experienced a number of workforce challenges and we have yet to fully embed a progression approach which builds on people's strengths to maximise their independence. Our short term social work services – our Early Intervention and Prevention Hub and Hospital Social Work Team have also experienced difficulties in always having sufficient capacity to meet the levels of need presenting to them. We are working through focussed improvements in these areas and implementing plans to strengthen the workforce and practice.

Our priorities for improvement in 2025-26 are:

- Ensure people are only admitted to hospital where this is medically necessary and

people move smoothly to their next care setting on discharge from hospital – working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board.

- Continue to transform the way we support people with learning disabilities.
- Improve the arrangements for supporting young people and their families during the transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Ensure there is sufficient accommodation care and support services to meet the needs of all our population groups in a way that supports people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible. We will recommission care and support at home services, develop a business case with partners for additional extra care and supported living provision and expand shared lives provision.
- Improve the way that we understand the needs of, and support, informal carers.

Early Help, Prevention and Wellbeing

In 2024-25 we integrated early help and edge of care services into the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate.

Demand and referrals for early help have been increasing significantly. We have strengthened the early help offer and improved outcomes for families. New front door arrangements have helped us with early identification of risk, allowing teams to intervene before needs escalate. Earlier identification has allowed teams to undertake preventative work rather than reacting to crises. there has been a 67% reduction in the number of families stepping up to statutory services, which highlights the effectiveness of this early and preventative work. Impact measures have shown

that 96% of families reported feeling more able to make positive lifestyle and behaviour changes, and 94% of families reported improved family resilience.

The prevention and well-being offer in Bridgend has continued to be sector leading in supporting the most vulnerable citizens of the county borough to be healthy, well and connected in 2024-25. We understand people are experts in their own lives and are committed to co-producing solutions with people and groups. There are some excellent examples such as the Bridgend Inclusive Network Group (BING) which deliver support and training and over time has become sustainable and our young carers ambassadors who support their

peers in our young carers network to access support and design wellbeing activities. There are examples of positive practice working with people of all ages in the county borough including:

- Local community connectors and community navigators who 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. Community connectors support individuals who are at the edge of needing statutory services; community navigators work with a wider range of people.
- The carer's wellbeing service signposted 4650 carers to appropriate services in 2024-25.
- The young carers networks which are engaging over 146 young carers in 'we are valued' days and has supported over 549 through the young carers card.
- Our new youth hub which meets twice a

week in Bridgend Resource Centre and provides social opportunities children and young adults with additional needs

- Accredited training and supporting for people with meaningful occupation in Awen's Wood-B and B-Leaf supported employment.
- Our healthy living partnership with Halo leisure trust which has received the highest level of industry accreditation and has supported autism friendly swimming and the Feel Good for Life programme for those living with dementia, people who are lonely and isolated and their carers.
- Our cultural trust partner Awen who provide a range of library, cultural and wellbeing services to support people to be well and connected to their community.
- Our active young people's programme which engages children of different ages in sports, games, arts and creative activities.
- Our Bevan exemplar super agers programme which keeps us fit, active and socially connected as we grow older.

Workforce

Our workforce has been part of significant change programmes, embracing our models of social work practice in social services and wellbeing.

We have had a strategic workforce board for 3 years which has focused on retention and recruitment, workforce planning, learning and development, workforce wellbeing and culture. Our own staff survey evidenced this as did the Care Inspectorate Wales survey of the children's services workforce found 86% staff would recommend working for us in Bridgend

County Borough Council. We have achieved a significant reduction in agency social workers, reduced staff turnover, improved recruitment and have evidenced effective succession planning. We are not complacent – we understand that a proportion of our workforce are not yet very experienced and we are committed to supporting and nurturing them. Some very experienced colleagues and senior leaders are nearing retirement and any change at a leadership level needs to be carefully planned and managed to mitigate the risk that staff become unsettled. Our workforce continues to be our highest priority.

Financial Performance, Risks and Issues

Social care costs are increasing due to new legal duties, a growing population, an ageing demographic and greater complexity of needs in younger adults and children and families and rising costs of providing care. The impact of covid lockdowns on the most vulnerable is still being fully understood.

The budget outturn position for Adult and Children's Social Care in 2024-25 was an overspend of £1.009 million against a net budget of £102.916 million. This means the directorate was within 0.98% of the budget set. But without one-off grant funding we would have overspent by £2.986 million. As so much of our budget (over 10%) is made of specific grants, there is a high service and financial risk if these grants, which largely fund core services, were to be withdrawn or reduced.

Social care is the second largest area of Council spend after education. The social services and well-being budget represents 30.25% of the Council's overall net revenue budget at £115.909m. The Council budget for 2025-26 built in additional funding following detailed planning between finance and social services and wellbeing colleagues. This was to reflect the costs of the real living wage for care workers, the costs of care experienced children and services for older adults, learning disabilities and mental health.

Over 75% of care is provided by providers who the Council has entered into commissioning arrangements with. Legally, local authorities are required to understand the cost of care and reflect this in its commissioning arrangements. The impact of the real living wage, employer's national insurance increases and other inflationary factors are resulting in the cost of care increasing.

The Council also has a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficient provision of care and support to meet the needs of the population – areas such as fostering and residential care for care experienced children and specialist residential care for adults where there is insufficient capacity experience significant cost pressures. 'Top-up' fees are increasingly charged by adult residential and nursing home providers in addition to the standard fee paid by the local authority or families. These have risen and cause stress on family and local authority budgets. The Council has developed commissioning strategies which it is implementing to mitigate these risks including developing more in-house children's homes, a strong focus on retention and recruitment of foster carers and plans to develop more extra care and supported living provision for adults. It should be noted that there is significant pressure on capital as well as revenue budgets and the social services directorate is very largely dependent on regional capital grants to progress our capital priorities.

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 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'*. In light of robust analysis and professional advice, the Council has supported pressures in Social Services as far as it has been able to in recent budgets, including an investment of £2 million in the Children's workforce in 2024-25 and £8.8 million in 2025-26 budget including £3.25

million investment in care experienced children and over £2 million to reflect the impact of the increases in the real living wage for care workers.

There are significant ongoing financial pressures for Council to be aware of in future medium term financial strategies:

- The impact of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill (2025) which will remove profit from children's social care by 2030. We know the transitional and ongoing costs will significantly exceed the grant funding we have been given. This is evident in the Welsh Government's Regulatory Impact Assessment. To mitigate this, we will continue to safely reduce the overall numbers of care experienced children and develop more in-house provision which achieves better outcomes and is more cost effective.
- The impact of demographics on need for social care –we will continue to mitigate needs for care and support through targeted prevention and reablement services but not all needs for care and support can be prevented. We need to continue our transformation programme in Bridgend. At a national policy level, a sustainable funding solution for funding social services is required, which does not place overall local authority budgets at risk and result in reducing other services which are in themselves essential in preventing the need for care and support.

There are a number of other risks and issues being managed and mitigated in social services and wellbeing which are reflected in corporate and directorate risk registers. The most significant are:

Children's Placement Sufficiency

The Health and Social Care (Wales) Act (2025) received royal assent on 24 March 2025. The focus of the legislation is removing profit from children's social care in Wales which has created some additional instability in the children's social care market during the transition period, with a number of residential providers electing to withdraw whilst others have not yet disclosed their longer-term intentions.

There are insufficient foster care families in Foster-Wales Bridgend and an ageing foster carer population. The number of new foster carers we are recruiting are less than those leaving the service. There are at any time a small number of children living in residential care who could be supported in foster care. In 2024-25, there were also a small number of children at any one time living in settings which are "operating without registration". This is a significant risk as the safeguards of a registered

provision are not in place. The financial implications of high-cost placements, registered and operating without registration, is very high.

To manage this risk there is a renewed focus on our strategy to safely reduce the numbers of care experienced children. We are expanding our edge of care services which keep children safely living with their family. A detailed placement commissioning strategy has been developed which sets out the services that need to be developed to manage the transition to a not for profit children's social care system over the next 5 years. A fostering remodelling project is enhancing the offer and support to Bridgend foster carers. The Council is developing further in-house provision for care experienced children. The short term 'eliminating profit' grant funding to support the impact of the new legislation is supporting the transition but this is currently due to end in March 2028 which may create a revenue gap. Further service and financial modelling is being undertaken.

Levels of Contact into Social Care Services

The number of referrals to children and family services has continued to increase. South Wales Police are the highest referrer. Further work will be undertaken with key partners.

The need for adult services also continues to grow as the population is increasing, and ageing. A new Early Intervention and Prevention Hub has been implemented from February 2025 which is channelling assessments through a new adult services front door, focusing on signposting and

advice with less ongoing care and support plans. The level of contacts to this service has also increased and we need to ensure that service capacity always meets the level of demand.

There have been significant increases in levels of care and costs of care for people with learning disabilities in recent years. There have been pressures 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.

Digital System Replacement

The Council is facing a number of challenges and risks in relation to a new system for its current safeguarding and case management IT System.

A new system has been procured but there is a significant amount of work to be undertaken to move from the current WCCIS system to the new Mosaic system. This is an area of significant concern which will be closely monitored corporately through our corporate risk register throughout 2025-26.

Pressures on Partner agencies

Service and financial pressures are impacting all parts of public services and many organisations are making big changes to focus on their core business.

There is a risk this means a greater expectation on Council services and gaps in the support available to people from other agencies. We need to work through changes with partners to ensure people continue to access the support they need, whilst being clear what the local authority's responsibilities

are and the expectations on other partners to fulfil their responsibilities. This works best where there are integrated service arrangements such as the MASH and integrated adult community teams.

Priorities for 2025-26

Supporting workforce wellbeing, retention and recruitment to continue to achieve a highly motivated, well supported skilled workforce.

Embedding our models of practice and using our quality assurance and learning and development programmes to address variation in quality.

Enhancing our prevention, early intervention and edge of care services to support more people to live independently and well and for children to live safely with their own families.

Embedding our operating models in adults, children and families and prevention and wellbeing which have early help and prevention at their core.

Hearing and acting upon the voice of the people we work with and alongside.

Addressing deficits in the sufficiency of services, particularly children's not for profit residential and fostering services and supported living, shared lives and extra care for adults.

Understanding better current and future needs and projections for social services and wellbeing services, including the impact of new legislation and demographics, to align service and financial plans which mean we are as best placed as possible to achieve sustainable social services at a cost affordable to the Council.

Investing in partnerships with other public services, the third sector and community groups to improve outcomes for individuals and families in the most effective and cost effective way.

Implementing a new digital system which will modernise the way our workforce practice, whilst we support them to prepare for social care being at the fore of the Council's digital strategy.

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, the risks and issues we face and the areas where we will continue to improve.

Despite challenging levels of demand our performance is good and compares well with other local authorities in Wales. Our workforce is stable, well-motivated and committed to the Council. We have a strong and highly motivated management and leadership team. We work well with partner agencies. Our reviews show improvements in the quality of our practice – and this is reflected in the inspections undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales.

But there will always be areas which require improvement and we have focussed activity to deliver this. The risks set out in this report are considerable. The change of digital system in the next year presents a particularly significant risk. Our frontline workforce, managers and leaders all depend on an effective system to undertake their work and keep people safe. The financial risks to the Council remain challenging. We need to continue with a whole Bridgend community approach - one Council and partners - to work together to safeguard and improve outcomes for the most vulnerable.

My final word is one of sincere thanks, to all Councillors, my colleagues across the Council and in partner agencies. Your support has been unwavering and fundamental in achieving a well-functioning and, for the most part, highly performing social services and wellbeing service for the people of Bridgend. The progress set out within this report could not have been achieved without your leadership, challenge and commitment.

Diolch o galon,

Claire Marchant

Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing

JULY 2025

2

CONTEXT

What do we do?

The Social Services and Wellbeing directorate is made up of statutory services - Adult Social Care, Children and Family Services, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. We also lead the Prevention and Wellbeing service which includes the healthy living partnership with **Halo Leisure** and the cultural partnership with **Awen Cultural Trust**.

We work with other parts of the Council, partners, and the people of Bridgend, to promote wellbeing, connection and to safeguard and protect people with care and support needs.

Our services

We provide a range of services, including:

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Early Intervention & Prevention
Assessment and Care Planning
Safeguarding (Adult Protection)
Mental Health services
Substance Misuse
Residential & Nursing Care
Extra Care
Supported Living
Domiciliary Care (Home care)
Reablement & Residential
Reablement
Shared Lives
Equipment, Adaptations & Telecare
Respite Care
Direct Payments
Day Care
Advocacy

PREVENTION AND WELLBEING

Early Intervention & Prevention
Active 4 Life
Community Engagement
Aging Well
Carer / Young Carer Support
BAVO Partnership

- Building Community Resilience

Awen Partnership

- Libraries
- Theatres / Cultural Hubs
- Work Based Initiatives

Halo Healthy Living Partnership

- Life Centres
- GP Referral Scheme
- Falls Prevention
- Health and Wellbeing Membership
- Free Swim Initiative

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Early Intervention & Prevention
Assessment and Care Planning
Safeguarding (Child Protection)
Foster Care
Residential Care
Care Leavers
Direct Payments
Respite Care
Advocacy

Who do we support?

We work with the most vulnerable children and adults, their families and carers, to enable them to live safely and well. This is often in challenging circumstances resulting from age, disability, poverty, or risk of neglect and abuse.

This year, (as at 31st March) we were providing services to **1011 children and young people**; and **1977 adults**.

The tables below shows the number of people receiving managed care and support (excluding those going through the assessment process, who are not yet in receipt of a care plan).

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED*

Care and Support	608
Child Protection	75
Care Experienced Children	333

* These figures include 242 children with a disability and 126 care leavers. A child or young person can be in more than one category.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED**

Adult Social Work Teams	1388
Learning Disability	347
Mental Health	159
Early Intervention and Prevention Hub	72
Secure Estates	11

**The Adult Social Work and Early Intervention and Prevention Teams support adults aged 18+ including older adults, those with cognitive impairment, a physical disability and / or sensory loss or impairment.

We also work with many more children and families and adults and carers preventatively.

2024-25: The year in summary

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

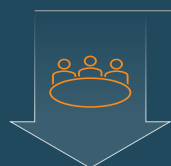


24% INCREASE

14828 contacts received in the year



1244 contacts provided with advice or assistance



58% DECREASE

694 section 47 enquiries held



34% DECREASE

1576 new care and support assessments completed in the year



4% DECREASE

341 new care and support assessments that progressed to a care and support plan



25% DECREASE

1011 in the number of children with a care and support plan at 31st March



37% DECREASE

333 in the number of care experienced children at 31st March



60% DECREASE

75 in the number of children on the child protection register at 31st March

ADULT SOCIAL CARE



7% INCREASE

6210 contacts received in the year



31% INCREASE

2553 contacts provided with advice and assistance



36% INCREASE

2509 new care and support assessments completed in the year



9% DECREASE

387 new care and support assessments progressed to a care and support plan



7% DECREASE

2038 in the number of adults with a care and support plan at 31st March*



4% DECREASE

737 in the number of adults in receipt of homecare as at 31st March



6% DECREASE

495 in the number of adults supported in residential or nursing care at 31st March

* This figure includes 61 adults known to the Child Disability & Transition Team as they are aged 18+ years.
(Please note these would also be included in the 1011 children with a care and support plan.)

Leadership

‘Delivering Together Our Corporate Plan 2023-28’ sets out the council’s priorities and how we will work with local people and partners to provide services over the next five years.

The plan was produced using feedback from staff, residents of all ages and backgrounds, users and providers of council services, elected members, partner organisations, and other local authorities.

The Council’s Corporate Management Board is led by the Chief Executive and includes the three Corporate Directors, the Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer.

Bridgend County Borough Council

Delivering Together
Our Corporate Plan 2023-28



Political & Senior Leadership

The Council has 51 Councillors who are elected every five years by the community. They represent public interest as well as individuals living in the ward in which they have been elected. They represent the people of Bridgend County Borough and set the overall Council strategy and budget framework.

The **constitution** sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed. Each year, Council elects a Mayor to chair the Council, perform a civic role and promote the County. Council also appoints a Leader of the Council who appoints Cabinet Members, each with a responsibility for a specific portfolio of services. Cabinet is responsible for most major decisions, provides leadership, and proposes the budget framework and budget to Council.

Governance & Accountability

The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees meet at least 4 times a year to scrutinise performance, budget and service developments, making recommendations on future policy and delivery of services.

The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting Committee, chaired by the Deputy Leader, meets quarterly to make 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 Corporate Management Board (CMB) and fortnightly Cabinet / Corporate Management Board (CCMB). CCMB and scrutiny oversee the directorate’s progress and performance against each of the Council’s key objectives. This governance ensures robust corporate leadership and a clear link between the directorate’s strategic and operational priorities and the Council’s overall objectives.

In the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate we monitor quality assurance, performance and management information monthly at team, service and directorate level. There is an in-depth quarterly performance and quality review of each group of services. This provides the Corporate Director and Heads of Service with robust and effective managerial oversight ensuring we are on-track to achieve the priorities of the Council’s corporate plan, the Directorate’s business plan, key statutory and local performance indicators and quality assurance activity.



Workforce

Recruitment & Retention

Retention and recruitment of the workforce is our top priority. A well-motivated, well supported, highly trained workforce is essential to high quality services and positive outcomes for the people we support.

SERVICE AREA	31st March 2024		31st March 2025	
	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount
Adult Social Care	592.01	765	571.39	734
Children and Family Services	245.06	289	352.43	405
Prevention and Wellbeing	28.21	33	25.73	30
Business Strategy, Performance and Improvement	67.12	71	72.74	77
Commissioning	12.62	13	9.62	10
Total	945.03	1171	1031.91	1256

Our total number of staff increased by 7% over the last year and 12% compared to March 2023. Children and Family Services increased by 16 staff members due to service configuration, improved recruitment and retention and a number of Early Help and Edge of Care Services transferring to the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate between April and July 2024.

We have implemented an effective retention and recruitment strategy and have significantly improved the workforce position across Social Services and Wellbeing, with improving recruitment, reduced vacancy rates and less reliance on agency workers. Since May 2023 the overall number of agency social worker staff has decreased by 62% from 77 in May 2023 to 29 in May 2025. Our retention rate has improved from 81% during quarter 4 of 2023-24 to 86% in 2024-25.

Sickness absence is higher than we would like with both Children and Family Services and Adult Social Care experienced an increase in the last year. Supporting staff wellbeing is important so we have promoted flexible working options and individual and team wellbeing. We work with human resources to manage sickness and absence through Council policies and ensure staff access the support they need. The importance of wellbeing is reflected in our staff survey with 93% of staff indicating that they know how to access support when needed and over 90% of staff feel supported by their manager.

Growing Our Own

We work closely with schools and Bridgend College, providing positive information about careers in social care. We provide apprenticeships for people wishing to start a career in social care. We have a Social Services Practitioner programme which provides a pathway for people working in roles in social care to gain qualifications and, if they wish to do so, to progress towards the social work degree. Both programmes received positive feedback from managers.

Growing our own social workers helps make sure we have enough newly qualified social workers. We offer secondment and traineeship opportunities onto social work degree and master's programmes and staff who qualify via these routes remain employed with us for longer. In 2024, 6 staff members qualified as Social Workers and in 2025, 12 qualified and all were successful in securing a position with us.



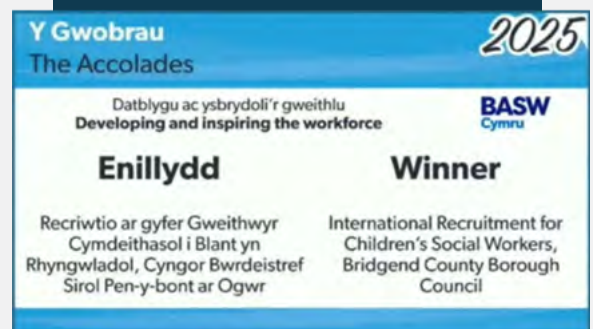
Social Care Accolades 2025

In April 2022, we commenced a project to recruit international social workers to Children and Family Services. We recruited 13 workers who relocated between March 2023 and November 2024.

The project has been recognised as excellent practice, winning a 2025 Social Care Wales award in the 'developing and inspiring the workforce' category.

Two staff members were also nominated and were recognised as highly commended finalists. Ffion Cole, Principal Officer, Children and Family Services for the Inspirational Leadership award and Casey Baker, Social Care Worker, Adult Social Care for the WeCare Wales award.

More on why Ffion, Casey and the international recruitment project were nominated and recognised can be found [here](#).



Staff Feedback

To understand the views and experiences of our workforce over the last year, we asked staff to complete a survey. Here is what they told us.

91%

Agree or strongly agree that they understand what is expected in their role

85%

Either agree or strongly agree that they can make a difference in their role

69%

Agree or strongly agree that they have the right tools and support to effectively undertake their role

79%

Agree or strongly agree that they have opportunities to contribute decisions within their team

95%

Agree or agreed to a certain extent that they can easily access training relevant to their post

58%

Feel they have the right opportunities available to progress their career in social care

79%

Agree or strongly agree that they feel supported by their manager

89%

Agree or strongly agree that they feel supported by the colleagues

78%

Reported their morale as either moderate, high or very high

70%

Feel valued at work

93%

Know how to access support if needed

84%

Would either recommend or maybe recommend working in social care in Bridgend

What Next?

We are helping a broader range of people to enter careers in the social care sector through apprenticeships, work experience, and collaboration with schools, colleges and universities. We are also improving our marketing of social care careers, showing it as an attractive career option with high job satisfaction and good progression opportunities.

We intend to recruit people into social care roles based on their values, recognising that care is a vocation. This will help us develop a confident and healthy workforce and continue to reduce reliance on agency staff.

We have established our own Social Care Academi. The Academi offers staff, foster carers, carers and volunteers from across the Social Care sector

access to learning and development opportunities. This includes e-learning, on-line and in person training enabling individuals to develop the skills and knowledge needed to work effectively. For example, residential care staff who provide physical care and support for individuals have attended training on manual handling, medication awareness, health and safety and first aid. Our Social Workers have accessed training such as Safeguarding Children and Adults, Court Skills, Childrens Rights and Participation, Recording skills & Mental Health First Aid.

Academi staff work with schools, colleagues, careers and employability services to promote careers in care. The support people considering working in care with pre-employment training and work placement opportunities.

Financial Resources

As reported in the Revenue Budget Outturn 2024-25 to Council on the 25th June 2025, the net budget for Adult and Children's Social Care was £102.916 million and the actual outturn was £103.925 million resulting in an over spend of £1.009 million.

SSWB	2024-25 Expenditure Budget £'000	2024-25 Income Budget £'000	2024-25 Net Budget £'000	2024-25 Actual Outturn £'000	2024-25 Actual Variance £'000
Older People (aged 65 and over)	44,527	(12,859)	31,668	31,082	(585)
Adults (aged under 65)	52,938	(11,876)	41,062	41,459	396
Childrens and Families Services	31,365	(1,179)	30,186	31,384	1,198
Total	128,830	(25,914)	102,916	103,925	1,009

In 2024-25 we continued to experience both service and financial pressures in children and family and adult services.

Independent residential placements are high cost and add pressure to the Children and Family Services' budget. The overall number of care experienced children decreased over the year, but the number in residential placements remained static. But as of 31st March, we were funding 19 placements when the budget only covers a maximum of 8. A very small number of placements are also "Operating without Registration" which also increases risk and financial pressures. Whilst these placements risks are managed they need higher staff

ratios and are more expensive.

Children and Family Services, along with all local councils in Wales must write a Placement Commissioning Strategy and update each year, explaining how we will provide care, housing and support for care experienced children. This strategy must also show how we will reduce and eventually stop using for-profit care providers in line with new duties under the Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025. Although Welsh Government provides some funding, it does not cover all costs, which places additional financial pressure on us.

Within Adult Social Care there continues to be pressures in

learning disabilities and older people's services driven by complexity of need. This means that the people who access our services often have multiple needs that span a number of our services. An increase in our aging population also places additional financial pressure on services as more people need help and support for longer which increases costs linked to staff, time and additional resources to meet the demand.

To support us in addressing these ongoing pressures, in February 2025, Council approved £8.8 million in budget pressures for 2025-26 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2028-29:

2025-26 BUDGET PRESSURE ALLOCATION

Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities	£519,000
Mental Health Home Care	£679,000
Learning Disabilities Home Care	£325,000
Learning Disabilities Residential and Nursing Care Placement	£438,000
Older People Direct Payments	£369,000
Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Home Care	£274,000
Physical Disability/Sensory Impairment Equipment	£266,000
Older People Supported Accommodation	£201,000
Ongoing pressures of Care Experienced Children	£3.250 million
Implications of Real Living Wage on commissioned contracts	£2.020 million

The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing actions to address the service and financial pressures in the Children and Family Services and Adult Social Care budgets. Good progress has been made in the first year of the Children and Family Services 3 year strategic plan, approved in September 2023. A separate plan to make adult social care and support more sustainable was approved by Cabinet in November 2024. This followed a similar plan to sustainably improve children and family services approved by Cabinet in September 2023.

3

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

This section asks local authorities to address eight quality standards under four sections of People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration and Well-being.

This assessment is completed for both children and family services and adult services and describes how the local authority has aimed to achieve these standards throughout the year.

The self-assessment approach asks local authorities to address the following four questions:

1.

What do we know about the quality and impact of what we are doing?

2.

How do we know?
e.g. what evidence from research, engagement and the metrics are we using to inform this assessment?

3.

What are we doing well and how can we do better?
What are our priorities for improvement particularly over the coming year?

4.

What progress did we make on the areas for improvement identified in last year's report?
What difference did we make?

Each section is split into an assessment of Children and Family Services, Adult Social Care and, where work has been taken across the whole of our Social Services and Wellbeing directorate the relevant section will start with an update called "Across Social Services and Wellbeing."

At the end of each of the 4 sections you will also find our priorities for 2025-26.

People

Quality Standards

“All people are equal partners who have **choice, voice and control** over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them”

“Effective **leadership** is evident at all levels with a highly skilled well qualified and supported **workforce** working towards a shared vision”

Across Social Services

Voice and Control

People's views play an important role in helping us understand where we have done well and areas where we could do better. Engagement and involvement are at the centre of everything we do.

This year we have done a range of engagement and consultation exercises.



Direct Payments

Direct payments help people have more flexibility and control in how their care and support is delivered.



The graph shows there was a 3% decrease in the number of adults receiving a direct payment at 31st March 2025, and an 18% increase in the number of children and young people. A review of direct payments has been completed and a policy and guidance developed. A clear and consistent approach to the use of direct payments is in place from January 2025.

Advocacy Support

Advocates help make sure that the rights, needs and voice of people are heard.

Below is a table noting the number of “Active Offers” of advocacy support to children and adults during the year, and the number who then went on to receive support from an advocate.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number of 'Active Offers' of advocacy for children during the year	78	71	54
Of which, number of children where an Independent Professional Advocate was provided	70	64	39
Number of adults where the need for an Independent Professional Advocate was identified	181	125	102
Of which, number of adults where an Independent Advocate was provided	173	87	67

The table shows a decrease in the offer of an advocate in both service areas compared to 2023-24.

The 24% decrease in children being offered an advocate is due to a decrease in the number of children becoming care experienced and those being subject to an initial child protection conference. Focused work to increase the delivery

of the active offer for eligible children has been done and data has improved between September and March 2024.

Within adult social care our advocacy services have not had enough capacity to take on new referrals. To improve this position, we will undertake a review of the delivery of this contract to reflect current demands.

Supporting Effective Leadership

We have worked across the directorate in the following areas to support effective leadership.

Workforce Development

A workforce development plan has been created to improve the experience of our workforce so they feel well supported and valued. We achieve the right balance of skills and experience in our teams and retain and recruit a high standard of practitioner to our service.

Our retention and recruitment strategy is working, providing a clear opportunities for the provision of mentoring support and training opportunities for managers. Mentoring support through Social Care Wales and our improvement partner has helped with our succession planning.

Management and Leadership Pathway

Our management and leadership development pathway and program is part of our support for all managers to develop their skills in leading teams and services.

We worked with our improvement partner to deliver a bespoke management and leadership development programme and first line managers have been offered the ILM Level 3 Award in Leadership and Management.

Children and Family Services

Voice and Control

Understanding Family Engagement

We have focussed our quality assurance on understanding how well care and support plans provide evidence of how children, young people and their families participated in shaping their plans and that the plans focussed on what mattered to those involved. We concluded that our care and support plans evidenced the voice of the child and that both the child and family were clearly involved in their plans.

We have embedded the 'signs of safety' model of practice. We have also sustainably reduced children's social worker caseloads. This has supported practitioners to build relationships with children and families spending more time working directly with them. It helps them understand their strengths and connections and developing safety plans that are owned by those involved. Signs of safety places the family at the heart of decision making. An independent review has confirmed that we are providing the right support at the right time. This helps us understand the child and family even in situations where an immediate response to safeguarding is required.

CASE STUDY:

Signs of Safety in Practice

A 14 year old Child A, was referred to Children and Family Services in 2023 due to concerns about exploitation, fractious family relationships and going missing. These circumstances saw A move from their parent's care into local authority foster care, moving 4 times during 2023-24. A was known to use substances and there was continued concern for their safety and well-being.

A was allocated a social worker and in December 2024 the social worker and the safeguarding team asked for support to run a Signs of Safety family network meeting to move towards re-uniting the family. The consultant social worker supported the family and professionals to engage in a mapping exercise to consider what was working well, worries, complicating factors and next steps for A, to build a family led safety plan that worked for both A and their family.

During the meeting, family and professionals worked together to establish the risks and worries through "Danger Statements", developing safety goals and identifying areas of strength and safety. The meeting was rich in discussion and by working jointly with A and their family, a co-produced plan was established to support A in moving home in a safe and planned way.

By January 2025 A returned home to their parent's care. They worked together to ensure the family felt equipped to keep A safe. The support offered by the social worker, the residential home and Youth Offending Service, supported the successful reunification and in April 2025 A was safely removed from the child protection register due to the positive progress made.

A's story shows the positive outcomes that can be achieved through the collaborative, relational, strengths based social work which in Children and Family Services is achieved through the Signs of Safety model. The social worker has been praised by A's Independent Reviewing Officer for being child focussed and relational in their social work practice.

Story Panel

We now have a 'story panel' where stories can be shared to hear the lived experience of families. It allows us to reflect and review the effectiveness of what we do and the impact of our involvement. Below is an example of stories shared.

Hearing these stories and lived experiences helps us to reflect and consider how effective our current policies are in promoting 'what matters' conversations and positive outcomes that are led by the child and their family.



Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

Supporting Practice Framework Implementation

Over the last year we completed a training needs analysis. It looked at how our training programme focusses on the needs of our workforce to ensure the best possible support is provided to children and their families.

This analysis has helped us to strengthen our practice and develop family safety plans that support sustainable long-term approaches and move away from short term service plans.

Over 180 members of our workforce are now trained in our 'signs of safety' practice model.

'Most Significant Change'

The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) model helps us gather feedback from people we work with to show how our services are making a difference. These stories tell us things we may miss with facts and figures alone and helps us understand how effective our services are and how to improve them in a more person centred way.

Within Children and Family Services we ran a pilot using the MSC model to support care experienced children and their families in voicing what matters to them to support reunification and build lasting long-term relationships. This pilot enabled us to understand the impact of our work, was positively received and will be rolled out further across the service.

We have appointed a Signs of Safety Consultant Social Worker to embed this model across the service and a Workforce Development Officer who has provided internal training and will now focus on training partners.

Adult Social Care

Voice and Control

To ensure the people of Bridgend have control over what matters to them, we design services alongside them and make sure they are targeted to the needs of local communities.

Better Together Bridgend

Better together Bridgend is a partnership between people with a learning disability, supported by People First, support providers and the council. The partnership has co-produced a plan to improve services in Bridgend.

The group has a programme board chaired by a person with a learning disability. The workstreams of Better Together Bridgend include work on developing day opportunities by developing a hub and spoke model around the community hubs, extending the take up of annual health checks for people with learning disabilities, and support for parents to create a parents' forum.

Having a Say Group

The Having a Say Group began back in 2022, bringing together people with learning disabilities who are living in their own homes supported by staff working under the umbrella of BCBC Supported Living services. It began as an opportunity for an informal get together for people to socialise, see friends and re-establish their networks in person following the restrictions and isolation they felt during COVID but the group has evolved into strong, supportive networks. People plan social events and parties, invite other groups to come and share information about their services; these have ranged from charities and advocacy groups to BCBC's safeguarding team and Contracts Monitoring team.

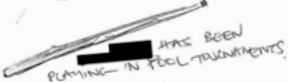
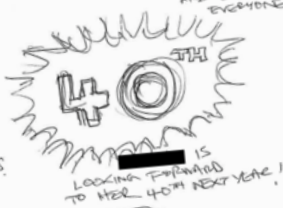
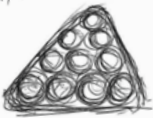
Through the meetings and events people have built meaningful connections and collaborative relationships; these inclusive approaches have helped people to place lived experiences at the heart of the discussions, decision-making and their own personal development.

At each meeting people have the opportunity to share good news, celebrate achievements, and recognise the everyday successes that often go unnoticed; by sharing experiences they have developed environments that value encouragement and support. Alongside sharing positive updates, the group also provides a space for people to reflect on learning experiences. From overcoming barriers to navigating support systems, people are empowered to share their stories and help other learn. These open discussions help with people's understanding and also spark conversations about how services can improve and better meet people's needs.

The minutes and action log are produced in easy read form.

The group is now supporting our safeguarding team with the development of communication and accessible information for vulnerable people living in Bridgend.

HAVE YOUR SAY! 25/7/25 ①



25/7/25



██████ WENT ON A CANAL BOAT AND HAD SOME LUNCH Cakes!



██████ HAD COCKTAILS AND SAW SOME SHOWS!



LEON AND BETH WERE VISITING US! THEY TOLD US HOW THEY CAN HELP US! THEY ARE FROM SAFEGUARDING.



THEY WILL HELP OUR VOICE TO BE HEARD.

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER.

LEON WILL ARRANGE A PRESENTATION TO GIVE MORE INFORMATION.



THANK YOU FOR COMING!
SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

THERE MAY BE AN AWARDS CEREMONY. WHAT AWARDS SHOULD WE HAVE?

The Welsh Language

“Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Just Words” is a strategic framework produced by Welsh Government, which along with the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 promotes Welsh language and culture in social services, social care and health across Wales.

It is important that the people we work with have an opportunity to communicate in their language of choice.

CASE STUDY:

Mwy Na Geiriau / More than Just Words

Adult A's first and preferred language is Welsh. As a result of this, A's capacity assessment was completed in Welsh, where discussions with their family also took place in Welsh due to this being their preferred and first language.

A enjoyed interacting with the practitioner in Welsh, held their hand and was smiling throughout the assessment process.

The outcome of the assessment was that A lacked capacity regarding their hospital discharge plans but enjoyed the opportunity to interact with someone in the language they understood best.

The family advised that A had only spoken to them in Welsh. As a family, they were also pleased to be supported by the practitioner through the medium of Welsh during the difficult time of navigating the hospital discharge process.

Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

Training and development have been targeted across a number of our services to ensure we are providing opportunities for staff to develop their skills and are suitably qualified to undertake their roles. Some areas of training delivered during the year are highlighted below.

Strength Based / Outcome Focused Practice Model

We delivered training to support consistent implementation of our model of practice to ensure it is embedded across the service. This is reinforced in supervision and peer support.

Fortnightly meetings are held to monitor the performance and impact of the model and make sure it is consistent across all areas of the service.

Falls Prevention

Falls prevention training for support workers highlights the main causes of falls and their impact on older adults. It gives practical information and advice on what can be done to reduce the risk of falls.

The training has been delivered to all our domiciliary care staff, carers in care homes and has been adapted to support community staff from third sector partners, Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) and Care and Repair. Training is currently being delivered to independent domiciliary care providers in the area, with training being provided to 325 people during the year.

Telecare/ Technology Enhanced Care

The telecare e-learning module is now mandatory and forms part of the induction for all staff ranging from carers to social workers. It has enabled staff to be more aware of telecare and to recognise equipment when they are in a person's home so that they can contact the telecare team if they identify any technical issues. The module also gives guidance on how to complete a telecare referral correctly so that delays can be avoided.

The telecare team have been pro-active in setting up monthly 'just checking' drop-in sessions for practitioners so that diagnostic data can be used as part of the assessment process to right size packages of care. Meetings have also been set-up with all the social work teams to help raise the profile of technology enabled care to support our frontline services to free-up care capacity.

People: 2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

Co-design and support community based health and wellbeing activities across both Awen and Halo partnerships.

Work with carers who have a caring responsibility for loved ones, family members with a dementia diagnosis to develop a carers networks and understand what is needed.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Continue to implement our workforce plans to make sure we keep continue to build on good process in the recruitment and retention of staff.

Continue to train and support our staff to use the signs of safety model of practice across all areas of the service.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Complete an evidence based review of the Bridgend Resource Centre and review capital and revenue opportunities for optimal use of community buildings across the borough.

Deliver a comprehensive rolling training and development programme to support the consistent implementation of the adult social care model of practice, to ensure it is embedded across the service.

Develop a business justification case for a 'core and cluster' model of supported living for people with learning disabilities at the Sunnyside site.

Prevention

Quality Standards

“The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is **prevented** whilst ensuring that the best **outcomes** for people are achieved”

“**Resilience within communities** is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively supporting people who need care and/or support including **carers** to learn develop and participate in society”

Across Social Services

Promoting Resilient Communities

Our 3 year strategic plans for children and families and adults emphasise the importance of prevention and early intervention in keeping families together, supporting independence and connection to friends, family and community.

Our Prevention and Wellbeing Service and Early Help and Edge of Care Services, our healthy living, cultural trust and third sector partners play an important role in helping us support people within their communities by working with to stop problems getting worse and people needing long term care and support from social services.

Resilient and Connected Communities

The 'Building Resilient and Co-ordinated Communities' programme supports individual and community well-being. It is a cross sector programme with Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO) and the broader third sector, to support individual and community well-being. This partnership approach has secured Regional Partnership investment to address areas such as loneliness and isolation, connecting people to support within communities, developing carer well-being and building community networks of common purpose (e.g. disability, older adults).

Local Community Connectors (LCCs) form part of our Prevention and Wellbeing Service. They aim to support a person's independence by providing support to avoid or delay the need for statutory care by promoting individual strength and resilience. They recognise and support the value of individual gifts, skills and assets, the powerful and positive role of families and relationships and the contribution that local communities can make as an alternative to professional health and social care services.

Resilient and Connected Communities: 2024-25 Summary

THE BUILDING RESILIENT AND CO-ORDINATED COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME:

Signposted **2288** people to relevant services

Supported **564** people to make new friends or improve their support networks.

LOCAL COMMUNITY CONNECTORS:

Supported **272** organisations to develop or deliver preventative opportunities based on “what matters” conversations

Noted **137** people attending network meetings

Reported **587** people had increased social connections

NEXT STEPS:

Build stronger cohesive partnerships across the 3rd sector

Hold workshops with referring partners to ensure the right people are being referred to the right service

Strengthen engagement with early help services to help inform and shape the family support offer

Ensure capacity to support the needs of those signposted to the community

Carer Wellbeing

We offer a range of services to support carers across the borough.

- The [Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service](#), delivered by the charity TuVida, supports unpaid carers in Bridgend. It provides a range of services including advice on caring, access to breaks, support groups, free training, carer grants, and health and wellbeing support. The service aims to help carers manage their caring role while maintaining their own health and wellbeing. Over the year the service received 553 referrals, with 1522 carers supported or signposted to a relevant service.
- The Halo Carers respite programme delivered 9 community sessions, providing 18 hours of replacement care and had 60 attendances.
- Over the year, Cwmpas have supported 83 unpaid carers to access local support.
- The peer mentoring project run in partnership with [Bridgend Carers Centre](#) for young carers aged 7 to 25. It gave 57 young carers the chance to make new friends, feel like they belong and be less lonely. All young carers told us they feel better in themselves, with improved mental health, more confidence, higher self-esteem and improved life skills.

Over the next year we will create a strategic carers group within Bridgend to ensure the views of all unpaid carers are heard and acted upon to co-produce a carers strategy. The groups will include representatives from the Council and carer representatives from 3rd sector organisations.

Young Carers

The Bridgend Young Carers Network is a partnership between the Council, Bridgend Carers Centre, Whitehead Ross, Tu-Vida, Awen, Halo, Bridgend Inclusive Network Group, BAVO, Bridgend College and primary and secondary schools across the borough.

The network began its journey in 2022 and has continued to grow, providing a platform for young carers and young adult carers to have their voices heard and needs addressed. It is led by young carer ambassadors aged 11 to 25 years who play a vital role in leading activities and generating interest in joining the network.

The group has grown from 3 to 17 ambassadors all playing a crucial role in co-designing and supporting the voice of other young carers to be heard and acted on, whilst breaking down barriers for young carers to thrive and reach their full potential. While many young carers excel at home, perform well academically and maintain strong friendships, others face significant challenges and require additional support.

One of the main obstacles they encounter is finding the time and space to focus on their own health and well-being. The Bridgend Young Carer Network organises termly events that bring young carers together to share experiences, learn from one another, and make new friends.

Young carers and care-experienced parents are being identified earlier and supported in ways that help them stay healthy, manage responsibilities, and remain in education or work. These community-focused supports are helping build resilience and reduce pressure on statutory services.

Support for Young Carers

Supported by the Healthy Living Partnership

- 294 Young Carers are accessing a Halo Membership.
- 549 Young Carer ID cards have been issued.

17 Young Carer Ambassadors in schools across the borough.

167 primary school children are involved, and **381** comprehensive and young adult carers.

154 Young Carers attended “We are valued” days, supported by educational settings.

NEXT STEPS

To further support young carers we will:

Create a series of short advocacy films for schools to improve school-based staff's awareness in this area

Continue to strengthen relationships with young carers and adult and parent carers groups.

Young Carers Event

The Young Carers Network currently supports 146 young carers. In March 2025 they held an event which not only offered an opportunity for young carers to gather information to help with their caring role but gave them time for themselves.

It is also provided an opportunity for Young Carers to have time away from their responsibilities, their caring role, school and any other pressure they may be experiencing.





Children and Family Services

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

Early Intervention and Prevention

Early Help and Edge of Care joined Children and Family Services between April and July 2024. New referral processes were implemented in September 2024 in line with our 'no wrong door' principle of people accessing the right support from the right person at the right time.



For more information on the impact of Early Help, please refer to the Well-being section of this report.

Edge of Care

Edge of Care provides services to families who are already in receipt of care and support to help them make the necessary changes to prevent children from becoming care experienced, focussing on 6 key areas.

EDGE OF CARE SERVICES



RAPID RESPONSE

Short term support for children and families in crisis



CONNECTING FAMILIES

Medium term support for children and families where there are concerns about children's safety



BABY IN MIND

Intensive pre and post birth support for families and wider networks to ensure the baby can remain in the care of the family safely



INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT

Long term support for families affected by trauma



DADS SUPPORT WORKER

One to One or group support to develop fathers' relationships with their children



RISE

Long term support for families whose children have been placed into care and subsequently adopted

ANALYSIS OF EDGE OF CARE: 2024-25

222 referrals were received by Edge of Care during the year

92% of families who engaged with the service were successfully supported to prevent children and young people from entering care

CONNECTING FAMILIES

97 cases in total

85 families received support

96% of cases successfully supported

BABY IN MIND

28 families

28 families received support

82% of cases successfully supported through trauma-informed support

INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

22 cases in total

86% of cases successfully supported

RAPID RESPONSE

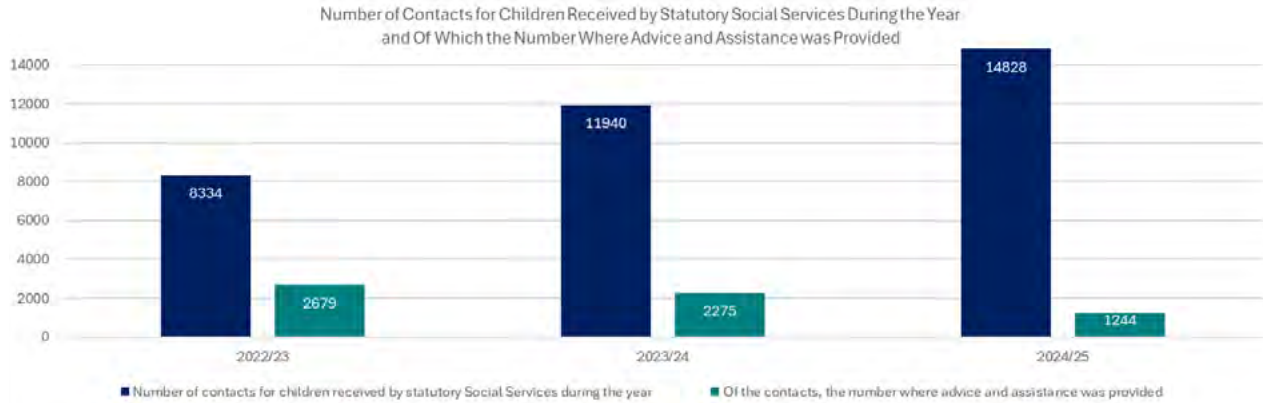
61 cases in total

95% of cases successfully supported



Contacts to the Service

Over the last year the number of contacts received by Children and Family Services increased by 24%.



However, whilst contacts have increased the proportion of contacts where advice and assistance was required has decreased from 19% of all contacts received in 2023-24 to 8% in 2024-25. This demonstrates the impact of our drive to focus on early intervention and prevention via non statutory (social services) support.

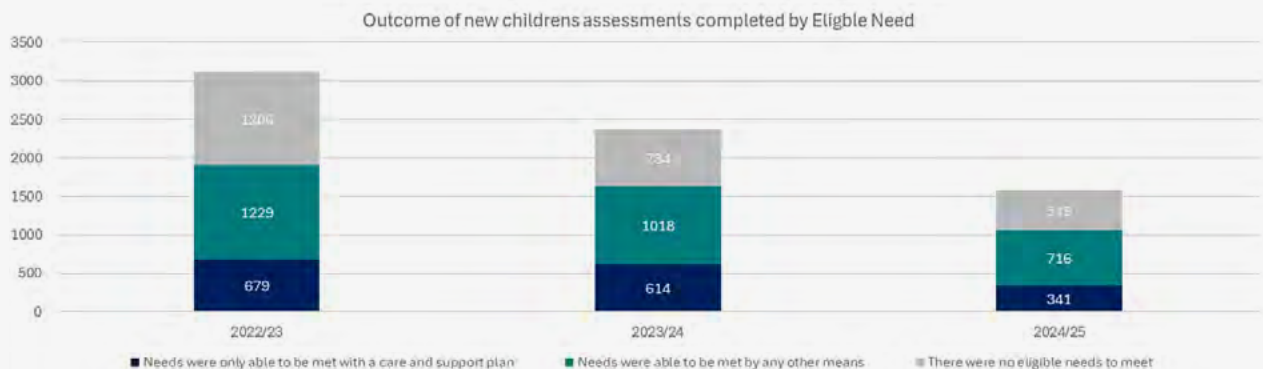
With early help co-located within MASH and locality safeguarding hubs, the ability to ensure children and families get the right support from the right service

has increased in the last 12 months. To demonstrate this between January to March 2025 there were 237 referrals received into Early Help which equates to a 22.8% increase when compared to the same period in 2024.

We have identified a need to separate referrals and contacts. Classifying all contacts as a referral makes our figures appear greater than other local authorities, as a number of referrals can be related to the same incident.

Care and Support Assessments

Over the year we completed 1576 new care and support assessments for children and young people which is a 34% decrease compared to 2023-24.



The decrease in assessments demonstrates the effectiveness of our Signs of Safety screening tool which has assisted clearer decision making alongside our drive for early intervention via preventative approaches. Overall, 45% of new assessments were able to be supported outside of statutory services compared to 43% in 2023-24.

Following a recent independent review of front door arrangements, it was confirmed that practice and decision making is safe and reflects our model of practice. We have identified a range of areas including threshold, decision-making and joint working for improvement.



Adult Social Care

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

Intervening early and preventing escalation of need helps people to remain independent where possible. To promote independence a number of initiatives were introduced across our community based services.

Home Care Remodelling: The Support at Home Journey

We have improved Support at Home - increasing the effectiveness of short-term interventions for people in the community to reduce or eliminate the need for longer-term care at home.

We have upskilled all care staff who now work in dedicated localities to increase care capacity and reduce travel time. We also aimed to assess 75% of people who appeared to require care and support via the Support at Home Assessment Team. By mapping people's current provision, we were able to create 3 v locality support networks. Each network comprises of a Team Leader and 2 co-ordinators each supported by a number of dedicated direct care staff. The new structure was introduced in October 2024.

The new model has enabled a much more efficient and effective response to identifying and providing support. It has supported people to maintain their independence by providing an opportunity to access reablement services, and, where care and support is required ensure it is proportionate to the person's needs. During 2024-25, 509 people completed a period of reablement, an increase of 35% when compared to 2024-25 where 377 people completed a period of reablement.

Next steps are, provide further training to upskill care staff in improved reablement practices and pursue a vision for a multi-disciplinary service at the front door of adult services to increase the earlier interventions.



Bed to Chair: A Rehabilitation Project for Adults with Complex, Long-term Conditions

It was recognised that some people who require therapy led reablement required more support.

To address these gaps, we have provided community based support for people most at risk of admission to hospital or long-term care via reablement interventions.

The project has had a positive impact both on individuals and the service. By increasing capacity at the early stages of the referral process and providing more timely intervention, not only have people retained independence and improved their wellbeing but their risk of being admitted to hospital was reduced, which will reduce the reliance on long term care and support

CASE STUDY:

Care Home Avoidance

Adult B lives in sheltered accommodation and was referred to a Social Worker for admittance to a care home due to increasing self-neglect resulting in significant health problems. B was declining care from the current care agency and was at risk of being evicted from their sheltered accommodation.

B was discussed in the Multi-disciplinary Team and an assessment focussed on what mattered to B. A plan was put in place to allow them to remain in their sheltered accommodation and reduce the risks. This included:

- a Therapy Technician program designed by the Occupational Therapist.
- a recliner chair purchased.
- a physiotherapy program commenced on strength-based work
- and a mobility aid ordered and strength built to access the toilet independently.

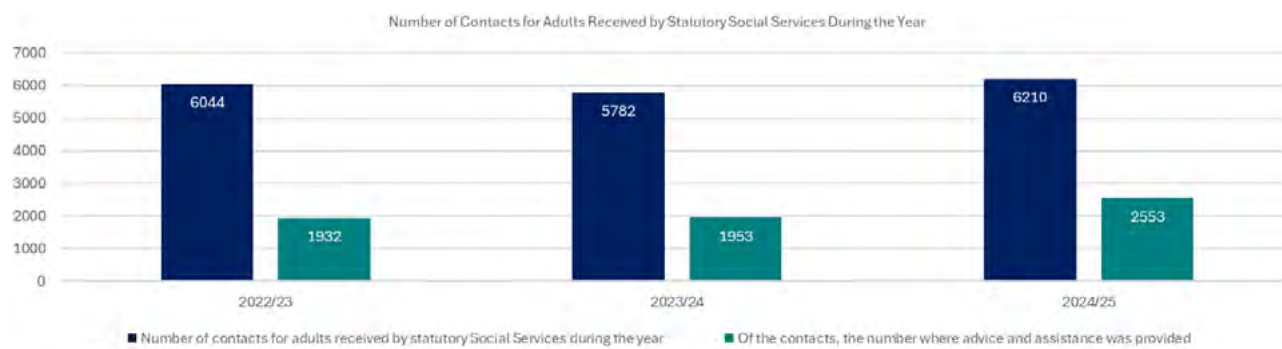
This meant that B's care calls were able to be reduced from 4 to 2 per day, the district nurse support was withdrawn and through the Social Worker, the Care Agency was changed and a new program of care designed introducing reablement approaches.

This approach meant that B was able to remain in their home and be as independent as they could be. This was a much better outcome for B as well as making saving on care home fees for the local authority.

There were 495 people supported by the local authority in care home placements at the end of March 2025 compared with 524 at the end of March 2024 which demonstrates the outcomes from this targeted work with our most vulnerable citizens. This achievement is particularly positive given the growing and ageing population in Bridgend

Contacts to the Service

There was a 7% increase in new contacts received during 2024-25 compared to 2023-24.

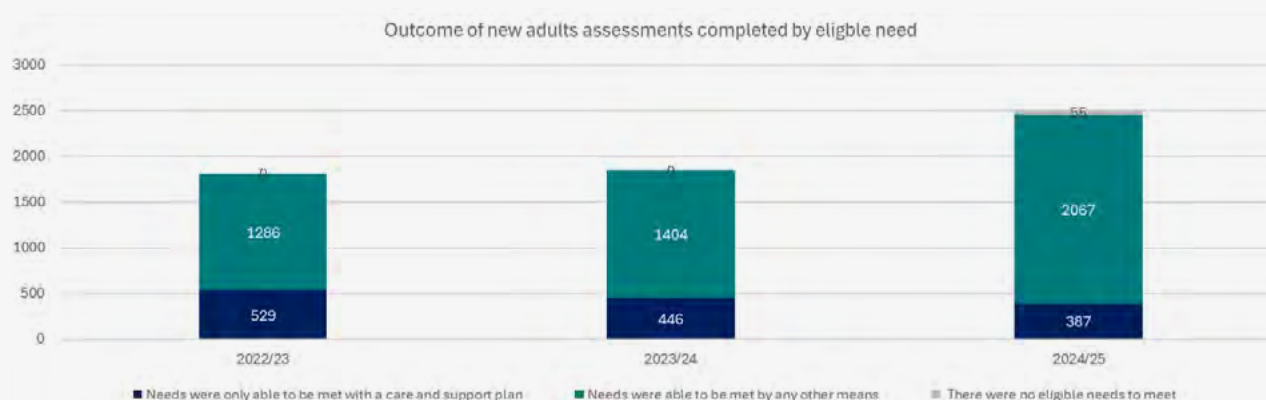


Over the latter part of the year, we implemented a change to the processes of our Early Intervention and Prevention Hub (EIPH), with contacts being directed via our Corporate Front Door.

Whilst the increase in those receiving advice and support has increased in line with the increase in overall contacts our work with the Council's Corporate Front Door ensures only those contacts requiring social care assistance are being handled by the EIPH service.

Care and Support Assessments

During 2024-25, 2509 new care and support assessments for adults were completed, which is an increase of 37% when compared to the previous year.



This data now includes the new proportionate assessment completed by the EIPH. The reduction in the number of assessments resulting in a care and support plan is positive indication that practitioners are effectively using the "Strengths Based, Outcome Focussed" approach during assessments.

The need for care and support plans have decreased as we are working with people to understand their strengths and resources which reduces the necessity for some people to have a care and support plan to have their needs met.

The Reablement Service

As stated earlier, the total number of reablement packages provided during the year rose by 35%, as a result of the remodelling of the Support at Home service which is described above.

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Reablement Packages that mitigated the need for support	67%	67%	56%
Reablement Packages that reduced the need for support	12%	14%	17%
% of Reablement packages that maintained the need for the same level of support	15%	14%	16%
% of Reablement packages that neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support	7%	5%	11%

Whilst there has been a positive impact for those people whose needs were maintained there has been a small decrease in those whose needs were reduced or avoided. The service has observed that the level of need of the people accessing reablement has increased

Delayed Pathways of Care

The number of people delayed in their transfer of care on the 'discharge to recover and assess' pathway has decreased from 104 in 2023-24 to 70 in 2024-25.

This information is a count of people on a set census day each month who are still in hospital 48 hours after a clinician has determined that they are medically fit to return home. These improvements have been achieved despite our workforce working across multiple hospital sites due to the major works required at the Princess of Wales Hospital.

Prevention: 2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

Preventative services to connect people to community based support.

Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service to support referrals and conduct what matters conversations.

Strategic group created to support unpaid carers and identify objectives within the carers action plan.

Community based activity offers for carers developed with Halo and Awen and 3rd sector partners.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Implement our commissioning strategies for Family Support and Children with disabilities.

Reduce the number of care experienced children and reunify children with their families whenever it is safe to do so.

Implement our placement commissioning strategy and reduce our use of unregistered placements.

Continue with the remodelling of fostering services so that we retain the carers we already have and recruit into the local authority.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Strategic group created to support unpaid carers to improve the way we work with adult carers.

Carry out a review of the assisted recovery in the community service in partnership with CTMUHB and other stakeholders.

Partnership and Integration

Quality Standards

“Effective **partnerships** are in place to commission and fully deliver fully **integrated**, high quality sustainable outcomes for people”

“People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as **equal partners**”

Across Social Services

At a local level, several of our services are integrated with key partners.

Regional Arrangements

We have a number of regional partnerships that work across the whole of the service.

We work closely with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and other partners in the Regional Partnership. The aim of the [Regional Partnership](#) is to improve the wellbeing, health and social care services of people living across the 3 areas. The Deputy Leader of BCBC is the chair of the Regional Partnership

To ensure we have effective arrangements in place to protect all people of all ages from harm, with our regional partners we are a member of the [Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board](#).

Local Arrangements

At a local level, several of our services are integrated with key partners.

The Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) co-locates our Children and Family Services and Adult Safeguarding teams with a number of agencies including South Wales Police, education and probation to provide a collaborative approach to safeguarding across the borough. More information on Bridgend MASH can be found on our [website](#).

In Adult Social Care our Integrated Cluster Network Teams work jointly with CTMUHB to deliver services to people within the community. Our integrated approach for adults is based across 3 'networks.' These bring together a range of social care and community health professionals to meet the needs of people with chronic and long-term conditions.

Each network covers a geographical area of the county aligned with our GP surgeries. This ensures that people receive integrated care within their communities which can adapt as their needs change. Taking a multidisciplinary approach means that we can respond to issues that arise quickly, preventing things getting worse. Taking a holistic approach to meeting people's needs and working closely with their families ensures they don't need to repeat their story to multiple professionals and ensures they have greater choice and control in the way their care is delivered.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARTNER:

“Trust and confidence in the child protection arrangements in Bridgend faced considerable pressure following several high-profile child deaths. Bridgend Children’s Services played a pivotal role in this response and, in my view, deserve significant recognition

Upon identifying that certain aspects of the arrangements required improvement, they engaged fully and transparently with partners. While performance data can often be a sensitive matter, Bridgend was proactive in discussing in granular detail the areas that needed attention. This openness allowed partners to provide constructive feedback and gain a comprehensive understanding of the interdependencies at play.

In keeping with the commitment to trust and transparency, there was positive engagement with practitioners across all agencies. This inclusive approach ensured that challenges were openly discussed, and all practitioners had the opportunity to contribute to the development of solutions.

While there is always room for improvement, and we should continually strive to deliver the best possible service to our most vulnerable, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) quickly adopted the stance that such progress must be built on a foundation of trust, confidence, and a shared understanding of the barriers, challenges, and strategic goals.”

Detective Superintendent
SOUTH WALES POLICE

Third Sector Arrangements

Our Prevention and Wellbeing Service works with third sector partners, Awen Cultural Trust and Halo Leisure in the delivery of leisure, cultural and wellbeing services. These are key to supporting preventative services for children, young people, adults their families and carers.

Our partners have had a successful year:

- In June 2024, Halo’s Healthy Living Partnership, including the Council and other partners, received an excellent rating following an assessment by QUEST. QUEST is a quality assurance scheme for the sport and leisure industry measuring national standards and for service planning. Receiving this rating demonstrates BCBC and Halo’s commitment to providing high-quality services and customer satisfaction.
- Awen libraries which is managed the Awen Cultural Trust in Partnership with the Council was named Welsh Library of The Year at the 2025 British Book Awards. The award recognises libraries who bring the world of books to the wider community.

Addressing the Gaps in Social Care

In April 2024, Cabinet approved three commissioning strategies across the key population areas, which set out our priority areas and commissioning intentions over the next 5 years.

The strategies were developed using analysis from Population Needs Assessments and Market Stability Reports produced in 2022/23, as well as local data to identify key trends about the people of Bridgend and our services. This data has enabled us to understand how our current services are performing and to project future service requirements over the coming years.

Some of the key areas of work identified in the commissioning strategies included the development of a Placement Commissioning Strategy in Children and Family Services as well as a detailed Accommodation-Based Service review, and a review of Daytime Opportunities within Adult Social Care

A Children and Families Placement Commissioning strategy has been submitted to Welsh Government and our key priorities include:

- Enhancing our Residential Provision
- Increasing Supported lodgings and Supported accommodation options
- Reducing our independent high-cost residential use.
- Eliminating Operating Without Registration use

We have also started a project to remodel our fostering services. The aims of this are to:

- Increase the number and diversity of Foster Wales Bridgend carers.
- Improve carer recruitment conversion and reduce terminations.
- Enhance carer support, wellbeing and retention.

- Reduce reliance on Independent Foster Agencies and residential placements.
- Embed carer voice through consistent communication and Foster Carer charter delivery.

Within Adult Social Care, we completed an accommodation mapping exercise, the findings of which were approved by Cabinet in March 2025. Key priority areas identified include the development of a new extra care service in the south of the county borough, and to ensure service accommodation provision (both internal and commissioned) is able to meet increasing complexities and increasing dementia rates moving forward.

The key next steps are to finalise business cases in these priority areas in order to help secure any capital and revenue available to support the developments needed.

There has also been a review of daytime opportunities in Bridgend, which have been approved by Cabinet, where the following priority areas were identified.

- A progressive and enabling service, enabling people to progress/realise their potential or move to their next stage of care
- Meaningful occupation for younger adults going through transition and adults of working age
- Carer respite and high-quality care, support and meaningful activity for those with the most complex needs
- Community connection to meet the social needs of people with care and support needs

Over the next year we will continue to develop and mobilise children's residential care as set out in the business justification case and Placement Commissioning Strategy and continue to improve the way we support foster carers to improve our retention and recruitment of foster carers.



Children and Family Services

Effective Partnerships

Mental Health Support for Children and Young People

We developed a multi-agency action plan with CTMUHB, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr County Borough Councils to improve mental health support for children and young people.

This has led to better joint working between the health board and local authorities. We are jointly developing an approach that ensures children and families access emotional wellbeing support from the right service at the right time. This regional approach will be termed SPACE and is intending to go live in January 2026.

CASE STUDY:

Working with Health to Safeguard from Harm

Child B was hospitalised following self-harming themselves. Their parent was extremely concerned about how to safeguard B from any harm with worries that a further attempt would be made to harm themselves again.

Health and Social Services worked together to hold risk management meetings and be clear about what risks were evident and how they were being managed. Health clearly outlined their risk assessment and rationale about why community support was the best course of action for B.

It was a concerning situation, but partners worked well together with clear roles and responsibilities. B remains with a family member and is being supported by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and social services to recover from their experiences and safeguard from harm.

Homelessness

We have developed plans to improve the response to care leavers who experience homelessness. Working closely with our housing partners we intend to develop a joint protocol to address and try and prevent these issues from occurring in the future.

We have also been developing additional supported accommodation options for care leavers to ensure smooth transitions for children and young people into adulthood.

People As Equal Partners

Family Support Services Commissioning Strategy and Young People

Due to increased demand on our statutory services, our improvement partner reviewed current services and local needs.

They identified clear areas of focus to enhance preventative services and alleviate pressure on statutory support and ensure children and families access the right support at the right time.

As part of this review, a Family Commissioning Strategy was developed which clearly sets out 6 key areas for Early Help, Edge of Care and partner agencies to focus on over the next 2 years.

FAMILY COMMISSIONING STRATEGY: KEY PRIORITIES

1. STREAMLINED SERVICES Integrate Early Help, MASH, and Social Work into a single front door Develop clear referral routes and aligned access, assessment, and planning pathways Promote a "no wrong door" approach for families and professionals	2. MORE INTENSIVE TARGETED SUPPORT Expand Tier 3 services for families with complex needs Equip Family Support staff with skills to deliver sustained, high-impact intervention Reduce reliance on statutory services by offering earlier intensive help	3. PARENTING SUPPORT REFORM Shift from general parenting programmes to targeted, evidence-based interventions Increase coaching-style, one-to-one support for families at risk Commission new models and partners to deliver intensive support
4. SUPPORT FOR OLDER CHILDREN & ADOLESCENTS Address rising demand related to family conflict, exploitation, and school exclusion Develop flexible and responsive support offers, including out-of-hours provision Build capacity to reduce unplanned care entry for teenagers	5. SUPPORT FOR NEURODIVERSE CHILDREN & MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS Collaborate with NHS to invest in support for complex neurodevelopmental and emotional needs Create intensive family support pathways tailored to these young people Reduce pressure on families and prevent breakdown	6. FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS & PRACTICE MODEL Embed trauma-informed, strengths-based approaches and Signs of Safety Promote true partnership working with families, reducing over-reliance on services Strengthen understanding of the local support system among staff

The strategy will support collaboration with communities and local organisations to build a broader network of support for families, in ways that are more familiar and rooted in their own communities. We are starting to see stronger relationships between local services, voluntary groups, and the families they support

Bridgend Youth Voice Forum

Bridgend Youth Voice is a forum for care experienced young people and care leavers aged 12 to 21 years. It acts as a sounding board to the Council and its partners for service improvement on all issues for care experienced children, young people and care leavers.

The forum is facilitated by TGP Cymru who are commissioned by us to deliver specialist independent participation support and to champion the views and rights of our children and young people. They are supported by our Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer.

The forum also collaborates with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Voices from Care Cymru, Children in Wales, Foster Wales and Welsh Government on a range of initiatives to improve the lives of children in care. The forum is valued by our young people, carers and staff.



To understand our impact over the year we asked our Youth Forum three important questions.

What has gone well with people or things that have happened?

- Supportive Social Workers, Personal Advisors and Foster Carers
- Feel listened to
- Supported to undertake activities that matter and are important

What has not gone so well?

- Feel there are different rules in place for us compared to other young people
- Feeling pressured to accept support
- Feeling unaccepted by peers

How can the support be improved and what ideas/solutions do you have?

- Less red tape to reduce the stigma of being care experienced
- More understanding that we do not have to stay in the local area
- Not being introduced as the "new kid" at school and ensuring the right educational support is in place
- A regional forum to provide opportunities to meet with other care experienced young people
- Advocacy champions in schools/teams to ensure all children and young people know their right to advocacy

Adult Social Care

Effective Partnerships

Hospital Discharge

In partnership with the Health Board we have improved how we work together to manage discharges from hospitals more effectively. The aim of the plan was to support people to recover and regain skills to minimise poor discharges which result in return to hospital or can result in someone losing their independence at home.

We achieved this aim by:

- working within the Discharge to Recover and Assess (D2RA) framework and timelines.
- phasing implementation of Enhanced Community Care Level 4 capacity within the Community Resource Team.
- collaborating with the Regional Partnership to develop and implement an optimal model for community services.
- and, utilising the local authority escalation plan to facilitate focussed whole system activity to assist CTMUHB in improving their position at times of high pressure.

WHAT IS LEVEL 4 ENHANCED COMMUNITY CARE?

It is a model that helps us work with key partners to support...

- an integrated health and social care approach to avoid crisis and escalation of health and care needs where feasible.
- community services to promote faster recovery from illness, prevent unnecessary acute hospital admissions, support timely discharge and maximise independence.
- step up support to prevent hospital admission or step-down support to enable people to leave hospital early, while still receiving the treatment, care and support they need.
- people to be cared for in their own homes or usual place of residence.
- the use a combination of technology and face-to-face support, remote consultation, remote monitoring and/or remote intervention

Housing

The council is currently working in partnership with a registered social landlord and the health board to develop a range of supported housing options close to a Wellness Centre as part of a new development.

This involves the development of a core and cluster support arrangement which will provide tenants with person centred and flexible support. The accommodation options include, supported living and targeted support in one or two bedroom flats. A business case has been produced which explains how the core and cluster arrangement will operate and how staffing resources will be used to help people live independently.

The Mental Health Operational Group

The Mental Health Measure Operational Group (MHMOG) meets once a month to ensure all partners are meeting the statutory requirements outlined in the Mental Health Act Measure (2010) and Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It provides an example of effective partnership working with our neighbouring Local Authority's and healthcare partners.

We aim to enhance and offer high quality services for those in need of mental health care. We are working together to make care more joined up and personal, so it is easier to get the right support when needed. The group facilitates decision-making, training opportunities, and open communication between partners.

Supporting Autism Spectrum Disorder and Neurodiversity

We are key partners in the Regional Neurodivergence Improvement Programme. Leading on an ambitious agenda to improve access, inclusion and support for Neurodivergent adults.

The group's remit includes mental health and emotional wellbeing, leisure and community-based support, criminal justice system and substance misuse, staying safe, employment and housing.

The Substance Misuse Service

Substance Misuse services in Bridgend are delivered in 4 tiers, which are:

- **Tier 1:** Prevention & Early Identification/Intervention. Consists of a range of drug-related interventions that can be provided by generic providers, depending on their competence and partnership arrangements with specialised substance misuse services.
- **Tier 2:** Advice & Support Services. Interventions are provided by specialist substance misuse providers and include a range of harm reduction interventions, and interventions that engage, retain, and support people in treatment. Support for families and concerned others are also considered to be tier 2 interventions.
- **Tier 3:** Specialist Treatment Services. Specialist provisions including all clinical functions, substitute prescribing programmes and community detoxification.
- **Tier 4:** Services provide substance misuse Inpatient Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation programmes.

Tier 1 and 2 services are provided by an independent sector group who works in partnership with the Council and Health Board. Tier 3 services are a partnership between the Council and Health Board to provide social work, nursing and clinical services. All these partners are based in the same building and work together to offer a range of substance misuse services from a hub base which is accessible to the public.



People As Equal Partners

Social Opportunities Panel

A panel has been developed to support people to access the right preventative service for them, reduce duplication and enhance access to social opportunities.

The panel ensures decisions around access to activities is equitable, transparent and make best use of available resources.

The panel helps practitioners offer more of the right support, based on what people actually need. It cuts out duplication and makes sure everyone gets an opportunity to connect with others and feel included, no matter where they live or who is helping them.

The panel has helped us utilise services more effectively by bringing together support from social care, health and community based services. It also helps us focus on the specific needs of different areas of the borough, especially where people face more challenges like poor health, poverty, or limited access to services.

CASE STUDY:

Social Opportunities Panel

Adult C lives with dementia. They like to be active which can result in them becoming exhausted and increase their risk of falls. C is slow to respond to family members instructions and is becoming verbally aggressive towards their family, which is having an impact on them maintaining their carer role.

C's case was presented to the social opportunities panel to support them in achieving their well-being outcomes, which was to be active in the community. Support was provided for C to safely attend activity based groups. The Local Community Co-ordinator, Halo and Occupational Therapist worked together to find suitable groups and an Occupational Therapy Technician is supporting C to attend.

To increase social opportunities further, a request was made to panel for C to attend day services at the Integrated Dementia Service. The request was granted and C attends day services, enjoys groups activities and engaging with others.

The support provided has enabled C to achieve their outcomes by maintaining their interests, whilst ensuring their safety and well-being. C's carers are also supported to have a break from their caring role, resulting in time to recuperate and do things which are important to them. The support provided to C has brought their carers a sense of relief and reassurance, allowing them to continue in their caring role.

Enhancing Sensory Support

Our sensory team has worked to improve sensory support, working with groups across the borough as well as visiting people at home to hear their voices. This work identified that:

- by being present at groups, the team can provide information and advice to a wider group of people, making people aware of the wide range of support available to them.
- demonstrating the use of or replacing specialist equipment at these groups or during visits reduces the need for people to contact our services.
- working with families and carers ensures they are also supported. For example, referring them to relevant organisations such as the Carers Centre.
- we can create “buddying up” opportunities for people who are newly diagnosed and lack confidence to attend groups. The team accompanies them to the group until they become confident in attending themselves.

We regularly make connections between groups and other services and organisations, for example Falls Prevention, Wales Council for the Blind, Eye Clinic Liaison Officer and the Alzheimer’s Society.

People First Bridgend

People First Bridgend is a third sector organisation who support adults with learning disabilities and autism in Bridgend. They empower people they support to understand and exercise their rights, access services and fully participate in their communities. More information on People First Bridgend can be found [here](#).

We have strong partnership arrangements in place with People First Bridgend and to understand if we had made an impact over the year we met with representatives from People First, both staff and those that use their services, to ask 3 questions.

What has gone well with the people that support you or the things that have happened in the last year?

- I feel supported by helpful staff and managers
- I am supported to attend People First meetings
- I now feel listened too and support needs are being met
- BAVO provide advice, support and activities within the community
- Support from the Autism Worker within the ARCs

What has not gone well with the people that support you or the things that have happened in the last year?

- Lack of information on crisis intervention
- Allocated workers not always aware of advocacy support
- Support for the LGBTQ+ community
- Communication with allocated worker
- Flexibility of available support

How can the support be improved?

- Breaking down barriers for timely preventative support
- Advocacy training / awareness for workers
- Advance planning for key life events such as a change in worker or move to new accommodation
- Funding to support educational / training needs
- Transport availability to participate in community based events
- Improved communication with allocated worker

Partnership and Integration:

2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

Partnership working with BAVO to meet people's needs via the third sector and navigators to have "what matters" conversations to support people to connect to communities and to be clear about the different needs that can be met by navigators and local community coordinators.

Partnership working with 3rd sector Networks groups including Bridgend Inclusive network group, Bridgend young carers network group to develop new opportunities.

Work with Town & Community Councils to support universal Active4Life opportunities during school holidays.

Consultation and engagement on identified priorities and areas of focus within Library Services, Culture and Community Hub strategy for future development.

Review our out of hours Social Services arrangements.

Review the operating model of children with disabilities and transition.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Implement the threshold guidance with partners so that we are all clear about our roles and responsibilities and ways accessing services.

Develop an agreed approach to multi-agency training and practice.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Continue to implement our 3-year strategic plan.

Well-being

Quality Standards

“People are protected and **safeguarded** from abuse and neglect and any other types of harm”

“People are supported to actively **manage their well-being** and make their own decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and **live independently** for as long as possible”



Children and Family Services

People are Protected and Safeguarded

We experienced a 24% rise in the number of contacts to Children and Family Services. But even with more people getting in touch, fewer children and young people are now going through formal assessments, and the number of children on the child protection register or in care has reduced.

No Wrong Door

We are working to ensure a “No Wrong Door” approach across the service. It brings professionals together to make sure people get the support they need, without delay to prevent situations getting worse.

We respond quickly when a concern is raised, every referral is looked at within 24 hours and have worked with partners to lessen anxiety and have a shared understanding of risk thresholds. For those that require support early help services are able to provide support.

The “Signs of Safety” approach is becoming part of everyday practice. To support this, we have partner agency Signs of Safety champions and hold reflective sessions and case de-briefs to develop a common understanding on how we manage risk and implement thresholds.

Preventing and Responding to Exploitation

We have had a local exploitation panel in operation since November 2024. During the year, we completed actions to ensure we have the right tools in place to prevent and respond to cases of child exploitation.

- Workshops to inform a local multi-agency development plan.
- The plan is now operational, setting out clear actions and a governance structure to support implementation of the strategy in Bridgend.
- We are working with Cwm Taf Regional Safeguarding Board partners to build on the work we have done in Bridgend and ensure all new processes are embedded by September 2025.
- To strengthen co-production, we have upskilled our workforce and multi-agency partners on exploitation.

We have an exploitation screening tool that is utilised across teams to identify risks associated with exploitation. The senior practitioner of our exploitation service has delivered training to teams across Children and Family Services. We have worked closely with schools, the Youth Justice Service and South Wales Police to identify areas of concern linked to exploitation and provided interventions in those areas.



Children Safeguarding Enquiries

The reduction in safeguarding enquiries is a direct result of the greater stability of our workforce and the changes we have made in strategy meetings and decision making. We are now taking a more proportionate responses to supporting children and families in line with Wales Safeguarding Procedures.



If a partner agency does not agree with the decision in a child protection strategy meeting, we continue to promote the regional escalation of concerns process (CRISP). During the year we have not received any CRISPs as a result of decision making in strategy meetings.

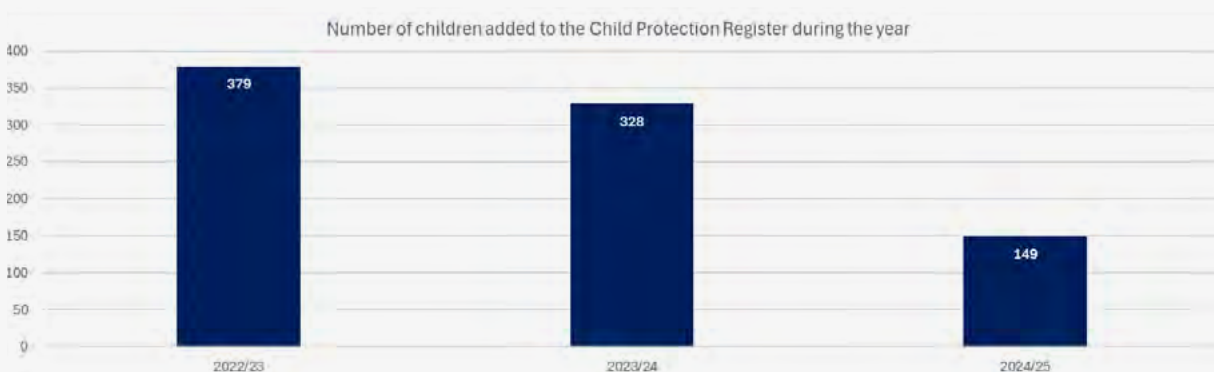
We continue to undertake work with partner agencies to support their understanding of our model of practice and have invited partners to

attend the regular reflective sessions to consider the implementation of the Safeguarding Procedures, impact on families and learning.

To further support professionals, having a shared understanding we have set up a consultation phone line. This line lets professionals talk through cases, get advice and plan next steps quickly and safely and does not replace the usual safeguarding processes which still need to be followed.

Child Protection Registrations

The number of children added to the Child Protection Register during the year has decreased by 55% when compared to the previous year.



This trend reflects a continued reduction from the high number on the register in March 2023 and is a result of more proportionate decision-making regarding children's safety in addition to improved working with early help services. The number of children on the child protection register has decreased from 270 as at March 2023 to 75 as at

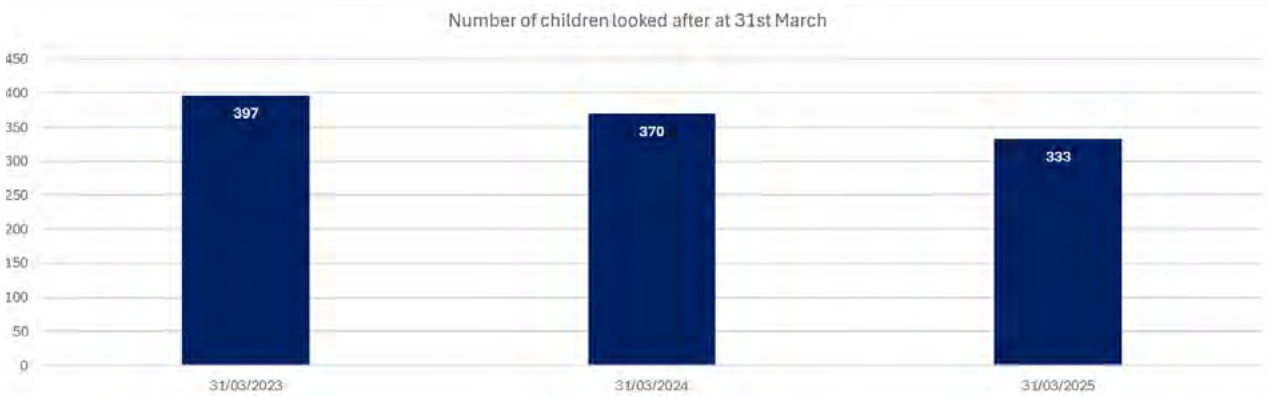
March 2025.

We continue to reduce the number of children registered and to provide reassurance around our decision making we have completed an audit and commissioned an independent review and share the outcomes with our partners.



Care Experienced Children

In November 2024 we renewed our reduction strategy to decrease the number of care experienced children. The strategy focuses on prevention, family support and reunification enabling us to work with families to build to build long life connections which, where possible, enable care experienced children to safely return home.



The effectiveness of the strategy is demonstrated by the 10% decrease in care experienced children, reducing from 370 as at March 2024 to 333 as at March 2025. We will continue this work in 2025-26.

Supporting People to Manage their Wellbeing

The Early Help and Edge of Care services completed their move into Social Services and Wellbeing in July 2024, and by early 2025, had been working with the wider statutory services for six months, giving time to fully settle in.

Hence, January to March 2025, provided a good timeframe to analyse and evaluate the impact of how the service had supported, children, young people and their families, which as noted in the analysis was extremely positive.

ANALYSIS OF EARLY HELP: JANUARY TO MARCH 2025

KEY ACTIVITY DATA DEMONSTRATED AN INCREASED DEMAND AND ENGAGEMENT WITH EARLY HELP SERVICES:

237 referrals received, an increase of **23%**

152 assessments completed, an increase of **13%**

REPORTED OUTCOMES

96% of families felt more able to make positive lifestyle and behaviour changes

94% of families noted improved family resilience

91% of individuals noted better emotional wellbeing and family relationships

88% of parents felt more confident supporting their child's development

87% of individuals noted improved personal resilience

Adult Social Care

People are Protected and Safeguarded

We have established a number of panels and groups to support our statutory safeguarding duties.

Complex Case Partnership Panel

The Complex Case Partnership Panel is a multi-agency mechanism for working together to safeguard individuals in the community who present with a significant level of risk to themselves or others.

The aim of the partnership is to provide a mechanism for partner agencies to decide and agree on how to best protect individuals and the public in a co-ordinated manner.

Self-Neglect Panel

The Self Neglect panel is a multi-agency approach to protection and risk mitigation for adults who neglect their health and wellbeing.

The panel applies to adults only, however, where children are at risk of harm because of the adult's self-neglect, a referral will be made to Children and Family Services. The protocol is triggered in cases of complex self-neglect where serious harm has or is likely to occur and existing case management processes have failed to deliver any reduction in risk.

Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Group

This group has been established to improve prevention, awareness, knowledge and understanding around the prevention of suicide and self-harm amongst individuals and agencies who frequently encounter people at risk of suicide and self-harm.

The group consists of partners including health, social care, education, the environment, housing, employment, the police, the criminal justice system, transport and third sector.

The group has developed a clear pathway for supporting concerns and referrals in this area.

Parc Prison

A significant amount of work has been carried out with HMP/YOI Parc to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of its prisoners. This has started with building positive working relationships with the safety team and wider colleagues within the prison. A review of internal safeguarding processes was carried out to ensure alignment with All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

There was a further review of the delivery and safeguarding training to ensure effective practice and alignment with the procedures. Both safeguarding and professional concerns training was provided to the senior operational and management staff along with wing managers to develop an awareness of their statutory responsibilities. This was met positively and now safeguarding forms part of all new recruits' induction along with ongoing training to wider prison staff in their 'lockdown Wednesdays'.

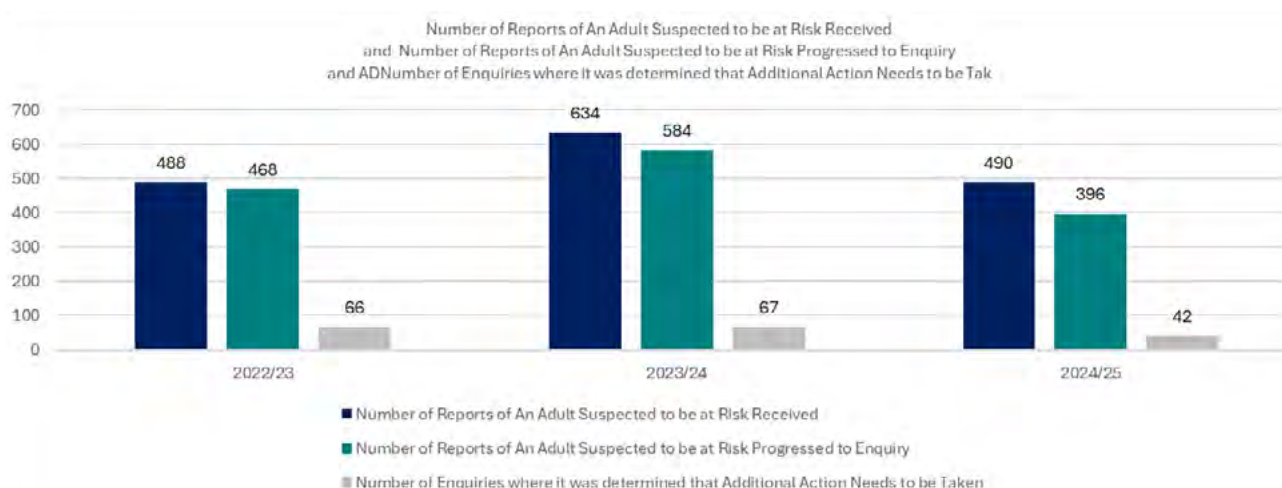
Following an increase in deaths within Parc, a range of plans have been introduced, including a forum to consider the needs of those who have made a significant attempt of suicide. This has highlighted that there are positive mechanisms in place within the prison to safeguard and support prisoners.

HM inspectorate of Prisons carried out the inspection in January which was very positive of the social work team stating, 'the local council carried out timely social care assessments and needs were appropriately identified and met.'

Over the past 12 months, there has been significant improvements both within the working relationships, and safeguarding practice within PARC and we continue to build on this.

Adult Safeguarding Enquiries

To reduce the number of referrals where outcomes determine the person is not at risk, we implemented a new consultation process with key partners. The process encourages professionals, who have concerns about an individual, to contact the team to have a conversation before determining if an Adult at Risk (AAR) referral needs to be made. We respond to all consultations within 24 hours.



The above graph demonstrates the impact of these consultations with a 23% decrease in the number of reports made to the Adult Safeguarding Team over the last year. The number that progress to enquiry are appropriate. Those that do not proceed are due to the service being satisfied that appropriate actions are already in place or the person does not give their consent to proceed.

To strengthen arrangements further, a daily allocation meeting has been established to discuss referrals and agree next steps and a weekly monitoring system has also been introduced to escalate issues. Next steps are to complete a deep dive to establish causes of delay within the system.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

In 2024-25 we received 557 referrals for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) assessment to Adult Social Care, a 6% increase from 524 the previous year. At the 31st March 2025, there were 21 people awaiting an assessment, which is the same as the 31st March 2024, with 22 on the waiting list.

To strengthen our processes further, in January 2025, 27 staff members (24 from Adult Social Care and 3 from Children and Family Services) received Best Interest Assessor training. In Adult Social Care these staff now take turns completing one assessment every three months which is helping us to manage our waiting list.

Supporting People to Manage their Wellbeing

Integrated Dementia Support Service

This service supports people with cognitive impairment and their families to help build resilience and maintain independence. The service provider has extensive knowledge and proven experience in providing a person centred support, developing strategies and techniques to support independent living, provision of information and signposting.

This service helps individuals to achieve positive outcomes through identification and recognition of their own strengths and capabilities, their personal, community and social networks. It helps them maximise these strengths to enable them to achieve their desired outcomes, thereby meeting their needs and improving or maintaining their wellbeing.

The Safeguarding Team

The safeguarding team use the strengths based, outcome focussed model.

The lead co-ordinators identify the individual's outcomes and ensure their voice is heard. A recent referral was made for an elderly person who was a high risk victim of domestic violence, had a diagnosis of dementia and additional health needs. An urgent, multi-agency response was required to safeguard them from further harm.

As a result of discussions including the Police, domestic violence advocate, social worker and lead co-ordinator, the person was admitted to hospital as a social admission. A code word was implemented to ensure only safe people were able to visit. This short term plan ensured their safety whilst longer term plans could be made, considering their outcomes, views and wishes.

Well-being: 2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

Support Super Agers activities in local community settings to improve physical and mental wellbeing.

Develop a low cost offer for the 60 plus age group linked to the Welsh Government Free Swimming Initiative.

Deliver chronic condition pathways as part of the National Exercise Referral Scheme and in partnership with health services.

Provide supported access to leisure activities for targeted population groups via membership provision, utilising external support.

To monitor attendance and engagement at corporate safeguarding board meetings to ensure the Council is protecting children and vulnerable adults.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Implement the Regional Exploitation Strategy, including multi-agency training and shared learning forums.

Review our standards for recording the work that we do and associated guidance.

Ensure our quality assurance activity considers the standards of our assessments and plans and helps us share good practice.

Promote children's engagement on meetings including child protection case conferences and produce records that are consistent with national procedures.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Ensure that learning from Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews (SUSRs) and other in-depth analysis is systematically embedded through learning, training and development and follow up quality assurance and review with partners.

Inspections and Reviews

Every year Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) undertake inspections and/ or improvement checks of health and social care services to ensure we are delivering good quality services that protect the safety and wellbeing of those that use our services.

During 2024-25 CIW completed 10 inspections across our regulated residential and direct care services.

Children and Family Services

Three inspections were completed in respect of residential establishments in Children and Family Services. Harwood House, Golygfa'r Dolydd (Meadow's View) Assessment and Emergency Service and Sunnybank.

All inspections were positive with key findings highlighting a number of strengths including:

- strong evidence of children, young people and families being involved in the development of care plans to reflect what matters to those involved.
- children and young people being supported to make choices and have control in their day-to-day life.
- and good governance arrangements in place for management oversight.

One priority action notice was issued in respect of Sunnybank and 6 areas of improvement, 2 for Harwood House and 4 for Golygfa'r Dolydd.

The priority action notice issued to Sunnybank was in relation to planning for transitions when young people were moving. CIW have since confirmed that they are satisfied with our response and action taken.

The key areas for improvement included:

- care and support to be provided as outlined in personal plans.
- the process for completion of agency checks to be strengthened.
- premises and equipment should be suitable for the needs of all children and young people.

A full [report](#) on the scope and findings of these inspections was presented to Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting on 10th January 2025. The report also notes actions taken to address the areas for improvement.

Further to the report being submitted to Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting, two further inspections were completed at Bakers Way and Hillsboro. These inspections were also positive with no areas for improvement noted.

Adult Social Care

Five inspections were completed in respect of residential establishments across Adult Social Care: Ty Cwm Ogwr Residential Home, Ty Llwynderw Extra Care establishment, Breakaway Short Stay Service and Ty Ynysawdre Extra Care establishment. Our in-house Domiciliary Care Service was also inspected.

Again, the inspections of our residential based services were positive with key findings highlighting a number of strengths including:

- people are supported and encouraged to make decisions about their care and daily routines.
- care and support is provided in an environment that enhances people's wellbeing.
- a good standard of hygiene and infection control is maintained to reduce risks of cross infection.
- and regular quality audits and checks are in place to ensure the service continues to meet people's needs.

Key strengths highlighted in the inspection of our in-house domiciliary care service:

- people have a voice, feel included, involved, and happy with the service they receive.
- people understand what care and support opportunities are available to them.
- and there is a positive culture embedded throughout the services.

It is positive to report that whilst no priority action notices were put in place for any of the Adult Social Care services inspected, 1 area of improvement was noted: personal plans to accurately reflect care and support needs.

A full [report](#) on the scope and findings of these inspections was presented to Cabinet on 8th April 2025.

All areas for improvement are monitored on a quarterly basis via our Regulatory Tracker (part of our quarterly corporate performance monitoring and feeds into our annual Corporate Self-Assessment) with actions reported to the Council's Governance and Audit Committee. Learning from inspections are embedded in key actions and priorities to support continued improvement.



Complaints and Representations

Complaints about social services are handled according to the **Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014**, and the Welsh Government guidance, “**A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services.**” These frameworks allow people to raise concerns about the services they receive ensuring they are addressed fairly and promptly.

Over the last year the overall number of complaints received has decreased by 12%. The theme of complaints varied with the most reported areas being lack of support, staff conduct and lack of communication which accounted for 48% of all complaints received.

Our aim, where possible, is to provide a good local resolution for the people, their families and carers who use our services and 95% of complaints received were resolved either informally outside of the statutory process or at stage one (informal stage) of the statutory process.

The remaining 5% of complaints were investigated via the stage two (formal) statutory procedure. This involves an independent investigator looking into the complaint and completing a report of their findings which may lead to recommendations for ways in which we can improve.

A process is in place to regularly monitor complaints not only to identify areas of good practice but to ensure the recommendations and learning outcomes from stage two complaints are implemented. In response to stage two complaints received, here is a summary of learning outcomes implemented:

SERVICE AREA	LEARNING OUTCOME
Across Social Services	- The Compliments and Complaints Resolution Team have strengthened consent procedures, staff training and guidance, and communication with complainants during periods during of staff absence. - Communication, transparency, and person-centred approaches have been strengthened to ensure learning from complaints informs practice.
Children and Family Services	- Implemented case consultations for early management guidance and intervention. - The Care Experienced Children's Team have Improved recording of section 47 outcomes. - The Children and Disability Transition Team have strengthened assessments, communication, and family engagement. - The Fostering and Safeguarding Teams have Improved training, record-keeping, and oversight of allegations against foster carers.

Adult Social Care

- Reviewed information provided to families on the role of social workers to ensure it is clear and easy to understand.
- The Community Learning Disabilities Team has improved timeliness of decision-making, family involvement, and case allocation.

The Citizen Voice Body

The Citizen Voice Body promotes public engagement in the planning, design and delivery of services. It helps make sure health and social care services in Wales are high quality and responsive to people's needs.

The body operates under the name "Llais" which translates as "Voice" becoming operational on 1st April 2023. Llais is an independent body providing free Advocacy support to members of the public who wish to raise a concern, which includes providing advice and information on the most appropriate course of action.

During 2024-25, we received 5 complaints from Llais advocates, 4 related to Children and Family Services and 1 to Adult Social Care.

More detailed information on complaints and representations in Bridgend can be found at "Social Services Representations and Complaints Annual Report."

Other Sources of Information

BRIDGEND COUNCIL

Delivering Together Our Corporate Plan 2023-28

Council Constitution

Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

Bridgend Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Corporate Self-Assessment

Audit Wales Reports

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

Awen Cultural Trust

Halo Leisure

BAVO Bridgend

People First Bridgend

Care Inspectorate Wales

Social Care Wales

TuVida Bridgend: Carer's Wellbeing Service

Bridgend Carers Centre

Llais Wales

BRIDGEND COUNCIL

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

More than just words: Welsh language plan in health and social care

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014

A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services

5

Glossary

Advocacy Advocates in social care are independent from the local authority (local council) and the NHS. They are trained to help people understand their rights, express their views and wish.

Assessment A meeting / discussion to help us to determine how someone is coping and what care and support they may need.

Care Experienced Children

Care experienced is an umbrella term which can mean children / young people who are:

- Looked after at home through a Care Order
- Looked after away from home in a residential children's house, in a foster placement or in a kinship placement (Looked After or Non-Looked After)
- Previously looked after, where at some point in their lives they have had any of the above experiences.

The child / young person may never have been formally looked after.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW is the social care provider regulator. They will register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales.

Care Leavers In Wales, care leavers are individuals who have been in the care of the local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and have left care on or after their 16th birthday. The support provided to care leavers is intended to be equivalent to what a child who has not been looked after might reasonably expect from their parents.

Care and Support Plan

A care and support plan is a document that sets out what has been discussed during a social care needs assessment and what is going

to happen as a result. It is a plan which a local authority is required to prepare and maintain under section 54 (1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Direct Payments Direct payments are issued to individuals to allow them to pay for their own care. They are a way that local authorities can help to meet individual's eligible need for care and support, or a carer's need for support. They are a way for people to arrange their own care and support.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is a legal procedure in the UK designed to protect vulnerable people in care settings. It applies to adults who lack the mental capacity to give consent to their care arrangements and need to be deprived of their liberty. DoLS ensures that those who cannot consent to their care are protected when their arrangements deprive them of their liberty. It will be replaced by Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) in the future."

Domiciliary Care / Domiciliary Support Service / Home Care Domiciliary care, also known as "care at home", refers to a broad range of care services provided in a person's own home. It can include assistance with day-to-day living and certain health care issues for the elderly.

Extra Care The provision of a domiciliary care package to an individual living in supported living/ accommodation.

Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) Refer to contacts and referrals – consent and level of information recorded – link to proportionate assessment.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) An IRO is someone who makes sure that care experienced children are looked after properly and that their care and support plans are right for them.

Mwy Na Geiriau / More than words More than just words is a strategy and delivery plan to aim to improve the quality of care for individuals living in a bilingual country.

Prevention and Early Intervention Prevention and early intervention are forms of support aimed at improving outcomes for people or preventing escalating need or risk. They are also sometimes referred to as early help or preventative services.

Reablement / Rehabilitation / Interim care This short-term care is sometimes called intermediate care, or aftercare. Reablement is a type of care that helps people relearn how to do daily activities, like cooking meals and washing. It is provided by local authorities with the aim of mitigating the need for long term care and support.

Resident / Citizen A person whose usual residence is within the local authority boundary.

Reunification Reunification refers to when a care experienced child or young person safely returns home to their family. Reunification only takes place once it has been determined that it is safe and the best outcome for the child or young person.

Residential Care Home / Nursing Home A residential care home provides accommodation and 24-hour personal care and support to the older people and others who may find it difficult to manage daily life at home. Both a residential care home and nursing home provide care and support 24 hours a day, however the main difference is that a nursing home is able to provide a higher level of care. Nursing homes have qualified nurses on-site around the clock to provide medical care as needed whereas residential homes help people with personal care and support them to engage in physical activity.

Safeguarding \ Adult Protection \ Child Protection Safeguarding sometimes referred to as adult protection or child protection is about protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.

Secure Estate A secure estate is a facility where individuals (adults or children and young people) may be housed or detained due to legal restrictions. Examples of a secure estate include prisons, young detention accommodation or an approved premises. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the care and support needs of individuals within a secure estate.

Shared Lives / Adult Placement Scheme Shared Lives Schemes, also known as adult placements, are a family-based way of supporting a vulnerable person's housing needs. This type of supportive accommodation can be the ideal

stepping stone on the way to independent living. This sharing arrangement is often referred to as 'shared lives'

Sheltered Accommodation Is housing for older or vulnerable people who want to live independently but with some support nearby. It usually includes a private flat, a warden or support staff, and emergency help if needed.

Social Care Wales (SCW) SCW is the workforce regulator. As part of this they register and set standards for the care and support workforce and develop the workforce. SCW also has an improvement remit, by which they will share good practice, set priorities for research and provide information for the public and other organisations.

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is a law that aims to improve the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and to transform social services in Wales.

Supported Living / Accommodation Supported living accommodation is a type of housing that provides personal care, support or supervision to help people live independently. The care and support are separate from the housing contract. The accommodation can be shared or single, depending on the needs and preferences of the occupants.

Telecare A service that uses technology to help people live independently and stay safe.

Third Sector The third sector refers to charities, community groups and not-for-profit organisations that help people and improve communities.

Transition The period of changeover/ move in being supported by Children and Family Services to being supported by Adult Social Care.

Unpaid Carer An unpaid carer is someone who provides care and support to family members, friends, or neighbours who are affected by disability, physical or mental ill-health, frailty, or substance misuse. The carer does not need to be living with the person they care for.

Young Carer A young carer is an unpaid carer who is up to the age of 18. They may be providing care and support to parents, siblings or other family members.

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	LOUIS PANNELL PRINCIPAL STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY OFFICER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	Following approval by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 nd July 2025, the purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the public consultation exercise that was carried out on the draft Retail and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document. This report also seeks Council approval to adopt the final form Retail and Commercial Development SPG. Adoption of the SPG will enable effective implementation of the Retail and Commercial Development Policies within the adopted Replacement Local Development Plan, March 2024 (RLDP), the Council's statutory land-use Planning document.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to inform Council of the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the draft Retail and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (**SPG**) document.
- 1.2 This Report also seeks Council approval to adopt the final form Retail and Commercial Development SPG (**Appendix 1**) in order to support the Retail and Commercial Development Policies within the adopted Replacement Local Development Plan (**RLDP, March 2024**).

2. Background

- 2.1 The adopted RLDP has a key role in ensuring that Town, District and Local Centres (**Centres**), are promoted as hubs of socio-economic activity, and are the focal points for a diverse range of services which support the needs of the communities they serve. Town Centres offer a wide range of shops and facilities serving a large catchment area, whereas District and Local Centres usually contain a small food store and a range of services that serve a smaller, more limited catchment area. They act as the most appropriate and sustainable locations for new retail, leisure and

supporting commercial development. This accords with the '*Town Centre First*' policy contained within '*Future Wales: The National Plan 2040*' (**Future Wales**), Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 4: Retail and Commercial Development (**TAN4**), to help build resilient communities, and respond to the long-term impacts of Covid-19, which have not only re-focused the lives of people and communities but acted as a further driver towards making such Centres multi-functional places.

- 2.2 The framework for the management of retail and commercial development in the County Borough is provided by Policy SP12, and its supporting Policies ENT6, ENT7, ENT8 and ENT9. The *Retail Study 2018* formed a key part of the adopted RLDP's evidence base and helped form the basis of these policies. The Retail Study 2018 sets out a number of recommendations, including '*retail need*' (the demand for additional retail floorspace), the distribution of retail need and the definition of "*Primary Shopping Areas*" and "*Secondary Shopping Areas*", to inform the policies contained within the adopted RLDP. The *Retail Study Update 2022*, further analysed trends affecting the retail sector across the County Borough, considered how trends may change over time and then assessed future needs for '*comparison*' retail (retail that sells goods that consumers compare before purchasing, goods that are usually higher value and purchased infrequently e.g. furniture, clothing, electronics), and '*convenience*' retail floorspace (retail that stocks a wide range of everyday items e.g. groceries), to 2033.
- 2.3 In recognising that Centres are moving away from their traditional retail roles, Policy SP12, and its supporting policies seek to ensure that such Centres become the focus of a wider variety of services and facilities. The '*Town Centre First*' approach is key to enabling such Centres to increasingly become multi-functional places and community focal points, thereby rendering them more viable as "go-to" destinations.
- 2.4 The purpose of this '*Retail and Commercial Development*' SPG is to expand on the above RLDP policies and provide clarity in respect of their future interpretation and application, and setting out what the Council expects from applicants in respect of satisfying the detailed criteria of those policies.
- 2.5 Development Control Committee was informed of the need to produce a SPG for Retail and Commercial Development on 8th August 2024. Councillor Easterbrook, volunteered to champion production of the SPG for Retail and Commercial Development and has since been working alongside the Principal Strategic Planning Policy Officer to progress the SPG.
- 2.6 The draft '*Retail and Commercial Development*' SPG provides updated, specific guidance on:
- *Policy ENT7: Development in the Commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg* – This policy defines '*Primary Shopping Areas*' and '*Secondary Shopping Areas*' within these three commercial Centres. Policy ENT7 seeks to protect these '*Areas*' to ensure their existing function is not diluted so they can continue to operate as viable shopping Centres. The SPG will provide further clarity on what is deemed acceptable within these named Centres.
 - *Policy ENT8: Non-A1, A2 and A3 Outside of Primary Shopping Areas* – The RLDP allows more flexibility to introduce shops, financial/professional services and food

and drink uses outside of Primary Shopping Areas. Policy ENT8 explains what other uses may be acceptable in commercial Centres. The SPG will clarify what uses may be acceptable within commercial Centres outside of Bridgend, Porthcawl or Maesteg.

- *Policy ENT9: Retail Development Outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres* – This policy explains what type of retail and commercial development is acceptable outside of retailing and commercial Centres. The SPG will provide guidance on the loss of retail and commercial floorspace outside of commercial Centres in addition to explaining what types of development would be appropriate on existing retail parks.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 On 11th March 2025, a draft version of the ‘Retail and Commercial Development’ SPG was presented to Cabinet. Cabinet resolved to approve that draft SPG as the basis for a public consultation period of 6 weeks. Cabinet also authorised officers to make appropriate arrangements for that public consultation before reporting the outcome back to Cabinet for approval to send a report to Council to seek adoption of the final form SPG.

3.2 A 6-week public consultation period was held from 19th March 2025 to 30th April 2025. The consultation was advertised in the following ways:

- Information on the consultation, including all the documentation, representation forms and how to make representations was placed on the Council’s online Consultation Portal.
- Consultation details were sent directly to approximately 140 targeted consultees including all Elected Members, Town and Community Councils, planning consultants, house builders and Registered Social Landlords (**RSLs**).
- A social media campaign was launched to promote the consultation across various social media platforms, aiming to generate awareness throughout the public consultation period. Periodic posts were made on the Council’s X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and Facebook accounts.

3.3 At the close of the public consultation period, two representations were received on the draft ‘Retail and Commercial Development’ SPG: one from an Elected Member and one from a planning consultant on behalf of McArthurGlen. These representations, together with the Local Planning Authority’s (**LPA’s**) responses to the comments raised, are provided in **Appendix 2** to this report. Copies of the full representations are held by the Planning Department and can be viewed on request. Given the extensive publication of the public consultation and direct targeting of consultees, the response rate is considered positive in that there were no wholesale objections to the contents of the draft ‘Retail and Commercial Development’ SPG.

3.4 The representors principally commented on the wording of certain paragraphs. Therefore, only minor amendments to the SPG are considered necessary in light of

the comments received. These proposed amendments are now incorporated within the final form draft 'Retail and Commercial Development' SPG, which is attached at **Appendix 1**. The paragraphs proposed for amendment following the consultation are detailed in full at the end of **Appendix 2** for ease of reference and include:

- Minor amendment to set out clearly the acceptable uses permitted on edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail allocations.
- Removal of a specified floorspace limit for small scale ancillary/incidental uses on edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail allocations to avoid being overly prescriptive. Furthermore, the role of the 'Retail and Commercial Development' SPG is to augment and interpret what is already contained in adopted RLDP policies rather than introduce new policies. Any application for ancillary/incidental uses will be judged on a case-by-case basis to determine their appropriateness.
- Minor amendment to the *Sequential Test – Assessment Checklist* detailed in Appendix B, to require the test to be based on a sound methodology. This will add further detail ensuring that applicants set out a clear methodology with regard to their assessment of the suitability of alternative sites. A sequential test is used to assess the suitability of sites for retail and commercial uses, prioritising development in defined retail and commercial Centres first, followed by edge-out-centre and out-of-centre locations if no suitable alternative sites are available.

3.5 At its meeting on 22nd July 2025, Cabinet noted the Officer's (on behalf of the local planning authority) consultation responses to the representations received arising from the public consultation (as described under paragraph 3.3 above), on the draft Retail and Commercial Development SPG, together with the resultant amendments set out in **Appendix 2**. Cabinet also approved presenting the final form Retail and Commercial Development SPG (**Appendix 1**) to Council to seek its adoption.

3.6 If adopted, the Retail and Commercial Development SPG will add weight to the interpretation and application of RLDP Retail and Commercial Development policies, provide more detailed advice and guidance to applicants preparing planning applications and will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

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

4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (**EIA**) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Retail and Commercial Development SPG will provide additional guidance and material weight to support adopted RLDP Policies and seeks to provide clarity in respect of their future interpretation and application, setting out what the Council expects from applicants in respect of satisfying those RLDP policies' detailed criteria. This is a key contributory factor to delivering Local Well-being Objective one 'A prosperous place with thriving communities'.
- 5.2 The Retail and Commercial Development SPG will also contribute to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- A prosperous Wales – Ensuring retail and commercial Centres are protected, promoted and support a prosperous Wales by ensuring such Centres act as hubs of socio-economic activity and are the focal points for a diverse range of services which support the needs of the communities they serve.
 - A resilient Wales – Ensuring retail and commercial Centres are protected, promoted and support a resilient Wales by ensuring such Centres become increasingly multifunctional, which will help to respond to the long-term impacts of Covid-19 and online shopping.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct climate change and nature implications from this report, although the Retail and Commercial Development SPG will provide additional guidance to ensure that new retail and commercial development is directed to existing retail and commercial Centres, that are well connected by established active travel routes and public transport links. This will help to encourage a sustainable modal shift, reducing carbon emissions that are released from car-borne travel.

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. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council:
- a) Note the contents of this Report and approve the Officer's consultation responses to the representations received following public consultation on the draft Retail and Commercial Development SPG, together with resultant amendments set out in attached **Appendix 2**.
 - b) Adopt the final form Retail and Commercial Development SPG (**Appendix 1**) for immediate application in making development management decisions and in the determination of planning applications along with the adopted RLDP, subject to the provisions of Recommendation c) below.

- c) Authorise the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to make minor presentational changes, typographical or factual corrections as necessary prior to publication of the adopted Retail and Commercial Development SPG.

Background documents

None

**Bridgend County Borough
Local Development Plan
2018-2033**

**Retail and Commercial Development
Supplementary Planning Guidance**

September 2025

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



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Wyndham Street, Bridgend

Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018-2033

Retail and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Guidance

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is to support and provide further direction on the implementation of the retail and commercial development policies contained within the adopted (March 2024) Bridgend Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). It outlines further guidance on retail and commercial development to protect the vitality, attractiveness, and viability of the designated retail centres in accordance with the approach outlined in National Planning Policy. This guidance aims to assist applicants and decision makers when considering specific changes of use in retail centres and other town centre developments, in accordance with the policies contained within the RLDP, National Plan 2040 (Future Wales) and in light of other material considerations to ensure the County Borough's retail centres are sustainable in the long term.
- 1.2 This SPG will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications for retail and commercial development including applications for renewal of consents.
- 1.3 Anyone wishing to submit an application for retail and commercial development within Bridgend County Borough is urged to consider this SPG and to contact the Local Planning Authority (LPA), in advance of submitting a planning application, to discuss the issues that are raised in this document on a site-specific basis.
- 1.4 The SPG provides specific guidance on:
- Development in commercial centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg (including Primary Shopping Areas, Secondary Shopping Areas and outside of shopping areas but within commercial centres);
 - Non A1, A2 and A3 uses in commercial centres outside of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg; and
 - Retail development outside of retail and commercial centres.

2.0 Policy and Legislative Context

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy context for the provision of retail and commercial development through the planning system is set out in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 4 November 2016 (TAN4) Retail and Commercial Development.
- 2.2 **Future Wales: The National Plan** is the National Policy framework setting out the direction for development in Wales to 2040. ‘Town Centre First’ is a key policy within Future Wales (Policy 6), and it is recognised that the planning system has a long-established role in this respect. Future Wales recognises the need to re-think the future of town and city centres, which are moving away from their traditional retail roles towards more multi-functional places. Town centres remain important focal points of communities and are increasingly becoming places to live, centres of community and cultural activity, a focus for public services such as health and education, and the location of new co-working spaces.
- 2.3 **PPW (Edition 12)** sets out the National priorities and considerations with regards to new commercial and retail development and for managing change within existing commercial and retail centres. PPW requires local planning authorities to establish through their development plan a clear strategy for retail development, supported by policies, to achieve vibrant, attractive and viable retail and commercial centres. The Welsh Government operates a ‘Town Centre First’ approach in relation to the location of new retail and commercial centre development (Policy 6, Future Wales, as referred above).
- 2.4 **TAN 4: Retail and Commercial Development** sets out National Policy and guidance in relation to the changes of use in Primary and Secondary retail and commercial Areas. TAN4 identifies a number of overarching objectives for retail and commercial centres where the planning system must promote viable urban and rural retail and commercial centres as the most sustainable locations to live, work, shop, socialise and conduct business; sustain and enhance retail

and commercial centres' vibrancy, viability and attractiveness; and improve access to, and within, retail and commercial centres by all modes of transport, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

- 2.5 **TAN 23: Economic Development (February 2014)** defines economic development broadly so that it can include any form of development that generates wealth, jobs and income, recognising that retail is an economic land use.
- 2.6 **Building Better Places: The Planning System Delivering Resilient and Brighter Futures - Placemaking and The Covid-19 Recovery (Welsh Government, July 2020)** recognises that town centres should become places where a variety of retail, employment, commercial, community, leisure, health and public sector uses come together in a hub of activity to make them viable as go-to destinations. Flexible, local co-working spaces could also be a crucial new element to increase space to work. Residential uses are also key to the vitality of centres, provided that they do not curtail the commercial activities which take place and that noise impacts are considered.
- 2.7 **Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as Amended) (Use Classes Order 1987)** identifies uses of land and buildings and places them within various categories known as 'Use Classes'. The Use Classes Order 1987 does not contain a definitive list of all the different types of uses of land and buildings but provides broad categories to allow developers and decision makers to understand which Use Class should apply.
- 2.8 Table 1 sets out the types of uses which would fall under the retail Use Classes contained under Part A Schedule 1 of the Use Classes Order 1987:

Table 1: Retail Use Classes

Use Class	Examples
A1 Shops	Shops, retail warehouses, post office (not sorting offices), hairdressing, undertakers, dry cleaners, pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms and domestic hire shops.
A2 Financial and professional services	Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies.
A3 Food and drink	For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises – restaurants, snack bars and cafes, drinking establishments and take-aways.

2.9 **Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as Amended) (GPD Order 1995)** identifies that certain types of minor development changes can be made to land and buildings without requiring planning consent. These are known as permitted development rights and are contained within the GPD Order 1995. In relation to proposals involving similar types of Use Classes a change of use to the building or land may not require planning consent. For example, a hairdressers could be changed to a shoe shop without the need for permission as these uses fall within the same 'Class', a restaurant could be changed to a shop or an estate agency as the Use Classes Order allows this type of change to occur without requiring planning permission.

2.10 However, most external building work associated with a change of use is likely to require planning permission, for example new advertising for the new use.

Regarding change of uses which fall under the Use Class A retail uses, Table 2 outlines where a change of use would be considered a permitted development.

Table 2: Permitted Development, Retail Uses

Existing Use	Permitted Change of Use
A2 (professional and financial services) when premises have a display window at ground level	A1 (shop)
A3 (food and drink)	A1 or A2
Sui Generis – Car showrooms and Betting Offices only	A1 Shop
A1 or A2	A1 plus a single flat above
A2	A2 plus a single flat above

2.11 Please note in some areas of the County Borough permitted development rights are more restricted. If the land or building is located in a Conservation Area (including Bridgend Town Centre, Porthcawl Town Centre and Maesteg Town Centre), planning permission will be required for certain types of development works which may not apply in other areas. There are also additional restrictions if a building has been designated as a Listed Building. Furthermore, the existing use may have been permitted but subject to the removal of permitted development rights so that planning consent would be required for the changes of use shown in Table 2. In some instances, a use may have been restricted to a specific user or subject to other limitations, consequently it is important that the planning history of a building or land is fully understood before undertaking any type of permitted development. The LPA offers a pre-application service (details available on the Council's website), which offers advice before a planning application is submitted. This will help to identify issues that may be of relevance to a particular site.



3.0 Background

3.1 The RLDP sets out the Council's land use planning policies up to 2033. The Retail Study 2018 (Stantec) formed a key part of the adopted RLDP's evidence base setting out recommendations on retail need (the demand for additional retail floorspace), the distribution of retail need and the definition of "Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas" to inform the policies contained within the adopted RLDP. The Retail Study Update 2022 (Stantec) further analysed trends affecting the retail sector across the County Borough, considered how trends may change over time and then assessed future needs for comparison and convenience retail floorspace to 2033, based on existing market shares. In the consideration of planning applications for retail and commercial development, the following policies are particularly relevant:

- SP12: Retailing, Commercial and Service Centres
- ENT6: Retail and Commercial Development
- ENT7: Development in Commercial Centres
- ENT8: Non-A1, A2 and A3 Uses Outside of Primary Shopping Areas
- ENT9: Retail Development Outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres

3.2 The policies listed above can be viewed within the RLDP Written Statement.

3.3 Policy SP12 promotes specified town, district, and local centres (Centres) as hubs of socio-economic activity and as the focal points for a diverse range of services which support the needs of the communities they serve. These Centres are denoted on the RLDP Proposals Map. Policy ENT7 also defines Primary Shopping Areas (a central part of a retail and commercial Centre where A1 retail uses are concentrated) and Secondary Shopping Areas (located adjacent to or near a Primary Shopping Area that consists of a wider range of uses) located in Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg, which adds an additional layer of protection in defining a retail 'mass' where policy controls apply in respect of retail activity.

- 3.4 The distribution of shopping facilities in Bridgend fits within the wider regional hierarchy. Cardiff and Swansea are the highest order Centres within the regional hierarchy. As the sub-regional town centre, Bridgend contains the largest number and widest range of shops, services and leisure and is the principal shopping centre for much of the County Borough and some communities outside.
- 3.5 The other significant town centres of Maesteg and Porthcawl offer a wide range of shops and facilities, including a medium sized convenience offer to meet the needs of their immediate catchment areas.
- 3.6 District and local Centres within the County Borough usually contain a small foodstore and a range of services which serve a smaller, more limited catchment area. These Centres primarily provide only essential goods available for 'top up' shops.
- 3.7 The County Borough's retail hierarchy comprising of sub regional, town, district and local Centres is set out in Table 3. This excludes existing '*edge of centre*' and '*out of centre*' retail sites.

Table 3: Retail Hierarchy

Sub Regional Centre	Bridgend Town Centre
Town Centres	Maesteg and Porthcawl
District Centres	Aberkenfig (Valleys Gateway); Kenfig Hill, Ogmore Vale, Pencoed, Pontycymmer and Pyle
Local Centres	Bettws North, Bettws South, Blackmill, Blaengarw, Brackla, Broadlands, Bryntirion, Caerau, Laleston, Nantymoel, North Cornelly, Nottage, Pontrhydycyff, Sarn, Verlands Court (Pencoed), Wildmill and Five Bells Road (Bridgend)



4.0 Planning Requirements

4.1 Policy ENT7 – Development in Commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg

- 4.2 Policy ENT7 defines the Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg. Policy ENT7 aims to ensure that commercial centres do not lose their ‘critical mass’ of retail units to the extent that they can no longer function as viable shopping centres. This section will clarify how Policy ENT7 applies to Primary Shopping Areas and Secondary Shopping Areas in turn, before providing further clarity on the status of the remaining broader commercial centres.

Primary Shopping Areas

- 4.3 Primary Shopping Areas are frontages within the town centre which are focussed on providing an opportunity for shopping and therefore the dominant use should be A1 retail. In relation to Primary Shopping Areas, strict criteria need to be met before a change of use to a non-A1 use will be considered as acceptable.

- 4.4 The following paragraphs will address each policy criterion in turn.

4.5 Policy ENT7: Criterion 1

‘The development would not, by virtue of its nature, design and scale, materially dilute the continuity of the primary shopping frontage.’

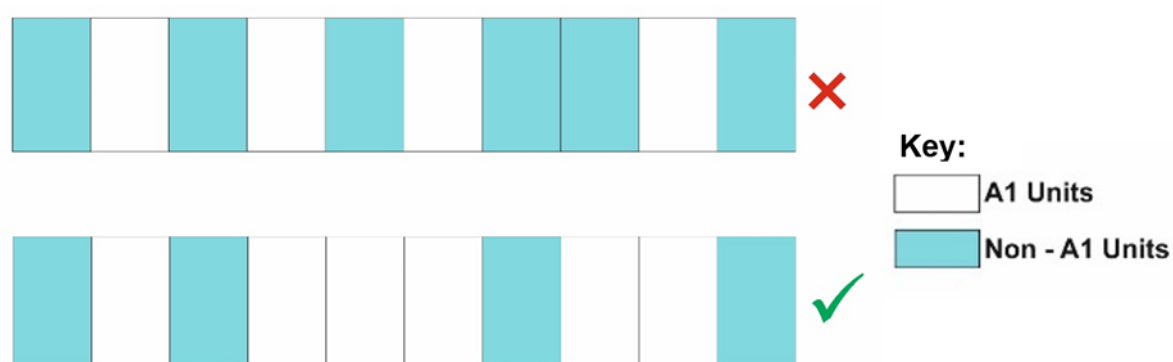
- 4.6 Proposals which are considered to ‘tip the balance’ in terms of diluting the ‘critical mass’ of A1 retail frontage will not be supported.
- 4.7 In determining the impact of a proposed change of use, consideration should be given to the following:

- i) **The proportion of non-A1 uses that already exist in the Primary Shopping Area in the street scene and in the frontage within which it is located.**

Consideration will be given to where the introduction of another non-A1 use would *'tip-the-balance'* in terms of diluting the *'critical mass'* of A1 uses. Figure 1.1 provides an illustrative example of this dilution effect. This scenario reduces the number of A1 uses, with the non-A1 uses becoming dominant and therefore unacceptable in planning terms. This phenomenon dilutes the primary retail character of the area, reducing its appeal as a shopping destination.

Consideration of this dilution effect will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

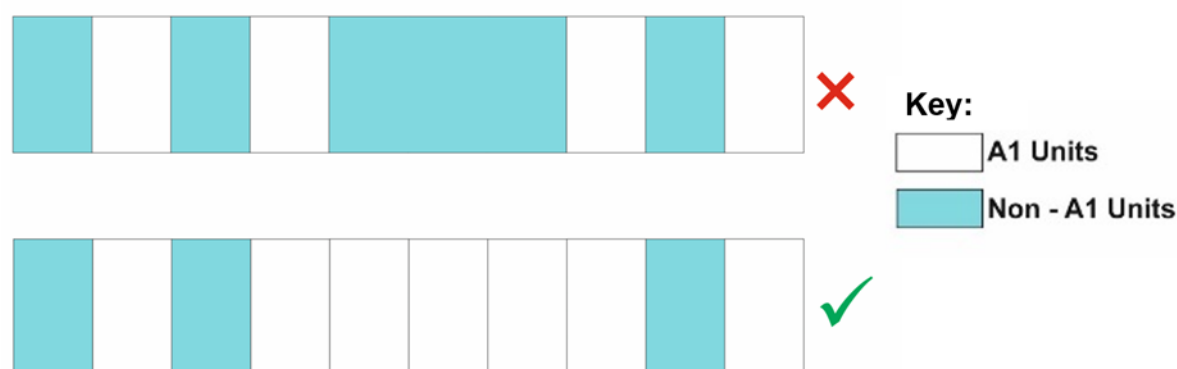
Figure 1.1: Primary Shopping Area Dilution



- ii) **The scale and design of a shop front to which the change of use relates.**

Whilst the proposal may not numerically 'tip the balance' in favour of non-A1 uses, loss of a large shop front with a prominent design or presence in the frontage can have a significant impact in terms of dilution as illustrated in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Primary Shopping Area Dilution



4.8 Policy ENT7: Criterion 2

'The development would not exacerbate an existing, nor create a new, undue concentration of non-A1 uses.'

4.9 Criterion 2 is concerned with clusters of non-A1 uses in the Primary Shopping Area. Whilst a change of use might be acceptable in the context of Criterion 1 in terms of the number of units in the frontage as a whole, a number of non-A1 units in close proximity can have a similarly detrimental impact on the frontage.

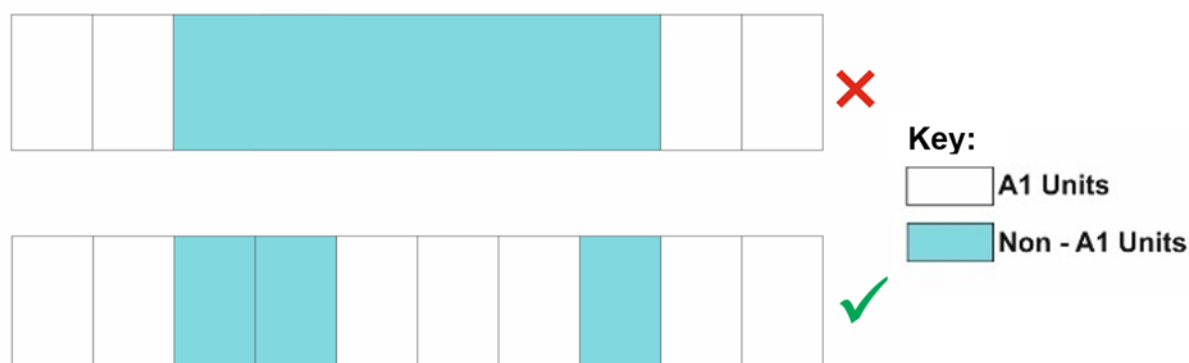
4.10 When considering applications for a change of use in the context of Criterion 2, applicants should consider the units that surround the proposal and whether the introduction of an additional non-A1 use would create a noticeable 'gap' in the A1 retail frontage. Figure 1.3 provides an illustrative example.

Figure 1.3: Undue Concentration



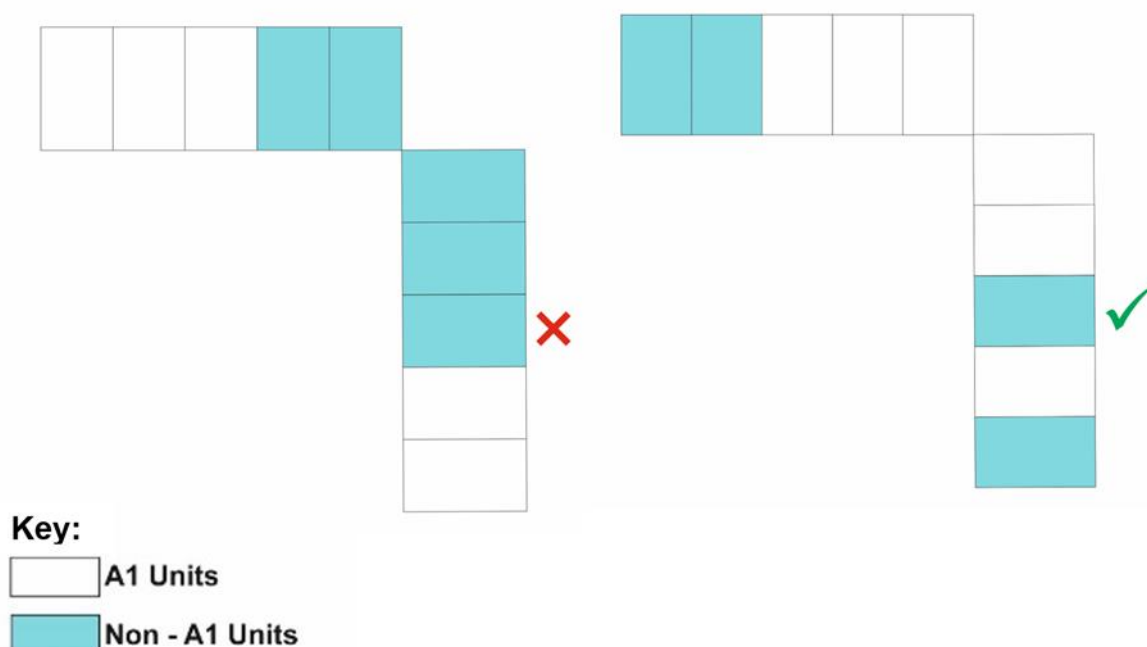
4.11 The impact may be exaggerated by the scale of the shop front. Loss of a large and/or prominent A1 frontage is likely to have an impact far greater than a regular sized frontage as illustrated by Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4: Undue Concentration



4.12 Additionally, the location of the proposal may be of significance. For example, a proposal which is located in a gateway location and/or on a corner will have a far more noticeable impact as illustrative by Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5: Undue Concentration



4.13 Policy ENT7: Criterion 3

'The development would not create a dead frontage but would rather stimulate passing trade and maintain public interest.'

4.14 This Criterion 3 relates to individual units. All units in the Primary Shopping Area should seek to create attractive and vibrant shopping frontages of interest to passers-by. A dead window frontage is not only concerned with the design of the frontage (i.e. blank facades or blanked out windows), but it also refers to the operations within the unit. For example, a B1 office use could have a similar dead frontage impact as a blank façade because the operation within the unit may not be of interest to the shopping public and may also be unlikely to operate on the basis of passing trade. A dead window frontage can also be created by A3 hot food takeaway establishments where the operating hours are associated with the nighttime economy and are closed during the daytime operating hours of the town centre.

4.15 However, certain non-A1 uses can maintain the interest of passers-by provided that they are acceptable in the context of the other Policy ENT7 Criteria. For example, A3 cafes and coffee shops which have window displays, outside seating and opening hours consistent with A1 retail operations can introduce an element of vibrancy to the town centre.

4.16 Therefore, consideration should be given to the nature of the use in terms of its operational requirements, opening hours and window displays, which could make the proposal acceptable in accordance with Criterion 3.

4.17 Policy ENT7: Criterion 4

'Individually or cumulatively the proposal would not adversely affect the vitality, viability and character of the centre.'

4.18 Diversity of retail and commercial Centres is the key to their success, and careful attention should be paid to proposals within Centres, which will enhance their vitality and viability. Some proposals can have an adverse effect on a

Centre, damaging both the vitality and viability of the retail and entertainment uses within it.

4.19 Factors that will be considered in the determination of planning applications, to ensure that any loss of A1 floorspace would not undermine the vitality, viability and character of a Centre, include:

- Whether the existing use is surplus to requirements;
- The nature of the proposed use and the contribution to vitality it might bring;
- The number of vacant premises in the Primary Shopping Area or Centre;
- The length of continuous frontage in non-retail use that would be created.

4.20 Policy ENT7: Criterion 5

‘The development would not give rise to new, nor materially exacerbate existing, local problems due to traffic generation, congestion, highway safety, noise, smell, crime, anti-social behaviour or other amenity considerations.’

4.21 With regards to traffic generation, congestion and highway safety, town centres are highly accessible locations with ample car parking, therefore small-scale proposals for change of use within the Primary Shopping Area are not likely to have an adverse impact.

4.22 However, for some larger proposals that are likely to generate significantly higher levels or densities of traffic, a traffic statement may be required to support a planning application. Applicants are advised to contact the LPA prior to the submission of a planning application to ascertain what additional information, if any, is required.

4.23 A traffic statement should include information on:

- Likely patron/visitor attraction;
- Staffing levels;
- Parking requirements;
- Potential area of attraction;

- Means of accessing the site by sustainable means i.e. public transport; active travel; and
- A travel plan may also be of benefit, assuming the proposal is large enough to warrant this.

4.24 Any highway infrastructure improvements to cater for an increase in traffic, such as a widened or new footway or a junction or carriageway improvement, should be included as part of the planning application.

4.25 With regards to noise, smell, crime, anti-social behaviour and other amenity considerations, applicants should consider the nature of the proposal, its impact on its surroundings and the impact of the surroundings on the proposal.

4.26 For example, if the proposal was for A3 hot food takeaway use, potential issues relating to noise and smell (generated by the extractor fans or otherwise), in addition to noise and litter generated by customers, will need to be given due consideration.

4.27 Applicants should consider the following:

- Is the land or building located amongst other similar uses?
- Are there residential units in close proximity?
- What opening times will the use be operating within?
- How will the site accommodate delivery to the unit?
- Will the operation offer a delivery service?

4.28 In addition to the above requirements [and considerations], **all developments that involve the loss of an existing A1 use on the ground floor must be actively marketed** prior to submission of a planning application. A marketing strategy (See Appendix 1 for Marketing Strategy Checklist) should be submitted to and agreed by the LPA in advance of any marketing being undertaken. Providing the LPA has approved the marketing strategy in advance and is satisfied that the strategy has been executed appropriately, one year of

marketing will be considered acceptable. Otherwise, the LPA will need to be satisfied that marketing has been undertaken on reasonable terms for at least two years prior to the submission of a planning application. Residential development on the ground floor will not be permitted within Primary Shopping Areas.

Secondary Shopping Areas

4.29 In relation to **Secondary Shopping Areas**, greater flexibility exists to promote a wider range of retail uses to address long-term vacancy rates. Development proposals must be for A1, A2 and A3 unless they satisfy the Criteria under Policy ENT7. Residential development on the ground floor will not be permitted within Secondary Shopping Areas.

4.30 The following paragraphs will address each Criterion in turn.

4.31 Policy ENT7: Criterion a)

‘Individually or cumulatively the proposal would not adversely affect the vitality, viability and character of the centre.’

4.32 Diversity of retail and commercial Centres is the key to their success and careful attention should be paid to proposals within Centres, which will enhance their vitality and viability. Some proposals can have an adverse effect on a Centre, damaging both the vitality and viability of the retail and entertainment uses within it.

4.33 Factors that will be considered in the determination of planning applications to ensure that any loss of A1, A2 and A3 floorspace would not undermine the vitality, viability and character of a Centre, include:

- Whether the existing use is surplus to requirements;
- The nature of the proposed use and the contribution to vitality it might bring;
- The number of vacant premises in the Secondary Shopping Area or Centre;
- The length of continuous frontage in non-retail use that would be created.

4.34 Policy ENT7: Criterion b)

'The development would not give rise to new, nor materially exacerbate existing, local problems due to traffic generation, congestion, highway safety, noise, smell, crime, anti-social behaviour or other amenity considerations.'

4.35 This Criterion b) will be assessed in accordance with the guidance detailed under Policy ENT7 Criterion 5 (paragraph 4.20 above).

4.36 Policy ENT7: Development outside of Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas but within the commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg

4.37 Greater flexibility exists within the commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg that are located outside of Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas. New development that provides retail, office, leisure, entertainment, cultural or community floorspace will be permitted within these retailing and commercial Centres as outlined by Policy SP12 (RLDP). Residential development will be encouraged and permitted on the first and upper floors of properties.



John Street,
Porthcawl



Well Street, Porthcawl

Bridgend Local Development Plan 2018-2033
Retail and Commercial Development Supplementary Planning Guidance

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4.38 Policy ENT8: Non A1, A2 and A3 Uses Outside of Primary Shopping Areas

4.39 Paragraphs 5.4.65 – 5.4.67 of the RLDP provide the rationale behind Policy ENT8, however, it is considered that additional guidance on meeting the policy criteria under this Policy ENT8 would be beneficial to applicants wishing to introduce a non-A1, A2 or A3 use within commercial Centres that do not relate to Bridgend, Porthcawl or Maesteg (See table below).

Table 4: Commercial Centres Outside of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg

District Centres	Aberkenfig (Valleys Gateway), Kenfig Hill, Ogmore Vale, Pencoed, Pontycymmer and Pyle.
Local Centres	Bettws North, Bettws South, Blackmill, Blaengarw, Brackla, Broadlands, Bryntirion, Caerau, Laleston, Nantymoel, North Cornelly, Nottage, Pontrhydycyff, Sarn, Verlands Court (Pencoed), Wildmill and Five Bells Road (Bridgend)

4.40 The following paragraphs will address each Policy ENT8 Criterion in turn.

4.41 Policy ENT8: Criterion 1

‘If for residential purposes: a) The premises/floorspace has been vacant for at least two years and has been actively marketed over that time’

4.42 In terms of demonstrating that the premises has been vacant for at least two years, it should be noted that the LPA conducts an annual survey of all retail premises within established town, district and local service Centres.

4.43 As such, the LPA maintains an annual “*snapshot*” of the use and occupancy of each retail unit, which will be used to assist in identifying how long a retail unit may have been vacant for. In addition to the length of any vacancy period, the LPA must be satisfied that the property is no longer required for its retail function. Applicants must therefore provide evidence of the length of time the property has been vacant and demonstrate that the property has been actively marketed on reasonable terms for retail occupancy/sale over that time.

- 4.44 This will include due consideration as to 'where' and 'how' the marketing has taken place, together with the advertised sale price/rent compared to comparable properties within the locality.
- 4.45 It should be noted that the LPA will require evidence to demonstrate the requirements under paragraph 4.41 above, which may include letters of instruction to agents; published letting/sales material and/or photographic evidence (See Appendix 1 for the 'Marketing Strategy Checklist').
- 4.46 In some Centres, it is acknowledged that existing retail and commercial uses may have only been operating for a short period of time. Where applicants can robustly demonstrate that this is the case and that a long-term residential use was previously established, a more pragmatic approach may be adopted for residential development proposals following an investigation into the nature and duration of the existing use.

4.47 Policy ENT8: Criterion 1

'If for residential purposes: b) The premises/floorspace does not form part of a purpose-built retail environment or a continuous frontage of three or more existing commercial units.'

Purpose-built retail environments refer to those retail sites which have been developed to meet a specific retail need. Examples include shopping Centres such as Brackla Local Service Centre or retail centres which were developed to specifically serve a housing development such as the Broadlands Local Service Centre.

4.48 Policy ENT8: Criterion 2

'If for other purposes: The proposal does not involve the loss of existing A1 floorspace.'

- 4.49 In terms of the acceptability of uses other than A1, A2 and A3 within the boundaries of existing retailing and commercial Centres; developments that

provide office, leisure, entertainment, cultural or community floorspace will be permitted within these retailing and commercial Centres, providing the proposal does not involve the loss of occupied and operational A1 floorspace.

4.50 The final requirement of Policy ENT8 Criterion 2 states:

‘Wherever possible, proposals for a change of use of existing floorspace must be designed so as not to prejudice a future conversion back to a retail or commercial use.’

4.51 It is accepted that changes of use to residential cannot practicably retain a retail frontage within its final design. However, non-retail commercial uses should wherever possible limit the external alteration to the unit to retain its external appearance. This would limit the visual impact of the change of use on the street scene and enable the unit to re-use its primary A1, A2 or A3 retail function, should the non-retail use vacate the property, without unnecessary complication and costs.

4.52 Policy ENT9: Retail Development Outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres

4.53 The first requirement of Policy ENT9 of the RLDP states:

‘Development proposals outside of Retail and Commercial Centres that result in the loss of retail and commercial floorspace will only be permitted where there is proven to be other sufficient provision locally or where the premises/floorspace has been vacant for at least 12 months and has been actively marketed over that time.’

4.54 It is recognised that local shopping facilities play an important role in serving local communities and their provision can mean a vital service is provided to local people. The loss of a single retail store to another use could lead to a deficit in provision locally. Policy ENT9 seeks to ensure that any loss of shopping facilities serving local communities outside of retail and commercial Centres will not lead to an under-provision in the area. Applicants must demonstrate that there is other sufficient provision locally. The LPA will

undertake a check of the surrounding area to determine whether there is sufficient local provision to justify the loss of retail use. If there is no other local provision, applicants proposing a loss of local retail use must demonstrate that the property has been actively marketed for at least 12 months prior to the submission of a planning application. The LPA will need to be satisfied that marketing has been undertaken on reasonable terms and, as a minimum, would require sales particulars and information from sales/letting agents to be submitted as part of an application (See Appendix 1 for Marketing Strategy Checklist). Examples of uses that are considered to offer a local convenience service, include but are not limited to the following:

- Newsagent/convenience store
- Bakery
- Café/restaurant/hot food takeaway
- Post Office
- Pharmacy

4.55 Policy ENT9 also states:

‘Retail development outside of Retail and Commercial Centres will be concentrated at the following existing locations:’

Location	Acceptable Uses	Type
Bridgend Retail Park	Bulky Comparison & Convenience	Out-Of-Centre
Waterton Retail Park	Bulky Comparison & Convenience	Out-Of-Centre
Sainsbury, Cefn Hirgoed	Convenience	Out-Of-Centre
Tesco, Brewery Lane	Convenience	Edge-Of-Centre
Tesco, Llynfi Lane, Maesteg	Convenience	Edge-Of-Centre
Bridgend Designer Outlet Village	Controlled by s106	Out-Of-Centre

4.56 Whilst Proposals for new out-of-centre retail will not be encouraged, Policy ENT9 acknowledges the presence of existing retail developments outside of Town, District and Local Centres. Retail development at these locations defined in Policy ENT9 will be restricted to the acceptable uses outlined in the table above, by means of appropriate planning conditions and/or legal agreements. Extensions within the boundaries of these locations, increases to the allocated floorspace or relaxations/changes to the types of goods sold, may require a needs test, sequential test and retail impact assessment, as detailed within National Policy (TAN4: Retail and Commercial Development / PPW), depending on the nature of the proposal and the potential impacts. This will also apply to planning applications which seek to vary conditions to change the types of goods sold from sites at these locations or the subdivision of units, both of which could potentially undermine the vitality and viability of town and district Centres if not properly controlled.



4.57 In respect of the 'types' of bulky comparison goods that are likely to be permitted at Bridgend and Waterton Retail parks, these are defined as:

- Carpets and flooring;
- Baby and toddler equipment;
- Cycles and accessories;
- DIY and home improvements;
- Electrical and other durable goods;
- Footwear;
- Gardening items and equipment;
- Sports camping and leisure goods (excluding clothing);
- Textiles and soft furnishings;
- Toys, games and hobbies;
- Vehicle and motorcycle sales;
- Vehicle accessories; and
- Bulky food and drink outlets.

4.58 In general terms, the LPA considers that the above list reflects accurately what could be considered as '*bulky*' and is the starting point in determining whether it is a '*bulky*' item or not, although this is not an exhaustive list. As a further guide in determining acceptability the following two questions are useful:

1) *Can the item fit within a bag and be easily carried around a town or district Centre?*

(The purpose of allowing out-of-centre retailing for bulky items is because the items, by their very nature do not allow easy movement between shopping units and require the use of a car within close proximity of the store to transport items with them).

2) *Are there other stores already located within any of the town and district Centres which sell similar items?*

(If there are stores selling similar items within a town, district or local Centre already, this could be used as an indication that an '*out-of-centre*' location is not required).

4.59 Whilst there have been subsequent variations of conditions based on individual circumstances, the above list (paragraph 4.57), remains the basis for determining what constitutes a ‘*bulky*’ item in the above described retail parks and will be the starting point in determining planning applications on those retail parks.

4.60 Proposals for non-Bulky goods

4.61 As highlighted above, development within allocated ‘*edge of centre*’ and ‘*out of centre*’ locations will be restricted to specific goods that would not typically be sold from premises within a Centre. The tests of ‘*retail need*’, ‘Sequential’ approach and impact will apply to the consideration of **all development proposals** at ‘*edge of centre*’ and ‘*out of centre*’ locations.

4.62 Proposals for ancillary and incidental uses such as Use Class A3 (food and drink) floorspace within designated ‘*out of centre*’ locations will be restricted to small scale provision that supports the primary retail function of the wider site, or comprises a facility that due to its operational and functional requirements cannot reasonably be accommodated within a Centre. Ancillary and incidental uses will be judged on a case-by-case basis and will not be permitted if judged to give rise to a critical mass.

4.63 Class D2 (leisure) proposals will only be permitted at ‘*out of centre*’ locations if the applicant demonstrates that there is no viable prospect of the proposed scheme being accommodated within the retailing, commercial and services hierarchy outlined under Policy SP12 (RLDP), as required by the Sequential Test (used to assess the suitability of sites for retail and commercial uses, prioritising development in defined retail and commercial centres first, followed by ‘*edge of centre*’ locations, and finally ‘*out-of-centre*’ locations if no suitable alternative areas are available) (See Appendix 2 for Checklist).

4.64 Leisure uses will not be permitted at these locations if judged to give rise to a critical mass and range of facilities that pose a threat to the future vitality, viability and attractiveness of the retail, commercial and district Centres. The

policy aim is to protect the threat of '*out of centre*' allocations becoming '*all round destinations*' for customers to have such a range and opportunity for retail and leisure experiences that it negates the need to undertake any separate visit to existing retail, commercial and district Centres.

- 4.65 Certain proposals have operational requirements that cannot reasonably be accommodated within Centres. A '*drive through*' restaurant/café proposal, for example, represents a Class A3 operation that, due to its circulation requirements and size constraints, would not typically be located within a Centre and may instead be accommodated within an '*out of centre*' allocation.

Appendix A: Marketing Checklist for Applicants

Marketing Requirement	Further Information
Period of Marketing	
1. Has the site and/or premises been actively and comprehensively marketed for its current and/or last permitted use for the minimum continuous period specified in the relevant RLDP Policy?	Marketing is required under Policy ENT7: (RLDP): <i>Development in Commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg</i> (Supporting paragraph 5.4.62) for the change of use from A1 to non-A1. Marketing is required under Policy ENT8: (RLDP): <i>Non-A1, A2 and A3 Uses Outside of Primary Shopping Areas</i> for the change of use from non-A1, A2 or A3 to residential.
Flexibility of use	
2. Does the marketing include marketing of the site/premises on a freehold as well as leasehold basis?	The purpose of marketing the freehold of a site and/or building is to increase the likelihood of sale by enabling potential purchasers to use it for a wider range of future uses than if they rented or purchased the site/building's leasehold.
Forms of marketing	
3. Advertising board posted in a prominent location on site throughout the period of marketing. The board should include contact information and be clearly visible. Photographic evidence should be provided with the application and/or pre-application enquiry.	
4. Registration of the property with at least one commercial property agent. The site should be continuously included on the commercial agent's website over the period of the marketing campaign. The site/premises should also be advertised on commercial property search sites and online advertising portals.	The requirement for registration with at least one commercial agent is a Minimum. The LPA will expect to see evidence of a range of methods of advertising throughout the required marketing period in order to demonstrate wide market exposure and an active approach to marketing. This may include mailshots, printed and online advertising (see point below) and use of a number of commercial agents.

5. Have details of where and how often the site was advertised, with copies of all printed advertisements placed and web pages, including publication dates, been supplied?	Any advertisements on websites should appear continuously throughout the required marketing period.
Price and terms	
6. Has evidence of the asking price and/or rent at which the property has been offered been included in the marketing statement?	
7. Has the site/premises been independently valued by at least two independent agents and marketing at a reasonable and competitive guide sale price and lease amount and terms that reflects its current value taking into account the current state of the property (including in relation to use, condition, quality and location of floorspace) and local sales/rents? Evidence of the above should be provided with the application and/or pre-application enquiry.	
8. Have details of any reductions in price throughout the marketing period also been recorded and included with the valuation evidence referred to in question 7?	Note: This information should be provided to indicate the price and/or rent at which the property has been offered.
9. Does the marketing statement include the number and detail of enquiries and/or offers received for the site/premises, reasons for refusal of any offers and reasons why any offers fell through?	
10. Does the marketing statement include the reasons for prospective tenants not making an offer and/or taking up the space, and how these problems have been addressed?	
11. Have the dates and periods for each individual marketing activity been clearly shown on the marketing statement?	

Appendix B: Sequential Test - Assessment Checklist for Applicants

Sequential Assessment	Further Information
1. Description of the proposed use	
2. The size of the unit	Whether existing or proposed
3. The area covered by the sequential search	
4. Justification for the area search	If it is less than Borough-wide or limited to particular types of centres
5. The types of units searched for	
6. Justification for any limitations applied to the types of units considered	
7. A list of the alternative, available, sequentially preferable units identified	• This list should set out the address and size of the unit and if it is suitable or not. The suitability of a unit should be based on a sound methodology and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. • If a unit is unsuitable, full justification and evidence should be provided alongside the listing. • A conclusion as to whether the Sequential Test is met, looking at both the availability and suitability of those sites to accommodate the proposal. • If the Sequential Test is not met, an explanation of any overriding material considerations that would justify the grant of planning permission.

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Appendix 2: Consultation Representations, Responses and Resultant Action

Do you have any comments on the proposed guidance for Policy ENT7: Development in Commercial Centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg detail in Section 4	
Organisation	NTR Planning Ltd (on behalf of McArthurGlen)
Representation	The draft SPG sets out specific measures concerning the interpretation of Policy ENT7 in order to promote the vitality and viability of Bridgend town centre. These should be applied flexibly to enable the centre to respond to those changes in shopping patterns that have occurred over the last five years, both as a result of the pandemic and the shift towards online shopping. It should be noted that these changes have affected outlet centres as well, particularly given the growth in the availability of online outlet shopping channels. It is important that these flexible measures are applied without unnecessary burden in order to support a dynamic and changing retail environment, as well as to support alternative uses within centres. This is promoted at page 71 of Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 under the supporting text to Policy 6: <i>‘The principle of ‘Town Centre First’ is well established in planning policy in relation to retail developments. However, good planning can help us re-think the future of town and city centres, which are moving away from their traditional retail roles.’</i> This approach ought to apply in equal measure to other centres, including Bridgend Designer Outlet Centre, in order for it to also remain vital and viable and to continue to act as an important tourist attractor and to maintain the aforementioned synergy.

Local Planning Authority Response	Policy ENT7 specifically deals with development within the commercial centres of Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg, of which does not include edge-of-centre or out-of-centre allocations such as Bridgend Designer Outlet Centre. Any proposal that relates to Bridgend Designer Outlet Centre will be assessed against Policy ENT9 and uses specified by the associated Section 106 Agreement. Policy ENT7 takes into account the impacts of both the pandemic and the shift towards online shopping recognising that centres are moving away from their traditional retail roles. This policy ensures that these centres do not lose their 'critical mass' of retail units to the extent that they can no longer function as viable shopping centres. However, there is sufficient flexibility embedded within this policy and other policies to enable such centres to become multifunctional places and community focal points, thereby rendering them more viable as go-to destinations in light of the impacts of the pandemic and shift towards online shopping.
Resultant Action	No action necessary – the SPG provides supplementary information and guidance in respect of the adopted RLDP policy framework, but it cannot introduce new policies or change the policies in the adopted RLDP. Furthermore, there is considered to be sufficient flexibility embedded into Policy ENT7 and other retail and commercial policies contained within the RLDP. Policy ENT7 does not relate to out of town retail provision such as Bridgend Designer Outlet Centre.
Do you have any comments on the proposed guidance for Policy ENT9: Retail Development Outside of Retailing and Commercial Centres detailed in Section 4	
Organisation	BCBC Elected Member
Representation	I request that, where a commercial premises such as a corner shop is located in a residential area, then any application to instal a parcel locker system adjacent to the premises should be subject to a planning condition which restricts its use to match the agreed permitted opening hours of the business in question. Such a condition would address problems of additional traffic generation and associated overnight noise and disturbance experiences by neighbours.

Local Planning Authority Response	Comments noted. Whilst it is beyond the scope of the policy and this SPG to include specific guidance on parcel locker systems, planning conditions can be attached to future planning consents to control the operating hours of parcel lockers in circumstances where it is deemed to be necessary and appropriate. This would ensure that the local planning authority would retain effective control over the hours of operation of the business in the interests of general amenity.
Resultant Action	No amendments necessary – this issue can be addressed at the planning application stage through the use of appropriate conditions.
Organisation	NTR Planning Ltd (on behalf of McArthurGlen)
Representation	Paragraph 4.56 identifies that retail development at the locations defined in Policy ENT9 will be restricted to bulky goods retailing. The paragraph should be amended to confirm that the Outlet Centre will not be restricted to bulky goods, as these, as I am sure you will be aware, are not the prevailing range of goods that are sold from the centre. We suggest that the reference to bulky goods sales be referenced specifically to the retail parks listed.
Local Planning Authority Response	Comments noted. As drafted, the current wording of paragraph 4.56 states that retail development at the locations defined in Policy ENT9 are restricted to bulky goods retailing of which is misleading. As such, further clarity will be made to paragraphs 4.56 and 4.61 to ensure that the acceptable uses on edge-of-centre and out-of-centre allocations are clearly outlined.
Resultant Action	Paragraphs 4.56 and 4.61 will be amended to clarify the permitted uses on edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail and commercial allocations.
Organisation	NTR Planning Ltd (on behalf of McArthurGlen)
Representation	We are supportive of paragraph 4.62, which sets out support for ancillary/incidental A3 uses at out of centre retail destinations. We would however suggest that the reference to '200 sqm' be amended to read 'in the region of' 200 square metres so to be less prescriptive. Given that every planning application is considered on its own merits it is not considered appropriate (or necessary) for the Council to impose a specified floorspace limit, as this may act as a moratorium to certain

	development, even if the applicant was able to demonstrate compliance with the impact and sequential tests. The guidance set out in 4.64 on critical mass will likely assist in controlling total A3 provision in any of the identified out of centre locations, were a further proposal to arise.
Local Planning Authority Response	Support for paragraph 4.62 is noted. The representor's suggestion to amend paragraph 4.62, specifically requesting a change in wording from '200sqm' to 'in the region of 200sqm' is acknowledged. Furthermore, the purpose of the SPG is to augment and interpret existing adopted RLDP policies. As such, removal of a specific floorspace figure is considered appropriate in this instance, and any proposed ancillary and incidental use on an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre allocation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis regarding its appropriateness.
Resultant Action	Paragraph 4.62 will be amended to be less prescriptive regarding the size of ancillary/incidental uses at edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail allocations, making it clear that each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Organisation	NTR Planning Ltd (on behalf of McArthurGlen)
Representation	We are supportive of paragraph 4.63 and 4.64, which relate to D2 uses.
Local Planning Authority Response	Noted.
Resultant Action	No amendments necessary.
Organisation	NTR Planning Ltd (on behalf of McArthurGlen)
Representation	What is important, and what we consider is missing from this section of the draft SPG, is reference to other appropriate commercial uses that would also be considered small-scale/ancillary and incidental to the primary retail function of the out of centre destination listed. Examples would include A2 (Financial and professional services) uses, e.g. a bank, and D1 (Non-residential institutions) uses, e.g. a crèche. Such uses are provided in smaller units than those typically provided in the retail warehouse parks identified, so their inclusion in this section of the SPG might be more appropriate with specific reference to Bridgend Designer Outlet only.

	There is no reason why such uses should be considered differently to the A3 and D2 uses listed and there would be a clear synergy with the primary purpose served by the Outlet Centre with those additional Use Classes identified above and when taking into account the critical mass point. In this regard, we are mindful that the Council has supported the provision of a bureau de change unit (Use Class A2) at Bridgend Designer Outlet under planning permission ref. P/15/774/FUL. Here, it was identified in the officer's report that: <i>'The proposed installation of a kiosk to provide money exchange facilities will, it is considered, be ancillary to the main retail uses contained within the centre and therefore not significantly change the character of the centre.'</i>
Local Planning Authority Response	The representor's suggestion to reference additional examples that could also be considered small-scale/ancillary and incidental to the primary retail function of the edge-of-centre and out-of-centre allocations is acknowledged. The policy aim is to avoid 'out of centre' allocations becoming 'all round destinations' for customers with such a range and opportunity for retail and leisure experiences that they would negate the need to undertake any separate visit to existing retail, commercial and district centres. This would be considered out of accord with the 'Town Centre First' approach outlined in national planning policy. However, it is acknowledged that a limited number of appropriate uses can support or complement the primary retail function. Further detail will be included in the supporting text to clarify that uses that are ancillary and incidental (not exclusively those operating under Use Class A3) to the primary retail function of the wider site will be permitted where appropriate, while clarifying that each proposal will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

Resultant Action	Paragraph 4.62 will be amended to clarify that uses which are considered to be ancillary and incidental to the primary retail function of an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre retail allocation will be judged on a case-by-case basis to determine their appropriateness.
Do you have any comments on the proposed Sequential Test – Assessment Checklist for Applicants detailed in Appendix B?	
Organisation	NTR Planning Ltd (on behalf of McArthurGlen)
Representation	This section is helpful but perhaps lacking in detail. In undertaking any sequential test (where relevant) it is necessary to consider whether any alternative site is suitable for the broad nature of development proposed, as established by well documented case law. Whilst suitability is referenced in the 'Further information' part of the table, it is normal practice for an applicant to set out a methodology in undertaking an assessment. Whilst unit size is referenced in the table, there are other factors that would inform a judgement on the suitability of any alternative site as part of the applicant's methodology. These details could be incorporated or referenced in the draft SPG for clarity, or at least reference to the requirement of the test to be based on a sound methodology. For retail development, examples might include: 1. the ability of any alternative site to accommodate a specified minimum site size. 2. the ability of any alternative site to accommodate a store of a specified minimum gross floor area. 3. the ability of any alternative site to the safe manoeuvring of customer vehicles and delivery vehicles. 4. the ability of any alternative site to offer a viable trading environment. 5. the ability of any alternative site to be easily accessible by a choice of means of transport. 6. the ability of any alternative site to be able to provide suitable servicing arrangements to enable deliveries. Clearly, each case would be considered differently based on the requirements of the proposal under consideration.

	We consider that the appendix be expanded to include reference to 'methodology' and expand on matters relating to 'suitability' on a 'case-by-case basis', with reference to 'established case law'.
Local Planning Authority Response	Support for the sequential test assessment checklist for applicants is noted. The sequential test assessment checklist provides guidance to prospective applicants, clarifying the necessary information to support a planning application for a proposal on an edge-of-centre or out-of-centre allocation, that should in the first instance be located within a designated centre as per the retailing, commercial and services hierarchy outlined by Policy SP12 of the RLDP. The representor recommends adding further detail, specifically making reference to the requirement of the test to be based on a 'sound methodology'. The representor also suggests introducing several additional factors to expand upon the suitability criteria of any alternative site. Whilst this is acknowledged, the inclusion of such criteria is considered too prescriptive and would vary based upon the nature of the proposed use. However, in the interests of providing further detail, the appendix will be amended to make reference to the requirement for all assessments to be based on a sound methodology.
Resultant Action	Appendix B – Sequential Test Assessment Checklist for Applicants will be updated to include a reference to the requirement that the test be based on a sound methodology in relation to the suitability of alternative sites.

Proposed SPG Changes as a Result of the Consultation

The paragraphs proposed for amendment following the consultation are detailed below, for the reasons explained in the previous table. Strikethrough text is used to indicate proposed deletions from the SPG, whereas blue text is used to indicate proposed additions to the SPG. Only paragraphs proposed for amendment are included below, there are no proposed changes to the remainder of the draft SPG following consultation. The final draft version of the SPG (Appendix 1) incorporates the proposed amendments below.

- 4.56 **Whilst Proposals for new out-of-centre retail will not be encouraged, Policy ENT9 acknowledges the presence of existing retail developments outside of Town, District and Local centres.** Retail development at these locations defined in Policy ENT9 will be restricted to ~~bulky goods retailing~~ **the acceptable uses outlined in the table above**, by means of appropriate planning conditions and/or legal agreements. ~~Policy ENT9 respects the specific role and function of sites at these locations, which can provide a complementary role to town and district Centres by providing opportunities for large format, bulky goods retailing that does not compete with 'in-Centre' trading.~~ Extensions within the boundaries of these locations, increases to the allocated floorspace or relaxations/changes to the types of goods sold, may require a needs test, sequential test and retail impact assessment, as detailed within National Policy (TAN4: Retail and Commercial Development / PPW), depending on the nature of the proposal and the potential impacts. This will also apply to planning applications which seek to vary conditions to change the types of goods sold from sites at these locations or the subdivision of units, both of which could potentially undermine the vitality and viability of town and district Centres if not properly controlled.
- 4.61 As highlighted above, development within allocated '*edge of centre*' and '*out of centre*' locations will be restricted to ~~the sale of predominantly bulky goods, and/or other goods~~ **specific goods** that would not typically be sold from premises within a Centre. The tests of '*retail need*', 'Sequential' approach and impact will apply to the consideration of **all development proposals** at '*edge of centre*' and '*out of centre*' locations.
- 4.62 Proposals for **ancillary and incidental uses such as Use Class A3 (food and drink)** floorspace within designated 'out of centre' locations will be restricted to small scale provision that ~~is ancillary and incidental to~~ **supports** the primary retail function of the wider site, or comprises a facility that due to its operational and functional requirements cannot reasonably be accommodated within a Centre. **Proposals for ancillary and incidental uses will be judged on a case-by-case basis and will not be permitted if judged to give rise to a critical mass.** ~~'Small scale', for the purposes of this policy refers to a facility less than 200 sqm gross floor area.~~

Appendix B: Sequential Test – Assessment Checklist for Applicants

Sequential Assessment	Further Information
1. Description of the proposed use	
2. The size of the unit	Whether existing or proposed
3. The area covered by the sequential search	
4. Justification for the area search	If it is less than Borough-wide or limited to particular types of centres
5. The types of units searched for	
6. Justification for any limitations applied to the types of units considered	
7. A list of the alternative, available, sequentially preferable units identified	• This list should set out the address and size of the unit and if it is suitable or not. The suitability of a unit should be based on a sound methodology and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. • If a unit is unsuitable, full justification and evidence should be provided alongside the listing. • A conclusion as to whether the Sequential Test is met, looking at both the availability and suitability of those sites to accommodate the proposal. • If the Sequential Test is not met, an explanation of any overriding material considerations that would justify the grant of planning permission.

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	INFORMATION REPORTS FOR NOTING
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	OSCAR ROBERTS – DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - COMMITTEES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To inform Council of two Information Reports for noting.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of Information Reports for noting that have been published since its last scheduled meeting.

2. Background

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

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Information Reports

The following Information Reports have been published since the last meeting of Council:-

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date Published</u>
Annual Report of the Standards Committee	17/09/2025
Urgent Delegated Decisions	17/09/2025

3.2 Availability of Documents

The documents have been circulated to Elected Members electronically via email and placed on the Bridgend County Borough Council website. The documents are available from the date of publication above.

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 and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications in relation to 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 with regard to this report.

9. Recommendation

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

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER, LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	RACHEL KEEPINS DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules
Executive Summary:	The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires the Democratic Services Committee (DSC) to make a report at least annually to the Council covering the following areas: • The Membership of the DSC • Dates of meetings of the DSC • DSC Terms of Reference • Activities of the DSC for the period May 2024 to May 2025 • The Structure of the Democratic Services Team covering May 2024 to May 2025

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Council with the Democratic Services Committee's Annual Report for the period May 2024 to May 2025 for noting. The report outlines the work of the Committee during that period.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 requires each council to establish a Democratic Services Committee. The Measure prescribes the functions of the committee and requires the committee to make a report at least annually to the Council.
- 2.2 The Democratic Services Committee cannot discharge any other functions or perform any dual role.
- 2.3 During last year's consideration of the Committee's Annual Report the following proposals were made:

- That details of the Committee's attendance at Democratic Services Committee meetings be added to the report at paragraph 3.3;
- That any further detail be provided as to the meetings of the Sub-Committee to deal with Member Family Absence at paragraph 3.6;
- That an indication of hours, whether full time or part time be provided for the Democratic Services staff listed in the report.

2.4 The Democratic Services Committee approved their Annual Report at its meeting on 26 June 2025.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Councillor Tim Thomas was elected Chair of the Democratic Services Committee at the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2024.

3.2 The Committee is serviced by the Democratic Services Manager. The role also has the responsibility of being the Head of Democratic Services.

Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

3.3 The Membership and attendance details for the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2024 to May 2025 is as follows:

Councillor	13 June 2024	21 November 2024
Cllr Tim Thomas (Chair)	Present	Present
Cllr Sean Aspey	Not Present	Not present
Cllr Paula Ford	Present	Apologies
Cllr Richard Granville	Present	Present
Cllr David Harrison	Not Present	Not present
Cllr Martin Hughes	Present	Present
Cllr Malcolm James	Apologies	Present
Cllr Heidi Bennett	Present	Present
Cllr Ian Spiller	Present	Present
Cllr Graham Walter	Present	Present
Cllr Elaine Winstanley	Present	Present

Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference

3.4 The remit of the Democratic Services Committee is set out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and is:

- Designate an officer as the Head of Democratic Services;
- Review the adequacy of provision by the Authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions;
- Make reports and recommendations to the Authority in relation to such provision;

- At the request of the Authority review any matter relevant to the support and advice available to members of the Council, and the terms and conditions of office of those members.

3.5 There is also a Sub-Committee of the Democratic Services Committee which consists of a Panel to deal with Member family absence under the Family Absence for Members of Local Authorities (Wales) Regulations 2013. The Panel's Terms of Reference are set out below:

- a) Determine a complaint made by a Member regarding cancellation of family absence by the authority;
- b) The Sub-Committee may confirm a decision made or substitute its own decision as to the Member's entitlement to a period of family absence in accordance with the 2013 Regulations;
- c) Determine a complaint made by a Member on maternity absence or parental absence regarding a decision made by the chair of the authority as to the Member attending any meeting or performing any duty;
- d) The Sub-Committee may confirm the decision of the chair of the authority or substitute its own decision as to the Member attending any meeting or performing any duty;
- e) The decision of the Sub-Committee is final.

Member Development - On the subject of Member Development, regular updates have been received by the Committee who have provided valuable comments and suggestions. These include requests for additional information on the Cardiff Capital Region and the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (SEWCJC), which the Democratic Services Manager is in the process of arranging with the Monitoring Officer for the Cardiff Capital Region. It also included a request for Media training for all Members which took place on 26 June 2025. A survey has also been undertaken with Members, the results of which are helping to inform the future Member Development Programme. More frequent reminders as well as drop-in sessions for Member e-learning modules have also been undertaken in the hope of getting more Members through their mandatory modules. Despite these efforts, only 28 Members had completed their modules, and only 38 had accessed the system to commence them at the time the Annual Report was presented to the Democratic Services Committee for approval on 24 June 2025. Additional training sessions have also been undertaken at the request of this Committee on the Mod.Gov App in readiness for it to go live for voting in future meetings.

3.6 **Research Support and Services Protocol** - At its meeting in November 2024 the Committee considered a report and initial assessment to evaluate the existing research support provided to Councillors with the aim of developing a Research protocol for Elected Members. Members provided detailed comments and suggestions which have been considered in the drafting of the final protocol.

3.7 **Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2025/26** – the Committee considered the draft Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) Draft Annual Report 2025/26 and provided the following response back to the Panel:

- The Committee queried why there is no remuneration for Members that sit on the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) or Public Services Board (PSB), yet Members get remunerated for sitting on the Fire and Rescue Authority. Members also raised the point that generally female orientated roles (such as anything related to Social Services, for example the Regional Partnership Board) generally receive less remuneration which is creating a gender pay gap for Members. The Committee requested that these aspects be considered by the Panel as Members on both the RPB and PSB do a considerable amount of work.
- Members highlighted that the IRP Annual Report refers to the work of a Cllr based on assessment of a 3 day week, however this was assessed in 2021. The Committee proposed that this might be worth revisiting.
- Members asked for more guidance on the remuneration for Members in job share roles.

In addition to this, the Committee made the following comments:

- The makeup of the existing Panel does not reflect diversity. Members would like due regard and understanding that we live in a diverse community.
- Members highlighted that there was insufficient information on the IRPW website, in that it was a basic website and supplementary information should be readily available.
- Members requested further information and detail as to how the new Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru will exercise the functions of the Panel moving forward.

A letter from the Chair of the Democratic Services Committee was also sent to the Chair of the Panel thanking them for all their work.

Democratic Services Team for the period May 2024 to May 2025

3.8 During 2024/25, the Democratic Services Team underwent a restructure in order to make the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy savings for both 2024/25 and 2025/26. This led to the removal from the structure of the full time Chauffeur position, the part-time Democratic Services Officer – Committees and a permanent reduction of hours for certain Members of staff. The current structure for the Democratic Services Team is therefore set out below:

- Democratic Services Manager (with the statutory post of Head of Democratic Services) (Full time)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Committees (Part-time – Flexible retirement 22.2 hours)
- Democratic Services – Technical Support Officer (Full time)
- Democratic Services Officer – Committees (Full Time)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Scrutiny (Full time)
- Scrutiny Officer (Full time)
- Scrutiny Officer (Part-time – 30 hours)
- Senior Democratic Services Officer – Support (Full time)
- Democratic Services Assistant (Full time)
- Democratic Services Officer – Support (Full time)

- Democratic Services Officer – Leadership, Members and Mayoral (Full time)
- Business Administrative Apprentice (Full time)

3.9 The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 places the responsibility on the Authority itself to ensure that the Head of Democratic Services (HDS) is provided with sufficient staff, accommodation and other resources as are, in the Council's opinion, sufficient to allow the HDS's functions to be discharged. The Democratic Services team have worked tirelessly to ensure that all of the expected outcomes have been achieved despite the restructure and reduction in staff required to find savings as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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 is no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

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

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

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

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. There are no specific costs associated with the running of this Committee other than those involved in the cost of administration of this and other Council functions within the democratic process.

9. Recommendation

9.1 To receive and note the Democratic Services Committee Annual Report for the period May 2024 to May 2025.

Background documents

None

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	MONITORING OFFICER
Responsible Officer:	LAURA GRIFFITHS GROUP MANAGER LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	As soon as possible after the end of each financial year, the Standards Committee must make an Annual Report to the Council.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for Council to note the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2024/25.

2. Background

- 2.1 In accordance with the Constitution, the Committee must prepare an Annual Report to include:
- a description of how the Committee has discharged its functions;
 - a summary of any reports and recommendations that were referred to the Standards Committee under Chapter 3 of Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000;
 - a summary of the actions that the Committee has taken following consideration of the reports and recommendations referred to above;
 - a summary of any notices that were given to the Standards Committee under Chapter 4 of Part 4 of the Local Government Act 2000;
 - the Committee's assessment of the extent to which leaders of political groups on the Council have complied with their duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members of their group and to cooperate with the Committee in the exercise of its functions;
 - any recommendations which the Committee considers it appropriate to make to the Council about any matters which falls within the Committee's functions.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The Annual Report for the Standards Committee for 2024/25 is attached as **Appendix 1**.

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

- 4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, 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. This report also assists in the achievement of the following well-being objective under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:-

A county borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community.

- 5.2 Standards are an implicit requirement in the successful implementation of the corporate well-being objectives.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There are no climate change implications.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications.

8. Financial Implications

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

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council note the report.

Background documents:

None

Standards Committee Annual Report – 2024/25

Membership

The Standards Committee is made up of Independent Members, one Town and Community Council representative and two County Borough Councillors. These are:

Independent Members:

Sue Maughan (Chair)

Peter Baker

Roy Lynch

Phillip Clarke (term of office expired February 2025)

Borough Councillors:

Cllr Martin Williams

Cllr Graham Walter

Town and Community Council representative:

Cllr Gavin Thomas

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

This is the Annual Report of the Standards Committee for the period 1st March 2024 to 31 March 2025. The Committee seeks to promote and maintain high standards of conduct across the Council. Under Section 63 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the Committee must make an annual report to the Authority describing how the Committee's functions have been discharged during the financial year.

The Roles of the Standards Committee

The role and functions of the Committee are set out within Section 8 of the Council's Constitution. This covers such matters as:

- Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-opted Members
- Monitoring the Council's Whistleblowing Policy
- Considering reports submitted by the Monitoring Officer and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- Monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct
- Granting dispensations in accordance with the Regulations
- Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups on the Council with their duties to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the members of the group.

The Standards Committee generally meets quarterly throughout the year.

Recruitment

On 20 July 2022, Council approved that the membership of the Committee be increased to eight Members and an additional Independent Member (co-opted) be appointed to the Committee. At the time of this Report, there are currently two vacancies on the Committee following the resignation of Mr Shawn Cullen, Independent Member and the term of office ceasing for Mr Phillip Clarke, Independent Member. The Monitoring Officer has been given

approval to commence a new recruitment process for the appointment of two Independent Members to the Committee.

Work of the Committee

The work of the Committee during 2024/25 has continued to centre on the following main areas:

Maintaining high standards

The Council has ensured that Members have been trained to understand:

- Members' Code of Conduct
- Importance of the Register of Member Interests. The declaration of interest forms are published on the Council's website
- The Investigation of Complaints and a local hearing procedure

Monitoring compliance by leaders of political groups

The provisions in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 build on this by supporting a culture where members have a responsibility to act in a manner which respects and values all people. A duty under the Act is placed on the leaders of political groups to take steps to promote and maintain high standards of conduct of their members. Under the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 a political group is constituted where the Proper Officer is notified of two or more members who wish to be treated as a political group, the name of the group and the name of the one member of the group who is to act as its leader. At the Annual Meeting in May 2024, the Proper Officer was informed in writing of the following political groups and leaders:

- Labour – Group Leader: Cllr John Spanswick, Leader of the Council
- Bridgend County Independents – Leader of Largest Opposition Group: Cllr Amanda Williams
- Democratic Alliance Group – Group Leader: Cllr Ross Penhale-Thomas

The three group leaders were invited to the meeting of the Committee on 11 July 2024 to present reports outlining their compliance and support with the new duties including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and relevant information.

Looking ahead, a report will be prepared and submitted to the Committee annually from each individual Group including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and other relevant information. The reports will be shared with the Monitoring Officer prior to being submitted to the Committee and individual Group Leaders will be invited to attend the Committee when their reports are being considered.

Code of Conduct Complaints

The Standards Committee determined on 7 May 2024 that a Former Member of Bridgend Town Council had failed to comply with the following paragraphs of the Code:

4(b) –Members must show respect and consideration for others

6 (1) (a) – The Member must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or authority into disrepute.

The Committee resolved that the Former Member should be censured in relation to the above breaches of the Code, which was the maximum sanction available to the Committee, as the Member was no longer an Elected Member. This is in accordance with their powers under s 9(1)(c) of the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Former Member and the PSOW were notified of the Committee's decision by Notice of Determination and the Former Member did not appeal the decision.

The Standards Committee determined on 9 May 2024 that a Member of Bridgend Town Council had failed to comply with the following paragraphs of the Code:

6(1)(a) – Members must not conduct themselves in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing their office or authority into disrepute;

(7a) – Members must not in their official capacity or otherwise, use or attempt to use their position improperly to confer on or secure for themselves, or any other person, an advantage or create or avoid for themselves, or any other person, a disadvantage;

11(1) - Where Members have a personal interest in any business of their authority and they attend a meeting at which that business is considered, they must disclose orally to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest before or at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent;

14(1)(a) - Where Members have a prejudicial interest in any business of their authority they must, unless they have obtained a dispensation from their authority's standards committee withdraw from the room, chamber or place where a meeting considering the business is being held;

14(1)(c) - Where Members have a prejudicial interest in any business of their authority they must, unless they have obtained a dispensation from their authority's standards committee not seek to influence a decision about that business;

14(1)(e) - Where Members have a prejudicial interest in any business of their authority they must, unless they have obtained a dispensation from their authority's standards committee not make any oral representations (whether in person or some form of electronic communication) in respect of that business or immediately cease to make such oral representations when the prejudicial interest becomes apparent.

The Committee resolved that the Member should receive a sanction of 6 months suspension. This is in accordance with their powers under the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Member was granted permission to appeal the decision of the Committee to the Adjudication Panel for Wales (APW). On 5 June 2024, the President of the APW issued a decision which allowed the appeal to proceed on a limited ground of appeal in relation to sanction only. The APW determined on 5 December 2024 to refer the matter back to the Standards Committee with a recommendation that the Member should be suspended for 10 weeks pursuant to the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. On 6 February 2025, the Standards Committee upheld its original decision of a six-month suspension. The decision and reasons for the decision were confirmed in writing to the Member, PSOW and the APW.

The Standards Committee determined on 21 June 2024 that a Member of Porthcawl Town Council had failed to comply with the following paragraphs of the Code:

4(b) – show respect and consideration to others

4(c) – not use bullying behaviour or harass any person

6 (1)(a) – not conduct yourself in a matter which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office into disrepute

6(2) – comply with any request of your authority's Monitoring Officer, or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, in connection with an investigation conducted in accordance with their respective statutory powers.

The Committee resolved that the Member should receive a sanction of 2 months suspension. This is in accordance with their powers under the Local Government Investigations (Functions of Monitoring Officers and Standards Committees) (Wales) Regulations 2001. The Former Member and the PSOW were notified of the Committee's decision by Notice of Determination and the Former Member did not appeal the decision.

There is one ongoing 'live' case which has been issued by the PSOW under Section 69 of the Local Government Act 2000 at the time of this report.

The PSOW received 11 Town and Community Council Code of Conduct Complaints for 2024/25. At the time of this report, a breakdown of those complaints is not available but will be published as part of the PSOW Annual Letter in September.

Local Resolution Process

The Standards Committee notes that the Local Resolution Protocol adopted by the Council continues to provide a helpful process for resolving relatively 'low-level' behavioural complaints made by County Borough Members about other Members, in a timely and proportionate way.

Dispensations

The Standards Committee has statutory power to grant dispensations to Members with a personal and prejudicial interest in a matter, to allow them to participate in a decision regarding that matter, in appropriate circumstances, which are set out in statutory regulations.

No individual dispensations were granted to Members of the Council to allow them to speak and vote on any matter before the Council and / or Committee. However, the general dispensation is always kept under review.

Other Activities

In addition to the above activities the Standards Committee also:

- Received and noted the Ombudsman's Annual Report for 2023-24;
- Received and investigated three s69 reports from the Ombudsman;
- Received and considered the recommendations following the Independent Review of the Ethical Standards Framework (Richard Penn, report author);
- Received a report regarding the Standards Committee Hearing Process;
- Noted update reports following observations of Town and Community Council meetings;
- Received and noted the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Investigation Report into Codes of Conduct Complaints published in September 2024;

- Received reports from the Group Leaders outlining their compliance and support with their new duties including details of attendance at mandatory training sessions, complaints and relevant information.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead, much of the work of the Committee is demand led.

- The Committee will identify and support provision of regular training and refresher events for Elected Members of the Council;
- Observation of Council and Committee Meetings – the Standards Committee will continue to observe proceedings at Town and Community Council, Council and Committee meetings to give feedback on observations and inform its work priorities;
- Meetings with Group Leaders - to facilitate ongoing engagement with representatives from all political groups and to identify how the approach code of conduct matters in their political group;
- Code of Conduct, Member Training and Development – the Standards Committee will consider the need for any further training on the Members' Code of Conduct focussing on Town and Community Councils;
- To review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

The Agenda and Minutes of the Standards Committee, together with all Reports considered at meetings are published online.

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Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	24 SEPTEMBER 2025
Report Title:	URGENT DELEGATED DECISIONS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CHIEF OFFICER – LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES, HR AND CORPORATE POLICY
Responsible Officer:	MARK GALVIN – SENIOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER - COMMITTEES
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	To report to Council Delegated Power decisions executed under the Scheme of Delegations, as a matter of urgency.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to report to Council delegated decisions executed as a matter of urgency under Scheme A of the Scheme of Delegation of Functions.

2. Background

- 2.1 Delegated decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to Council in accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules which are to be found within the Constitution.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 The urgent decisions taken and therefore by-passing the call-in procedure (as set out within the relevant provision of the Constitution), are summarised below:-

Scheme A 1.1

CMM-ED-25-098 – SEWSCAP Framework Agreement – Works contract for construction of units at Village Farm Industrial Estate, Pyle.

EEYYP-EDSU-25-085 – Award of contract for Bridgend West School Modernisation Scheme.

CMM-PRU-25-72 – Works contract for the refurbishment of the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl

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 and Nature Implications

- 6.1 There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications in relation to 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 with regard to this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Background documents

None