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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: Democratic Services

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 17 September 2026

Dear Councillor,

COUNCIL

A meeting of the Council will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams on **Wednesday, 23 September 2026** at **16:00**.

AGENDA

1 Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence from Members.

2 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest from Members/Officers in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.

3 Approval of Minutes — 7 - 12

To receive for approval the minutes of 22/07/2026

4 To receive announcements from:

(i) Mayor (or person presiding)
(ii) Chief Executive

5 To receive announcements by the Leader

1. **Councillor HJ David to the Cabinet Member Education and Young People**

Working with local schools will the Council fund and install lifesaving defibrillators at every school site that is not already equipped, across the County Borough?

Having access to defibrillators in schools drastically increases the chance of pupils, teachers and visitors surviving a cardiac arrest. Research shows that when a defibrillator is accessed within 3-5 minutes of a cardiac event, this can increase the chance of survival to hospital discharge from 9% to 50%.

Schools are at the heart of our communities, and by expanding access to defibrillators across all school sites we can help improve local coverage and give people extra reassurance that this vital equipment is closer at hand if it is ever needed. Where appropriate, the defibrillators can also be made available to the wider community 24 hours a day, seven days a week, helping to improve public access to emergency equipment.

By working with partners including the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust, as well as charity and community organisations, to support the installation, registration, maintenance and monitoring of the devices the council could make sure the equipment is not only in place, but also properly maintained, easy to locate and ready to use when needed.

Raising awareness, more training, encouraging wider understanding of CPR and how defibrillators can be used safely and effectively in an emergency will also help save lives.

2. **Councillor M Williams to the Cabinet Member Regeneration and Housing**

Is it this Council's policy to deliberately minimise parking provision in new developments to make bus routes more commercially attractive for operators?

3. **Councillor O Clatworthy to the Leader**

In June I wrote to you urging Bridgend Council to reject the UK Labour Government’s plans to expand ‘safe and legal’ refugee routes into our area.

Given the ongoing housing crisis, rising homelessness, and pressure on local services, has the Council taken any formal steps to oppose these schemes and prioritise housing and resources for local Bridgend residents first?

Will you commit to putting British families and contributors ahead of resettling more people from abroad?

4. Councillor M Hughes to the Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member Social Services, Health and Wellbeing

Council has rightly welcomed the recent positive assessment of Children's Social Care, reflecting the hard work of staff and partners. Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the current performance of Adult Social Care?

Specifically, how is the service performing against key indicators such as waiting times, assessment backlogs, hospital discharge, workforce recruitment and retention, and overall financial sustainability?

5. Councillor S Bletsoe to the Cabinet Member Education and Young People

Could the relevant Cabinet Member please provide me with the Capital Investment provided over the last 3 years and planned for the upcoming 3 years into existing School Buildings in Bridgend County Borough to support the delivery of "Universal provision of free school meals" (UPFSM).

11 Notice of Motion Proposed by:

1. Proposed by Councillor J Gebbie

This Council recognises the important role that Health Visitors play in supporting babies, children and families, and notes the ongoing dispute involving Health Visitors represented by Unite the Union.

Health Visiting is a vital preventative public health service. Health Visitors play a crucial role in early intervention, identifying health and developmental needs, supporting parents and families, safeguarding children, and helping to reduce health inequalities.

This Council is concerned about the potential impact that the ongoing dispute, together with wider workforce pressures, may be having on the delivery of Health Visiting services across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area, which covers Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

Information obtained through a Freedom of Information request indicates a significant change in the recorded delivery of Healthy Child Wales Programme contacts. In March, April, and May 2025, 6,140 Healthy Child Wales contacts were completed. In the corresponding three months of 2026, the number of contacts recorded as completed by Band 6 Health Visitors was 909, against 23,592 contacts identified as due during that period.

The Council recognises that a range of factors may contribute to this position and does not seek to attribute causation without the full evidence. However, the scale of the gap highlights the importance of understanding how Health Visiting functions are currently being delivered, and how any unmet need is being identified and addressed.

The potential consequences of reduced Health Visiting provision are significant. Health Visiting forms an important part of the preventative health and social care system and contributes to:

- the early identification of health and developmental needs;
- safeguarding and the protection of children;

- prevention and early intervention;
- support for parents and families;
- tackling health inequalities; and
- effective partnership working between Health Visiting services, local authority social services and other agencies supporting children and families.

This Council recognises that public services across Wales continue to face significant workforce and financial pressures. It also recognises the challenges that can arise when capacity issues affect the ability of organisations to deliver essential services and statutory functions.

When Bridgend County Borough Council experienced significant workforce challenges within Children's Services, additional support and resources were put in place to help maintain service delivery and protect outcomes for children and families. This Council believes that the same principle should apply where concerns arise regarding the capacity of other essential public services.

Children and families should not be adversely affected by unresolved workforce issues or capacity pressures within key frontline services.
This Council therefore:

1. Recognises the contribution made by Health Visitors across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area and supports efforts to secure a fair and sustainable resolution to the ongoing dispute.
2. Notes with concern the reported gap between Healthy Child Wales Programme contacts identified as due and those recorded as completed by Band 6 Health Visitors.
3. Calls upon Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to provide assurance to Bridgend County Borough Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council regarding how Health Visiting functions are currently being discharged across the three local authority areas.
4. Requests that the Health Board sets out how children and families who may not have received scheduled Health Visiting contacts are being identified, assessed and followed up, and how any resulting unmet need is being addressed.
5. Calls upon the Chief Executive of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to continue efforts to resolve the dispute and to ensure that sufficient workforce capacity is available to support the effective delivery of Health Visiting services.
6. Calls upon the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care to work with the Health Board and other relevant partners in support of a timely resolution to the dispute and the long-term sustainability of Health Visiting services.
7. Encourages continued engagement between Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and the three local authorities to understand and address any impact on safeguarding, early intervention, social care demand and health inequalities.
8. Requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care and the Chief Executive of Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board setting out the Council's concerns and seeking a response on the actions being taken to support and sustain Health Visiting provision.

This Council believes that Health Visiting is a fundamental part of the preventative public health system. Where concerns arise regarding service capacity and delivery, it is essential that partner organisations work together to protect services, support the workforce and ensure that children, families and communities receive the support they need.

2. **Proposed by Councillor M Jones**

Reopening of the Garw Valley Cycle Path

Council notes:

1. The Garw Valley Cycle Path is a significant active travel and recreational route linking Bryngarw Country Park with Parc Calon, a popular visitor destination located at the foot of Mynydd Carn in Blaengarw.

2. The route passes through the communities of Llangeinor, Llwst, Pontyrhyl, Pontycymmer and Blaengarw, providing residents and visitors with access to the valley's natural environment, heritage, leisure facilities and tourism attractions.

3. The path follows the former railway corridor that historically served the Garw Valley coalfield and has, for many years, provided permitted public access for walking, cycling and other recreational activities.

4. Parc Calon and the wider Garw Valley attract visitors from across Bridgend County Borough and beyond, contributing to community wellbeing, sustainable tourism, local economic activity and active travel opportunities.

5. The section of route between Llangeinor and Pontycymmer, approximately 2.5 kilometres in length, remains closed by Network Rail due to concerns regarding the condition of bridges, structures and sections of the route requiring investment and remedial works.

6. The continued closure has severed a key strategic route within the valley, restricting access for residents, reducing opportunities for active travel and impacting the visitor economy.

7. Discussions between relevant stakeholders have identified that no single organisation can deliver the necessary works independently and that a collaborative funding and delivery solution is required.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Formally call upon the UK Government, Welsh Government, The Crown Estate and Network Rail to establish a joint partnership with Bridgend County Borough Council to secure the reopening of the Garw Valley Cycle Path as a matter of priority.
2. Request that Network Rail publish a detailed assessment of the works required, including estimated costs, timescales and delivery options, to enable meaningful funding discussions and project planning.
3. Seek the creation of a multi-agency funding package to meet the costs of remediation, restoration and future maintenance of the route, recognising its value as an active travel, tourism and community asset.
4. Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, the Chief Executive of Network Rail and the Chief

Executive of The Crown Estate requesting their direct engagement in securing a long-term solution.

5. Request that a progress report be brought back to Council within six months outlining discussions undertaken, funding opportunities identified and a proposed pathway towards reopening the route.
6. Reaffirm this Council's commitment to protecting and enhancing active travel infrastructure, public access routes and tourism assets across Bridgend County Borough.
7. Council further believes that the reopening of the Garw Valley Cycle Path would deliver substantial benefits for public health, sustainable transport, community connectivity, environmental wellbeing and the local economy, and should therefore be treated as a strategic priority for all relevant partners.

12 Urgent Items

To consider any items of business that by reason of special circumstances the chairperson is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with the Procedure Rules set out in the Constitution.

Note: This will be a remote meeting via Microsoft Teams. The meeting will be Live streamed for subsequent transmission via the Council's internet site which will be available as soon as practicable after the meeting. If you would like to view this meeting live, please contact cabinet_committee@bridgend.gov.uk or tel. 01656 643148 / 643694 / 643513 / 643159.

Yours faithfully
K Watson
Chief Officer Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services

Councillors:
All Members

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD REMOTELY - VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON WEDNESDAY, 22 JULY 2026 AT 16:00

Present

Councillor H Bennett – Chairperson

JPD Blundell	A R Berrow	F D Bletsoe	S J Bletsoe
C Davies	E L P Caparros	O Clatworthy	RJ Collins
M J Evans	C L C Davies	P Davies	S Easterbrook
W R Goode	N Farr	P Ford	J Gebbie
GC Haines	RM Granville	H Griffiths	S J Griffiths
P W Jenkins	M L Hughes	D M Hughes	RM James
RL Penhale-Thomas	W J Kendall	M Lewis	J Llewellyn-Hopkins
I M Spiller	J E Pratt	R J Smith	JC Spanswick
AJ Williams	T Thomas	G Walter	A Wathan
R Williams	HM Williams	I Williams	MJ Williams
	T Wood		

Officers:

Stephen Griffiths	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Laura Griffiths	Group Manager Legal, Democratic Services & Emergency Planning
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director - Education, Early Years & Young People
Rachel Keepins	Democratic Services Manager
Christopher Lewis	Project Manager - School Modernisation
Carys Lord	Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation
Claire Marchant	Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Jake Morgan	Chief Executive
Janine Nightingale	Corporate Director - Communities
Michael Pitman	Technical Support Officer – Democratic Services
Anya Richards	Group Manager - Communications and Public Affairs
Oscar Roberts	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Gaynor Thomas	School Programme Manager
Kelly Watson	Chief Officer - Legal, Regulatory and Electoral Services

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

297. Apologies for absence

Decision Made	Cllr Alex Williams Cllr Jeff Tildsley Cllr David Harrison Cllr Norah Clarke
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

298. Declarations of Interest

Decision Made	Cllr Heather Griffiths declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 Cllr William Kendall declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 Cllr Steven Easterbrook declared a prejudicial Interest in Agenda Item 11 Cllr Tim Wood declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 11
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

299. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 24/06/2026 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

300. To receive announcements from:

Decision Made	Announcements were received by the Mayor and the Chief Executive.

Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

301. To receive announcements by the Leader

Decision Made	Announcements were received by the Leader.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

302. Presentation to Council by the Director of Cardiff Capital Region

Decision Made	The Cardiff Capital Region Director provided a presentation to Council, which outlined key functions of the regional public body and the work that had been undertaken to date. Questions were asked by Members and these were answered by the representatives of Cardiff Capital Region. RESOLVED: That Council noted the presentation as referred to at paragraph 3.1 of the report.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

303. Capital Programme Outturn 2025-26 and Quarter 1 Update 2026-27

Decision Made	The Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation presented a report which updated Members on the Capital Programme outturn position for 2025-26, the quarter 1 spend and projected spend for 2026-27 as at 30 June 2026, the revised capital programme for 2026-27 to 2035-36 and the projected Prudential and Other Indicators for 2026-27. She highlighted slippage of £2.011 million which related to land acquisition and a further £500,000 slippage for site and technical surveys at the new Heronsbridge School site.

	Members discussed the following points: • Concerns were raised regarding historical over optimism in Capital budget forecasting. • Welcomed £500,000 allocation for cemetery improvements and addressing drainage and pathway issues at Maesteg Cemetery. • Welcomed £1 million investment for new industrial units at Village Farm Industrial Estate • Welcomed Investment of £1.25 million for road safety/crossing schemes and £1.5 million for community impact funds. Questions were answered by the Corporate Director. RESOLVED: That Council noted and approved the Capital Programme Outturn for 2025-26 and the Quarter 1 update/variations for 2026-27 as presented in the report.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

304. Treasury Management Outturn Report 2025-26

Decision Made	The Corporate Director – Finance and Transformation presented a report which updated Members on the treasury management activities as well as performance, debt and investment for the year 2025-26. A Member asked how surplus cash reserves are managed and whether holding large investment balances restricts funding for viable invest to save proposals. The Corporate Director for Finance and Transformation explained that surplus daily cash is invested short term to ensure liquidity and balance risk, but can be recalled whenever viable invest to save proposals were approved. RESOLVED: That Council noted and approved the Treasury Management activities and outturn indicators for the 2025-26 financial year.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

305. Annual Report of the Standards Committee

Decision Made	The Monitoring Officer presented a report which updated Members on the Annual report of the Standards Committee. She explained that the report summarized Code of Conduct training as well as governance oversight, and complaints processed during the year. The Annual Report of the Standards Committee for 2025/26 was attached as Appendix 1 and was presented to the Committee for approval on 8 July 2026. The Leader expressed frustration over the length of the Public Services Ombudsman process, citing a specific case involving a Brackla Community Councillor who was censured but failed to complete mandated Code of Conduct training. Other Members echoed this point and hopes that the feedback from Members would be taken on board. RESOLVED: That Council received and noted the Annual Report of the Standards Committee.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

306. To receive the following Questions from:

Decision Made	Councillor Huw David received a response to his question. He asked a supplementary question at the meeting which was answered by the Cabinet Member Councillor Tim Thomas received a response to his question. He asked a supplementary question at the meeting which was answered by the Cabinet Member Councillor Ian Williams received a response to his question. He asked a supplementary question at the meeting which was answered by the Cabinet Member.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

307. Notice of Motion Proposed by:

Decision Made	Councillor Tim Thomas:

	It was agreed to defer his Motion until the next meeting, as there was currently a Public Space Protection Order consultation ongoing that related to the Motion. Councillor Freya Bletsoe: The motion was to Members. During the discussions there were two amendments proposed by Members Amendment by Councillor J Pratt Proposal: To explore and review the council's local discretionary rate relief policies in tandem with discussions with the Welsh Government. Amendment by the Leader Proposal: Expanded the scope of the motion's advocacy to write directly to the newly appointed Secretary of State for Wales alongside the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and Welsh Government ministers. Both amendments were accepted and the amended motion was passed without dissent.
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

308. Urgent Items

Decision Made	There were no urgent items
Date Decision Made	22 July 2026

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click this link

The meeting closed at 19:00

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Meeting of:	**COUNCIL**
Date of Meeting:	**23 SEPTEMBER 2026**
Report Title:	**SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2025 -26**
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	**CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING** **DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND WELLBEING**
Responsible Officer:	**DEBBIE MORGAN** **GROUP MANAGER, BUSINESS STRATEGY, PERFORMANCE & IMPROVEMENT**
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	**There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.**
Executive Summary:	**The Social Services Annual Report 2025-26 is a statutory requirement providing the Council, the people of Bridgend County Borough, regulators and partners with an overview of the effectiveness of the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate during the past year.** **The report reflects on 2025-26, highlighting achievements and challenges whilst outlining priorities for 2026-27. This is the second report prepared under the revised Welsh Government guidance, with performance assessed across the four themes of People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration, and Well-being.** **As well as the performance assessment section of the report, it includes a Director's Summary, information on leadership, workforce, resources, inspections and reviews, and complaints and representations. The report is informed by feedback from people who use services, helping to ensure that performance is evaluated through the experiences of those who access and deliver services.** **The report highlights key achievements during 2025-26, including workforce stability, positive service performance, strengthened early intervention and preventative support, increased local placement capacity for children, further development of community-based support for adults, and**

	continued improvements in safeguarding arrangements. It also identifies key risks and financial pressures, including increasing demand and complexity of need, workforce sustainability, placement sufficiency, and the long-term financial sustainability of social care services.

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Social Services Annual Report 2025-26 **(Appendix 1)** 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 to ensure local authorities report on and evaluate performance against the well-being outcomes of the Act. 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 In May 2024, Welsh Government and the Association of Directors of Social Services Cymru (ADSS Cymru) issued revised guidance for Social Services Annual Reports, https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2023-05/local-authority-social-services-annual-report-directors-report-guidance.pdf reflecting developments in social care since 2017, including the Performance and Improvement Framework and stakeholder feedback.

2.3 The 2025-26 Annual Report is the second report prepared under the revised guidance. It supports the Director of Social Services in meeting their statutory duty to report annually to Council on the effectiveness of social services within the local authority area and has been developed in accordance with the Performance and Improvement Framework.

2.4 The draft Annual Report was presented to the Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th September 2026. The Committee welcomed the report and recommended the Governance and Accountability section (page 11) provide greater clarity on the roles and processes of both the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was also recommended that reference be made to the Social Services, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Working Groups and their contribution to the scrutiny process. These recommendations have been incorporated, and the report has been updated accordingly.

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 As outlined in the annual report guidance the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) places a duty on local authorities to promote the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, through a person centered and preventative approach to service delivery.

3.2 The report guidance sets the structure and content of the report, including a Director's Summary, a performance assessment against the four themes, and information relating to leadership, workforce, resources, inspections, complaints, and priorities for improvement.

3.3 This report forms an integral part of the Performance and Improvement Framework evaluating performance against eight quality standards, organised under four key themes: People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration, and Well-being (table one**).**

Table One

Theme	**Quality Standards**
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.
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.
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.
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.

3.4 Performance against each standard is considered within the Performance Assessment section of the report. The standards provide the framework for Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to assess the quality and effectiveness of local authority social services. For each standard, the report outlines progress and achievements during 2025-26, identifies areas for further improvement, and sets out priorities for 2026-27.

3.5 The Director's Summary provides an overview of the Directorate's key achievements, risks and challenges, as well as overarching priorities and objectives for the year ahead.

3.5.1 Summary of Key Achievements in 2025-26:

- Improved workforce stability through a reduction in agency staffing and growth in permanent recruitment.
- Sustained strong service performance and positive regulatory outcomes across social care services.
- Strengthened early intervention and preventative support, contributing to a reduction in statutory interventions for children and families.
- Enhanced support for care experienced children and foster carers.
- Further developed preventative, integrated and community based support for adults.
- Strengthened safeguarding arrangements through continued development of integrated and multi-agency approaches, including excellent joint working with HMP Parc.
- Progressed service transformation, quality assurance and partnership working to support continuous improvement.

3.5.2 Summary of Key Risks:

- Sustaining workforce wellbeing, recruitment and retention.
- Rising demand and complexity across social care services continues to present challenges to the timely and effective delivery of safeguarding services.
- Sufficiency and stability of local care placements for children and young people.
- Increasing demand, particularly within Adult Social Care, without additional resources.
- Long-term financial sustainability in the context of growing demand and service pressures.

3.5.3 Summary of Overarching Priorities for 2026-27:

- Maintain a stable, skilled and supported workforce.
- Strengthen prevention and early intervention across all service areas.
- Increase local placement capacity and improve outcomes for care experienced children.
- Respond sustainably to increasing adult social care demand.

- Continue to embed safeguarding learning, strengthening protection for children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- Deliver digital transformation and improve service efficiency and effectiveness.
- Ensure financial sustainability through transformation, commissioning and partnership working.

3.6 The Annual Report is also informed by feedback from people who use our services. This helps ensure that the experiences and views of those directly involved in social care and well-being services are reflected in the assessment of performance and the identification of areas for improvement.

3.7 It is important to note that the report also recognises the collective corporate contribution of the Council, partner organisations and the wider social services and well-being system in supporting vulnerable children, adults, carers and families across the county borough. The report acknowledges the vital role of statutory, health, third sector, community, cultural and leisure partners, and pays tribute to the dedication, professionalism, and compassion of the workforce across both preventative and statutory 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 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 delivery of social care and well-being services under the SSWBA supports the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Through promoting independence, wellbeing and inclusion, and by supporting children, young people, adults, carers and families to achieve their personal outcomes, these services help create a healthier and more equal Bridgend.

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 the report.

- **Long Term**: Social Care and Wellbeing Services continue to operate within a context of increasing demand and complexity. The report highlights the importance of strengthening preventative approaches that build resilience, promote independence and support sustainable services. Through investment in early help and family support, more children are supported to remain safely within their families and communities, helping to reduce the need for statutory intervention. Similarly, the Council's reablement service helps adults regain confidence and independence following illness or hospital admission, reducing reliance on ongoing care and support, supporting long-term wellbeing.

- **Prevention:** The report highlights service developments that support the preventative approach promoted by the SSWBA and reflected in the revised performance framework. Preventative services continue to support people to access help at an earlier stage within their own communities, promoting independence, strengthening community connections and building resilience. Through Community Navigators and Local Community Co-ordinators, individuals and families are supported to make the most of their strengths, local networks and community resources, helping to prevent or delay the need for more formal care and support.

- **Integration**: Effective partnership working is central to delivering seamless, person centred services and improving outcomes for people. The Partnership and Integration section of the report highlights how we work with partners including Awen Cultural Trust and Halo Leisure Trust to promote well-being and support people to remain active, connected and independent within their communities. We also work with Tros Gynnal Plant, who support the Bridgend Youth Voice Forum, and People First Bridgend to ensure that the views of children, young people and adults with learning disabilities inform service development and delivery.

- **Collaboration**: The report highlights the importance of collaboration in the planning and delivery of social care and well-being services. Through established partnership arrangements, including the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board and Regional Safeguarding Board, the Council works with partners to maximise resources, share expertise and improve outcomes. During 2025-26, this collaborative approach supported the implementation of the Regional Threshold and Eligibility Support Guidance, promoting a shared understanding of safeguarding responsibilities, supporting consistent decision making and strengthening multi-agency approaches to protect vulnerable children and young people.

- **Involvement**: The people who use our services are our key stakeholders, and it is essential their views and experiences inform service delivery and improvement. The People section of the report highlights how the directorate supports voice, choice and control through engagement, co-production and feedback mechanisms. This includes work with Bridgend Carers Centre to improve support for carers of people living with dementia, using carers' experiences and feedback to shape support networks, activities and services to ensure support is responsive to their needs.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change and 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 report.

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

- strengthened corporate safeguarding arrangements through improved oversight, self-assessment and workforce awareness.
- embedding learning from Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews (SUSRs) to strengthen safeguarding practice, workforce awareness and regional training.
- implementation of the Regional Exploitation Strategy to strengthen multi-agency responses to child exploitation.
- enhanced multi-agency working with HMP Parc which has succeeded in reducing harm in the secure estate,
- establishment of a Learning Disability Safeguarding Group to increase safeguarding awareness and inform safeguarding practice through lived experience.

7.3 The Directorate's safeguarding priorities for 2026-27 include:

- fully embedding the Regional Exploitation Strategy to strengthen protection and support for children and young people at risk of harm.
- continuing to embed learning from SUSRs to strengthen safeguarding practice.
- and, using performance, quality assurance and customer feedback to drive continuous improvement in safeguarding and service delivery

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the sustainability of social care, wellbeing and prevention services continues to present significant challenges for the Council. Part 8 of the SSWBA requires the Head of Paid Service and the Director of Social Services to ensure Elected Members receive clear advice on the resources required to effectively deliver social services functions.

8.2 Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services reported an underspend of £1.736 million against a net budget of £113.134 million in 2025-26. However, this position was largely achieved through the maximisation of grant funding, including the Children and Communities Grant, Housing Support Grant and Pathways of Care Grant. Without this additional funding, the Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services budgets would have reported an overspend of £137,000.

8.3 The Directorate remains reliant on external grant funding to support service delivery, presenting an ongoing financial risk should funding levels reduce or cease in future years. Driven by increasing demand, higher levels of need and the complexity of care required, the report highlights continued financial pressures across social care services, particularly in:

- children's residential placements.

- learning disability and mental health services.
- physical disability and sensory impairment services.
- older people's services.

8.4 To support the Directorate in managing these ongoing pressures, Council approved £6.6 million of budget growth for 2026-27 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 to 2029-30, including funding for commissioned care contracts, children's residential placements, learning disability transitions, adult social care pressures and supported accommodation services.

8.5 The Social Services Improvement Board continues to oversee actions to address service and financial pressures, including the acceleration of transformation activity within Adult Social Care.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Council approves the 2025-26 Social Services Annual Report.

Background documents

None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BROUGH COUNCIL

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR

Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2025-26

Contents

1 DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

This is my 6th annual report as statutory director of social services in Bridgend county borough and my 11th annual report as a director of social services in a Welsh local authority. The report advises on the effectiveness of social services and wellbeing in Bridgend county borough, celebrates where we are doing well and highlights areas of improvement. Its purpose is to ensure that our strengths, of which there many are understood, and that risks and issues are clearly articulated so they can be managed and mitigated.

The annual report is an opportunity to thank our workforce for their tireless dedication and compassion in supporting our most vulnerable residents. It is a privilege to work with people often in the most challenging times of their lives. This work is too often unseen and unheralded. Yet for those supported by the social care workforce and wellbeing workforce, there is no more important public service. I am inspired every day by the way our frontline staff go above and beyond to make life better for the people they support. This report also gives a voice to people with care and support needs – how they live well and with purpose with disabilities, mental ill health, frailty and care experience.

Social services and wellbeing is an exemplar of good public service, embedded at the heart of local government. Our population is growing and ageing. Often words like 'crisis' are used in the public description of social care. It's important to challenge this prevailing narrative. In Bridgend, as in the rest of Wales, our registered social care services, provided by or commissioned by the Council, are publicly rated by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as overwhelmingly good and in some cases excellent. People do not wait long for assessments or to access services if needed. There is a strong preventative offer for children and families and adults and carers. We have well established models of social work practice which are strength based and focussed on relationships. Performance is, for the most part, in the top quartile in Wales. Our workforce feels well supported by their managers and the Council and motivated and the majority would recommend working in social care in Bridgend.

There is always more to do. In the last year we have further embedded our quality assurance systems, ensuring we are focussing on qualitative as well as quantitative performance, and learning from people's experiences. Our quality assurance shows there is still some variability in how well we practice, particularly how well people's individual outcomes are recorded.

We have made good progress in reducing reliance on agency social workers and strengthening permanent staffing. In Children and Family Services, agency social worker numbers have fallen significantly since 2023, while staff retention has improved. Adult Social Care has also increased the proportion of permanent social workers. These changes have had a direct impact on the quality of what we do. Greater workforce stability improves continuity for people who use services and lowers some of the costs associated with agency staffing. Workforce wellbeing remains an important area of focus. Sickness absence remains higher than desired, with stress, anxiety and depression identified as the main reasons for absence. Recruitment, retention, wellbeing and workforce development therefore remain priorities.

Whilst the majority of our workforce feels well supported to do their jobs, there are areas where morale is lower and retention and recruitment continues to require a keen focus. We have invested significantly in 'growing our own' workforce and succession planning has been successful in recruiting into management positions. It's important that new staff and new managers feel well supported as they develop in their roles and grow in experience. It is also important that our workforce have the tools to do their jobs – a new digital case management system is being implemented. This is a high risk project given the sensitivity of the data being transferred between systems and a cause of frustration for workforce as all but the most urgent developments on the current system have been put on hold. The workforce are also anticipating the benefits of using artificial intelligence in their work with projects that will be progressed in 2026-27, to reduce bureaucracy and mean they can spend more time with the people they support.

2025-26 also saw very high levels of contacts with Children and Family Services and Adult Social Care. The investment in prevention and early intervention for children and families has meant that despite increased levels of contacts, less children have been supported in statutory care and support and in child protection and we have seen a steady but safe reduction in the number of care experienced children. This is excellent news as it means more families are being supported through early help and support services to remain together. We recognised a particular pressure with the support for teenagers and to address this have developed the Adolescent Crisis Team (ACT) to work intensively with children and families.

In Adult Social Care, the increase in contacts has translated into more adults requiring care and support plans and an increase in the number receiving care and support and care at home. The population is ageing and growing and whilst Bridgend residents' access proportionately less care home placements and hours of domiciliary care than elsewhere in Wales, the increases in 2025-26 were higher than the demographic increase, which illustrates the pressure in the social care and health systems locally. The longstanding integrated multi-disciplinary community teams continue to represent exemplary practice, however, there is more work required to understand the need for community beds which places more pressure on community services. There is a well-developed preventative offer for adults in Bridgend through our partnerships with BAVO, Halo and Awen, assistive technology, falls prevention, community connectors and our reablement service. We recognise that preventative services could be better co-ordinated and this will be a focus for 2026-27.

Despite the decrease in the number of care experienced children, there continues to be pressure for residential care placements. This is in part due to a paucity of Bridgend foster carers and also in part due to the remodelling of the children's social care market as implementation of the milestones in the Health and Social Care (Wales) Act (2025) progress towards the removal of profit from children's social care in Wales. In response, we have taken steps to increase local capacity and reduce reliance on external providers. Two new children's homes were secured during the year, with one expected to open in summer 2026 and the other in early 2027. The Council also continued to strengthen fostering services and provide practical and therapeutic support for placements through the Placement Support Team. These actions are intended to improve stability for children, reduce disruption and keep more children supported locally. There are early signs that this approach is having an effect. There have been no circumstances where the Council has had to support a child in a placement operating without registration since November 2025 which is excellent progress. The priority for 2026–27 is to build on this progress by increasing local placement capacity, improving placement stability and strengthening support for foster carers and families.

Financial pressures remain significant. Whilst there was an underspent position at the end of 2025-26, this was largely due to short term grant funding. The number of people receiving social care and support has increased. We have responded through our 3 year plans for sustainable care and support, prevention and early intervention and wider transformation and service redesign. Our focus continues to be on workforce stability, strength based practice, prevention and early intervention, and outcome focussed services. We also emphasise the importance of strong and effective partnerships – with health, education, police, third sector, leisure and cultural partners and social care providers. We recognise the pressures that other partners face and that working together delivers better, more seamless outcomes for people, and is also more cost effective as people get the right support from the right professional more quickly. This is particularly evident in our Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and integrated adult social care teams.

The Council approved additional budget pressures of £6.6 million for 2026–27. This supports continued investment in the real living wage for care workers and areas where need has been evidentially increasing for some time such as children's placements and learning disability services. The more recent increase in pressures in services for adults with long term disabilities and age related frailty requires close monitoring and oversight to understand what needs can be met more preventatively and the longer term financial implications of the growing and ageing population. We are also seeing more adults with long term health conditions stepping down from health settings, which is the right thing for them but is not accompanied by a corresponding transfer of funding. The overarching financial challenge is to achieve sustainable services without compromising timeliness, quality or outcomes. This makes prevention, early intervention, strength based practice workforce stability, effective commissioning and service redesign increasingly important. The Council's overall digital transformation will also bring opportunities for greater efficiency and effectiveness which need to be harnessed.

The overall picture for 2025–26 is one of positive progress, balanced by significant levels of need which is translating into pressure in parts of our system. We have strengthened our workforce, improved practice and developed innovative services. CIW inspections and internal assurance also provide evidence of a culture of continuous improvement. Despite the challenges, this report is optimistic. We have the best workforce and strong partnerships, which we will continue to nurture and invest time in. Relationships are fundamental to the quality of our social services and wellbeing in Bridgend. They will be central to the next phase of our transformation – as we focus on achieving excellence and sustainability across all service areas.

I would like to end this introduction by again thanking our social care workforce and paying tribute to people with care and support needs. It is a privilege to be your director and to have the opportunity to elevate your experiences in this report.

Diolch o galon,

Claire Marchant

Corporate Director of
Social Services and Wellbeing

JULY 2026

2 CONTEXT

What do we do?

Social Services and Wellbeing support children, families, adults and carers who need information, advice or assistance, care, support or safeguarding. We work in partnership with the third sector, Halo Leisure and the Awen Cultural Trust to help people stay healthy, active and connected. All services work with partners and local communities to improve wellbeing and keep people safe.

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
- Service Provision in Secure Estates
  - Caswell Clinic
  - HMP Parc

PREVENTION AND WELLBEING

- Early Intervention & Prevention
- Active 4 Life
- Discovery Days
- BAVO Partnership
  - Building Community Resilience
- Community Engagement
- Aging Well
- Carer / Young Carer Support
- Community Hubs
- 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
  - Feel Good 4 Life
  - Carers Respite

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 children and adults, along with their families and carers, to support them to live safely and live well. We often work in challenging situations, supporting people whose needs arise from age related frailty, disability, mental ill health, poverty, or the risk of neglect or abuse.

As of 31st March 2026, we were supporting **911 children and young people** in statutory children's services, a 10% decrease compared with 31st March 2025. We were supporting **2,126 adults** during the same period, representing a 8% increase from the previous year.

The tables below show how many people are currently receiving ongoing, managed care and support. This does **not** include people who are still being assessed and do not yet have a care plan.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES	Number of Children & Young People Supported as at 31st March 2026 *	Change from 31st March 2025
Care and Support	507	-102
Child Protection	91	+17
Care Experienced Children	316	-17

* These figures include 236 children with a disability and 99 care leavers. A child or young person can be in more than one category.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE	Number of People Supported as at 31st March 2026 **	Change from 31st March 2025
Early Intervention & Prevention Hub	50	-22
Network Adult Social Work Teams	1462	+152
Older People Mental Health Team	70	+8
Hospital Team	33	NO CHANGE
Learning Disability	353	+6
Mental Health	146	-13
Secure Estates	12	+1

** All 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 significant numbers of children and families, adults and carers preventatively which means that despite our growing and ageing population we are able to effectively meet needs.

Planning for Future Need

Planning sustainable social care and wellbeing services requires a clear understanding of both current and future population needs. Population projections for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region as set out in the Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027 indicated that whilst the total population is expected to increase by 3% over the next ten years and 5% over the next twenty years, the most significant growth will be amongst older people, particularly those aged 85 years and over.

At the same time, the working-age population is expected to decrease. These demographic changes will increase demand for community support, accommodation-based services, dementia services, integrated care and support for unpaid carers if we continue to operate as we currently do. We also know that with the development of the new special school to replace Heronsbridge that more families with children with significant disabilities may move to Bridgend so they can benefit from the excellent provision. This will impact on the need for Children and Family Services, and over time Adult Social Care services.

Bridgend's population is already becoming older. Between 2011 and 2021, the population increased by 5%, the proportion of residents aged 65-74 increased from 10% to 11%, and those aged 75-84 increased from 6% to 7%. The number of residents aged 50-64 increased by 13%, whilst the proportion of people aged 35-49 decreased. These trends are significant because as we age we are more likely to require wellbeing and social care support.

Increasing Demand and Complexity

Demand for social care services increased during 2025-26. Adult Social Care received 6,610 contacts, a 6% increase compared with the previous year. The number of adults with a care support plan as at 31st March 2026 increased by 8% to 2,126 people, whilst the number of adults supported by Adult Social Work Teams increased by 13%, rising from 1,388 to 1,565 people.

There is also increasing complexity of need. The proportion of adult assessments leading to a care and support plan increased from 16% to 22%, suggesting that the people contacting us require more support. In Children and Family Services, contacts increased by 15%, rising from 14,828 to 16,994 during the year. Whilst child protection activity increased, with the number of children subject to child protection plans increasing by 21%, from 75 to 91 children as at 31 March 2026, this still represents a significant decrease from previous years. The number of children supported through care and support plans and care experienced children fell.

The Importance of Prevention

To respond to increasing need we prioritise prevention and early intervention. Evidence suggests that this approach is helping people receive support earlier and reducing unnecessary escalation into statutory services.

Whilst adult contacts increased by 6%,completed adult assessments increased by only 2% during the same period, indicating that more people are being supported through information, advice, assistance and community-based services. Within Children and Family Services, although overall contacts increased by 15%, the proportion progressing to statutory assessment reduced from 8% to 7%, reflecting improved screening arrangements and stronger preventative services.

Local Community Coordinators supported 797 adults during the year, a 32% increase from 606 people the previous year. Preventative support for children and young people also increased substantially, from 140 to 310 children / young people representing an increase of over 120%. These services play a vital role in helping people remain independent and connected within their communities.

Sustainable Social Services

Our commissioning strategies inform future service development. During the year, housing and accommodation reviews identified the need for a fourth Extra Care housing scheme within the county borough. Children and Family Services also progressed plans to expand local residential provision, with two additional children's homes progressed and further developments being considered.

Progress has also been made in strengthening local fostering capacity and developing supported living opportunities. These developments aim to reduce reliance on external placements and ensure that more children can remain close to their families, communities and support networks.

Supporting Our Carers

We know that unpaid carers play a vital role in supporting health and social care systems. Bridgend currently has an estimated 17,000 unpaid carers, although only around 2,100 are known to services.

The Population Needs Assessment projects that the number of carers aged 65 and over could increase by almost 50% by 2035. This highlights the importance of identifying carers earlier, increasing access to support and strengthening services to help carers maintain their own health and wellbeing. We have improved the way we listen to, and act on what carers are telling us in the last year and have seen an increase in the number of carers taking up the offer of a carers assessment.

Looking Ahead

Sustainability will depend on continuing to balance growing need with available resources by being focussed on our prevention and early intervention offer. We will strengthen our front door arrangements so it is easier to access advice and information.

Our practice will continue to be strength based and outcome focussed. Our commissioning and service planning activity will focus on prevention, community resilience, workforce support, accommodation development, digital transformation and integrated working with health and other regional partners. By using population intelligence and evidence-based commissioning, we aim to ensure that social care and wellbeing services remain sustainable, affordable and able to meet the changing needs of Bridgend residents in the years ahead.

2025-26: The year in summary

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

15% INCREASE
16994 contacts received in the year

1172 contacts provided with advice or assistance

9% DECREASE
632 section child protection enquiries held

23% DECREASE
1207 new care and support assessments completed in the year

35
64% DECREASE
in the number of young carers needs assessments completed in the year

1% INCREASE
275 new care and support assessments that progressed to a care and support plan

911
10% DECREASE
in the number of children with a care and support plan at 31st March

316
5% DECREASE
in the number of care experienced children at 31st March

91
21% INCREASE
in the number of children on the child protection register at 31st March

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

6% INCREASE
6610 contacts received in the year

3% INCREASE
2624 contacts provided with advice and assistance

2% INCREASE
2546 new care and support assessments completed in the year

215
41% INCREASE
in the number of carers needs assessments for adults completed in the year

7% INCREASE
566 new care and support assessments progressed to a care and support plan

2126
8% INCREASE
in the number of adults in receipt of homecare as at 31st March

869
15% INCREASE
in the number of adults in receipt of homecare as at 31st March

519
5% INCREASE
in the number of adults supported in residential or nursing care at 31st March

Corporate Management Team

In 2025-26, the Council entered its third year of 'Delivering Together Our Corporate Plan 2023-28' which explains the priorities and how we will work with partners and local people to deliver services.

The Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) is led by the Chief Executive and includes the Corporate Directors and Chief Officers. The Corporate Director, Social Services & Wellbeing fulfils their responsibilities under part 8 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 by acting as the CMT lead responsible for ensuring the local authority effectively discharges its statutory care and safeguarding functions.

Political Leadership

The Council has 51 Councillors who are elected every five years by the community. They represent the people of Bridgend County Borough (BCBC) and set the overall Council strategy and budget.

The Council's Cabinet has 8 members: the Council Leader and 7 portfolio holders. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Wellbeing is responsible for adult and children's social services, and health and wellbeing services across the borough.

Governance & Accountability

There is robust cross-party scrutiny with recommendations made by both the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CSOC) and Social Services Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSHWB OSC), which meet at least 6 times a year, and responses are provided. COSC considers service provision, planning, management, performance, policies, protocols and plans relating to corporate performance and governance, and also undertakes scrutiny of the draft annual Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), including the budget savings proposals and comments upon the consultation process. The Committee also oversees the cross-party Scrutiny Budget Working Group process that identifies potential areas for savings or growth and examines them in its Deep Dive Groups working collaboratively across the Council, before making recommendations to Cabinet, ahead of the draft MTFS budget proposals report.

The SSHWB OSC considers the service provision, planning, management, performance, policies and plans relating to social Services and Wellbeing provision, including the Social Services annual report and also proposes items for the Forward Work Plan (FWP) having regard for the Corporate Priorities and risk Management Framework including the Scrutiny Topic Selection Criteria.

The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting Committee, chaired by the Deputy Leader, meets quarterly to make decisions about services for care experienced children and care leavers. aims. The Corporate Director for Social Services and Wellbeing is part of the Council's senior management team and regularly meets with Cabinet and other senior managers to review progress against the Council's priorities. This helps make sure the directorate's work supports the Council's overall The Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate reviews performance, quality and management information every month across teams and services. More detailed reviews at a group manager level take place every quarter to make sure services are performing well, meeting targets and delivering the priorities in the Council's plans.

Workforce

Recruitment & Retention

A values-driven, well-motivated, highly supported, and well trained workforce is essential for delivering quality services and achieving positive outcomes for the people we support. Therefore, improving workforce wellbeing, retention and recruitment is a key priority.

SERVICE AREA	31st March 2025		31st March 2026	
	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount
Adult Social Care	571.39	734	583.76	743
Children and Family Services	352.43	405	369.02	416
Prevention and Wellbeing	25.73	30	26.11	62
Business Strategy, Commissioning, Performance and Improvement	72.74	77	77.66	84
Commissioning	9.62	10	9.81	10
Total	**1031.91**	**1256**	**1066.36**	**1326**

We have continued to improve our workforce position, some key achievements were highlighted in the CIW improvement check of Children and Family Services in June 2025.

The number of agency social workers has reduced significantly across the directorate. In Children and Family Services agency social worker numbers have fallen by 86% since May 2023, from 77 to 11, while agency use in residential services has reduced by 40% over the past year. Staff retention has also improved from 81% to 86% and has remained strong. In Adult Social Care, between July 2024 and March 2026, the proportion of agency social workers reduced from 13% to 10% of the workforce, while permanent staffing levels increased from 77% to 89%, demonstrating a stronger and more stable workforce across both services.

Overall, there have been fewer incidences of absence due to sickness compared to last year, and most teams have seen improvements. However, sickness absence is still too high. Workforce wellbeing and staff support is a major focus. The highest reason people are off work is stress, anxiety, or depression that is not caused by work. To improve staff wellbeing, we've promoted flexible working and targeted health and wellbeing initiatives and encouraged both individual and team wellbeing activities. We also work closely with Human Resources to manage sickness absence effectively and make sure staff are well supported.

Learning and Development

Bridgend Social Care Academi provides learning and development opportunities for local authority and Bridgend care provider staff, foster carers, carers and volunteers. Training is delivered through a mix of e-learning and face-to-face sessions, helping people complete the required training while accessing practical support.

We have expanded the use of Padlet, a digital platform where staff can access and revisit training resources. Dedicated Padlet pages are available for key topics including practice models, safeguarding, supervision skills, children's residential care and social work.

In 2025-26, the Social Care Workforce Development Team delivered training to 2,336 staff from statutory agencies and 930 staff from independent and third sector providers.

Growing Our Own

EMPLOYMENT AND CAREER PATHWAYS

We worked with Employability Bridgend to deliver a two week "Pathways to Care" programme, providing accredited training in medication administration, safeguarding and first aid. Participants also heard from people who receive care and from social care staff working in Bridgend.

We work closely with local secondary schools and Bridgend College to promote careers in social care. This has generated interest in the Council's apprenticeship programme. There are now three social care apprentices who have started with the Council this year.

This year, we also partnered with ELITE, a supported employment project involving the Princess of Wales Hospital and Bridgend College. Two students completed work placements and subsequently secured jobs in BCBC.

Supported internships provide people with learning disabilities with valuable work experience, helping improve employment opportunities and support workforce inclusion. Two interns who completed placements in a Council residential care home through a previous programme have since secured permanent employment with the Council. The first BCBC employed supported interns will be commencing in Autumn 2026.

DEVELOPING OUR FUTURE SOCIAL WORKERS

Our Social Services Practitioner programme supports existing social care staff to gain qualifications and progress their careers, including progressing to a social work degree. The programme is a route into the Open University (Wales) Social Work degree, and four students completing the programme in summer 2026 will begin the degree in September 2026.

We have also seconded staff and hosted social work students from Bridgend College, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Cardiff University and the Open University. These staff and students act as ambassadors for the Council, with many new recruits citing their positive experiences as a factor in applying for roles in Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services.

Plans are in place to celebrate eight social work students graduating in 2026. All have secured jobs with BCBC.

Staff Feedback

We asked our staff to complete a survey so we could understand their views and experiences over the past year. This is what they told us:

KEY STRENGTHS

94% know how to access support if needed

92% understand what is expected in their role

91% can access relevant training

90% Agree or agreed to a certain extent that they can easily access training relevant to their post

87% would recommend Social Care in Bridgend as a place to work

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

78% have opportunities to contribute to decisions within their teams

72% feel valued at work

69% have the right tools and support to undertake role

56% have the right opportunities available to progress their career

Survey results are similar to last year, with improvements in the numbers of staff feeling supported, valued, and positive about working for the Council. Staff continue to report strong management and colleague support, while career progression, access to tools and resources and, in some teams, morale are areas for improvement.

What Next?

To support more people to enter, develop and progress in social care careers, we continue to develop career pathways training, learning and development opportunities.

CREATING MORE ROUTES INTO CARE CAREERS

We will continue to support people to begin careers in social care through apprenticeships, work experience and partnerships with schools, colleges, universities and supported employment agencies. In 2026, apprenticeship opportunities will expand into Children's Residential Care.

SUPPORTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT

We will introduce a new pathway for care and support staff who are interested in becoming social workers. Staff will be supported to complete the first stage of the Open University (Wales) Social Work degree, helping them gain the academic knowledge, skills and experience needed to explore a future career in social work.

STRENGTHENING CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL CARE

As children's residential services grow, we will invest in our workforce through tailored induction programmes, a clear training plan, qualifications and ongoing professional development opportunities.

IMPROVING CARE AND SUPPORT

Following a successful pilot, a new strengths-based approach to risk assessment will be introduced across services during 2026–27. This will support staff to focus on people's strengths and promote positive outcomes while managing risks safely.

SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

We will prioritise wellbeing, providing more resources and opportunities for team development, wellbeing activities to support a healthy and resilient workforce.

SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS

From September 2026, the Council will employ our first supported interns through a programme for up to 12 young people with learning disabilities. The programme will provide work placements and help participants develop the skills, experience and confidence needed to move into employment.

Celebrating Our Workforce

EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

Outstanding academic achievement: One MSc in Social Work trainee at Cardiff University achieved the **highest dissertation mark in their cohort.**

Peer recognition: Another MSc trainee was voted by fellow students as the person they would most like to have as their own social worker.

Excellent degree outcomes: Four seconded staff members achieved First Class Honours in the BSc (Hons) in Social Work at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Student success: A hosted student successfully completed the BSc (Hons) in Social Work programme.

SOCIAL CARE WALES ACCOLADES 2026

LEARNER OF THE YEAR

To find out why Catherine won the award click here

SUMMER 2025 GRADUATES WITH STAFF FROM BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL AND BRIDGEND COLLEGE

ADULT SOCIAL CARE CELEBRATION EVENT

17th MARCH 2026: CELEBRATING WORD SOCIAL WORK DAY

Financial Resources

The net budget for Adult and Children's Social Care for 2025-26 was £113.134 million and the actual outturn was £111.398 million resulting in an underspend of £1.736 million

SSWB	2025-26 Expenditure Budget £'000	2025-26 Income Budget £'000	2025-26 Net Spend Budget £'000	2025-26 Actual Outturn £'000	2025-26 Variance £'000
Older People (aged 65 and over)	48,221	(13,641)	34,580	34,266	(314)
Adults (aged under 65)	57,464	(12,970)	44,494	43,563	(931)
Childrens and Families Services	35,307	(1,247)	34,060	33,569	(491)
Total	**140,992**	**(27,858)**	**113,134**	**111,398**	**(1,736)**

While the Directorate reported an underspend of £1.736 million the main reason for the under spend was maximisation of grants across the service including Children and Communities Grant (CCG) (£608,000), Housing Support Grant (HSG) (£539,000) and Pathways of Care Grant (£726,000). Without this additional funding, the directorate would have overspent by £137,000.

There continues to be pressures in budgets for children's residential placements and physical disability/sensory impairment and older person's services driven by the complexity of need and levels of demand across these services.

The Social Services Improvement Board is overseeing a number of actions to address the pressure in the Adult Social Care budget, including accelerating the work to transform learning disabilities. It is clear that pressures are becoming more acute in Adult Social Care with an increase in the numbers of people receiving social care services – care and support and residential – has increased.

To support the Directorate in addressing these ongoing pressures, on 25th February 2026, Council approved £6.6 million in budget pressures for 2026-27 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026-27 to 2029-30. These included £3.000 million towards the implications of Real Living Wage uplifts on commissioned contracts, £1.498 million Childrens Services Residential Homes, £800,000 Transition Learning Disabilities Residential, £250,000 Adult Social Care residential pressures, £250,000 for Children's Supported Accommodation, £200,000 Accommodation Unit, £183,000 Community Sports Development and £151,000 Transition Independent Domiciliary Care.

3 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

This assessment covers both children and family services and adult services. It explains what the local authority has done during the year to meet the quality standards in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

Each section is divided into three parts: Children and Family Services, Adult Social Care, and, where work has been done across the whole Social Services and Wellbeing directorate, a section called “Across Social Services and Wellbeing”.

At the end of each of the four sections, you will also find our priorities for 2026–27.

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, Choice and Control

Listening to and involving people is central to everything we do. People's experiences help us understand what we're doing well and where we can improve.

Strengthening Voice Through Advocacy

Advocacy helps people have their voice heard about the care and support they receive, ensuring their views and wishes are listened to and acted on. It is important that everyone who uses our services knows that this support is available. Making people aware of advocacy is known as the "active offer".

	2024-25	2025-26
Number of 'Active Offers' of advocacy for **children** during the year	54	31
Of which, number of **children** where an Independent Professional Advocate was provided	39	24
Number of **adults** where the need for an Independent Professional Advocate was identified	102	101
Of which, number of **adults** where an Independent Advocate was provided	67	43

In 2025–26, 101 adults were identified as needing an Independent Professional Advocate (IPA), with 43 receiving support (42%). Bridgend has a Hub and Spoke model to ensure people are directed to the right advocacy service. A review was undertaken and identified improvements which freed up capacity. This is helping to reduce waiting lists.

In Children and Family Services, advocacy uptake has decreased. The Corporate Parenting Board has acted on feedback from care experienced young people and continues to work with Tros Gynnal Plant to promote access to advocacy. Youth forum membership has increased, strengthening young people's voice in shaping services. The Board is taking forward work on what it means for care experience to be recognised by the Council as a protected characteristic.

Direct Payments: Choice & Control

Direct Payments enable people to manage a personal budget to arrange their own care and support, giving them more choice, control and independence. They decide who supports them, when, and how their needs are met.

As of 31st March 2026, 403 people were receiving a direct payment, the same number as the previous year. The number of adults receiving a direct payment increased from 244 to 253, while the number of children and young people receiving a direct payment decreased from 159 to 150.

Learning from Experience

We use the "Most Significant Change" (MSC) approach and "Magic Moments, Tragic Moments" (MMTM) to hear people's stories and improve practice.

MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

What life was like before: Parent A approached the Local Authority for support during the diagnosis journey for their son of a Pathological Avoidance Disorder. They approached Early Help and the Children's Disability Team for support but were unsatisfied with the advice and guidance received.

What it is like following the change or experience?: Parent A was initially frustrated with the service responses which led to an informal complaint. Through improved communication they feel more confident advocating for themselves and their son.

Of all the experiences, what was the most significant?: Parent A now supports other parents in parent/carer groups and is actively involved in participation groups with other parents for Early Help service development.

Indicators of change:

- Enhanced parental confidence
- Improved advocacy skills for the self and others
- Participation evidence of service improvement and learning from real stories
- Improved practitioner connection building strategies for child engagement

MAGIC MOMENT, TRAGIC MOMENTS IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Magic Moment: Adult A was supported to improve their mobility and confidence through effective care and support planning and later returned to volunteer work at a local Men's Shed group.

Tragic Moment: Inconsistencies in Support at Home care scheduling caused initial frustration leading to an informal complaint, however it later prompted improvements in communication and care co-ordination.

Outcome: Adult A now lives independently and contributes to reflective learning and service improvement within Adult Social Care Integrated Network teams.

Indicators of change:

- Increased independence and community participation
- Improved consistency and communication in care delivery
- Reflective learning from positive and challenging experiences
- Stronger person-centred practice and accountability

Over the next year, we will continue to embed these frameworks. This will ensure people with lived experience have the time and space to share their experiences. Learning is used alongside workforce training, compliments and complaints, and through our Continuous Improvement Groups to support practice.

Working with Carers to Develop Support Networks

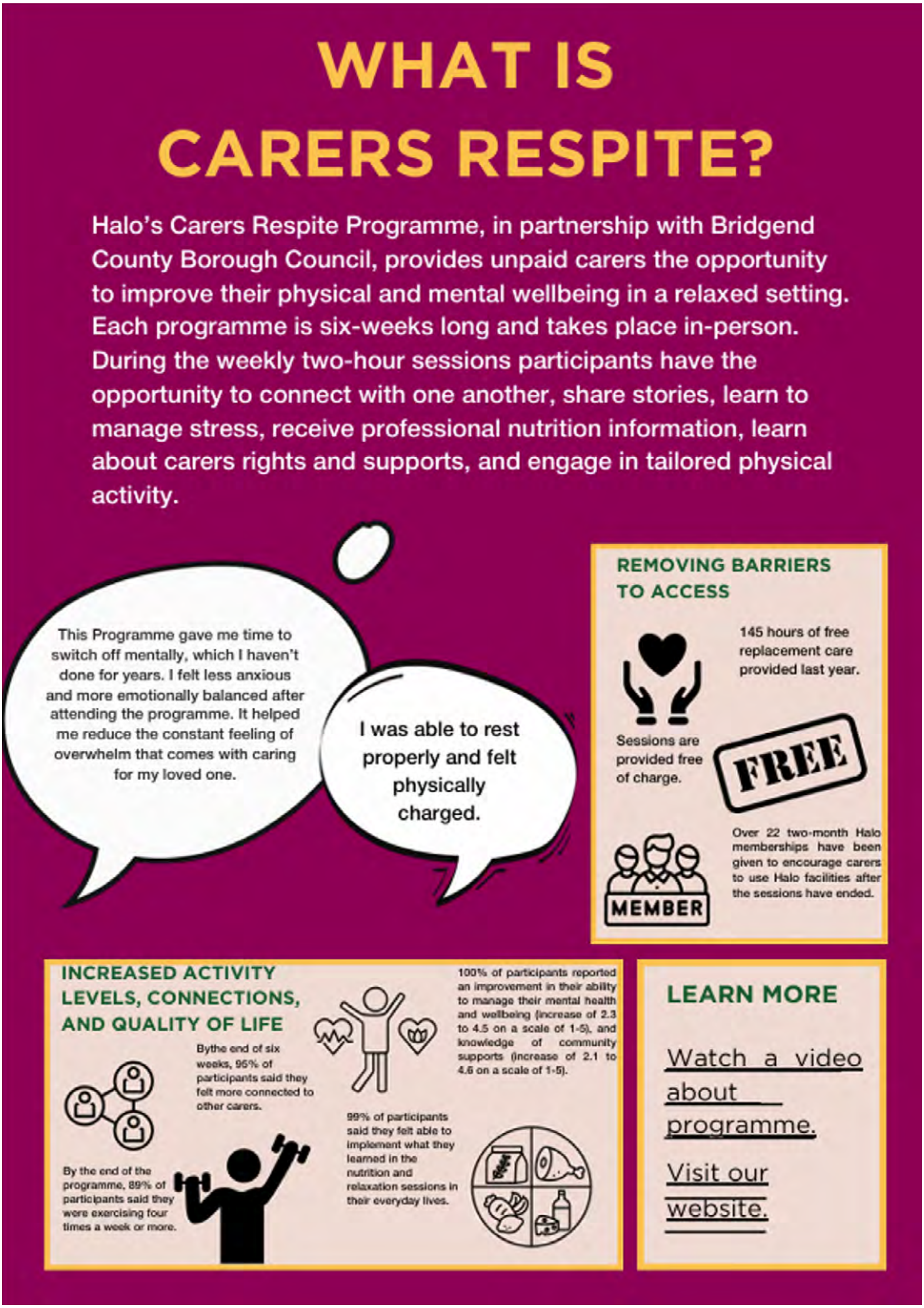
We have worked with Bridgend Carers Centre and other partners to improve support for people caring for loved ones with dementia. By listening to carers and understanding their needs, we have developed stronger local support networks, activities and opportunities that are welcoming and accessible for both carers and people living with dementia.

We know this work is making a difference from talking to carers, feedback from community sessions, and more people taking part in activities and wellbeing support. Carers have said they really value the chance to meet others, get advice and feel less alone.

During the year, partners ran Dementia Action Week events, family support sessions, community walks, and awareness activities across the area. There has also been good progress in improving how organisations work together in promoting local dementia support services.

Next year, the focus will be on strengthening carer networks, making sure people know what support is available, reaching carers earlier, and offering more community based wellbeing activities.

Overall, this work has helped carers feel more connected, supported and informed, while also building stronger partnerships and more dementia friendly communities.



Here is the link to Halo's Carer's respite programme website.

Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

Providing staff with training on people's language, culture, and background helps them communicate more clearly, show respect, and tailor care to each individual. This makes people feel valued, understood, and safe, which in turn improves their overall experience and outcomes.

In Wales, this approach is supported by key government strategies and frameworks that guide organisations to deliver fair, person-centred care.

Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

The Anti-racist Wales Action Plan is a national framework set by the Welsh Government that Social Services and Wellbeing has committed to. It makes anti-racism a core value and aims to improve fairness and outcomes for communities. The Bridgend social care workforce is becoming increasingly diverse. We have reviewed where we are against the standard in the plan. The plan sets out actions to build anti-racism into everyday work, policies and services to help eliminate racism.

Our self-assessment will inform a detailed action plan with clear, measurable steps to track progress and focus on proven improvements. This will support national reporting through the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru and ensure we meet the plan's goals by 2030.

Mwy Na Geiriau / More than Words

Mwy na Geiriau is Welsh Government's plan to make sure the Welsh language is an integral part of health and social care. We have updated our action plan to help staff develop their Welsh language skills and are focussing on ensuring managers and leaders take responsibility for supporting and promoting the use of Welsh.

The plan is closely linked with the Council's Equalities Team, Social Care Workforce Development Programme and Human Resources team. By working together, we have strengthened our partnerships, created a central list of staff who can speak Welsh, and reviewed the level of Welsh language skills needed for frontline roles.

Within Social Services and Wellbeing, 3 staff were enrolled on in-house Welsh language courses, and 34% of staff have declared some level of Welsh language skill.

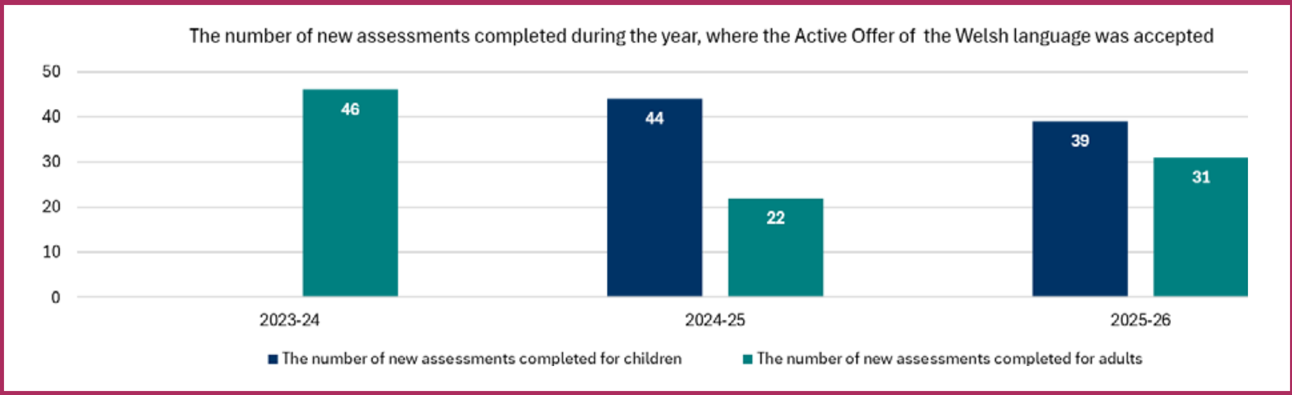
Key Developments

- The creation of an Active Offer factsheet to support delivery of Welsh language services.
- Ensuring the new case management information system can record individuals' language preferences.
- Identifying frontline social services staff who would benefit from Welsh language training.
- The promotion of Welsh language learning opportunities through staff coffee mornings.
- Raising awareness of "Welsh in the Workplace" through staff communications.
- Development of online resources to support understanding of the Welsh language and in social work.

In addition, we encourage Welsh speaking social work students to receive practice learning support in Welsh. Welsh Language Awareness training is mandatory for all staff, and we actively promote Welsh language training opportunities available through Social Care Wales.

The Active Offer

Mwy na Geiriau supports the Active Offer by making Welsh language services available as part of everyday care, without people having to ask.



In 2025–26, 39 children and 31 adults chose to receive services in Welsh. Adult uptake has increased since last year, showing growing demand for Welsh language services.

What Next?

- We will improve access to our register of Welsh speaking staff.
- Reissue our Active Offer guidance to help staff understand their responsibilities.
- Work in partnership with Human Resources, to further develop our workforce strategy, including exploring a minimum level of Welsh language skills for all social services staff.

Children and Family Services

Voice and Control

Voice, choice and control are central to Children and Family Services. We support this through a range of engagement activities that ensure children, families, and carers are listened to and actively involved in decisions about their care.

Below are key examples of engagement activity undertaken across Children and Family Services, including work with care experienced young people, supported by the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer.

Children & Family Services: **Engagement Overview**

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

We held three community events this year, with around 90 families taking part. These events gave children, young people and their families a chance to share their experiences, express their views, and help shape how our services develop in the future.

WILD ROOTS

Our Wild Roots programme uses outdoor activities to connect with young people, especially those who find it harder to engage in formal settings. It has helped us hear directly from them about their experiences and what support works best for them.

VOICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Across our service, we make sure to listen to and record the views of children, young people and families in our everyday work. This is a key part of how we operate and is reflected in our records, reviews and how we measure outcomes. We also use real life case studies and family stories to show the impact of our work, including in our recent Social Care Wales Accolades submission in which we were shortlisted for the finals.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE 11+ OFFER

In developing our 11+ Early Help service, we spoke with secondary school learners and heard from over 180 young people. Their feedback has given us valuable insight into the support they want and has helped shape how the service is being designed.

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES

We collect feedback from children, young people and families after they've received support. This is helping us get a clearer and more consistent understanding of what families think about the service and where we can improve.

PARENTING CAFÉS

The Early Help service will lead on setting up Parenting Cafés, giving parents and carers a chance to share their views and help shape the support available in their local area.

Care Experienced Children & Young People: **Engagement Overview**

STATUTORY VISITS, REVIEWS & ADVOCACY

Children and young people in care are regularly given opportunities to share what they think, want, and feel during statutory visits and review meetings about their care. They can also get help from independent advocates, who support them in speaking up about specific concerns and making sure their views are listened to when decisions are made about their lives.

BRIDGEND YOUTH FORUM (BYF) PARTICIPATION

The Bridgend Youth Forum, run by TGP Cymru, gives young people in care and care leavers a clear way to share their ideas and help improve the services they use. By taking part, they help shape service and practice, get involved in recruitment and selection, attend national events, and support projects like creating online resources for young people. This helps make sure they have a real say in shaping services.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUMMIT (AUTUMN 2025)

The Young People's Summit was the first event of its kind in Bridgend where care experienced young people met professionals in one place. It created a safe and positive space to talk and build relationships. The event focused on four key themes: Your Voice, Your Future, Your Education, and Your Health, with dedicated workshops for young people to share their views, wishes, and feelings.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?

Young people want to be listened to and understand why they are in care. They have hopes for the future but also worries. They value support in school but can feel pressured and unheard, especially when adults speak to carers instead of them.

IMPACT AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Feedback gathered from these events is used to improve services and practice so they better meet young people's needs and are more inclusive and responsive. It will also help shape the priorities of Children and Family Services and the Corporate Parenting Board, supporting better planning and stronger partnerships with young people who have experience of care.

Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

Embedding the Signs of Safety Practice Model

Signs of safety focuses on building a detailed, balanced picture of family strengths and worries so that children's safety is assured through collaborative practical plans created with the family and their network.

Our Signs of Safety training programme provides comprehensive multi-agency training and development for staff and partners to ensure effective and consistent implementation of the practice model.

Signs of Stability and Signs of Wellbeing practice have been introduced across several teams, including the Care Experienced Children Team, Just Ask 15+, the Independent Reviewing Officer Service, and the Early Help and Children and Family Support Service (CFSS). Core Signs of Safety training has continued, supporting new staff to learn the approach whilst giving existing staff the opportunity to refresh their knowledge. 80% of staff have now been trained in this practice model.

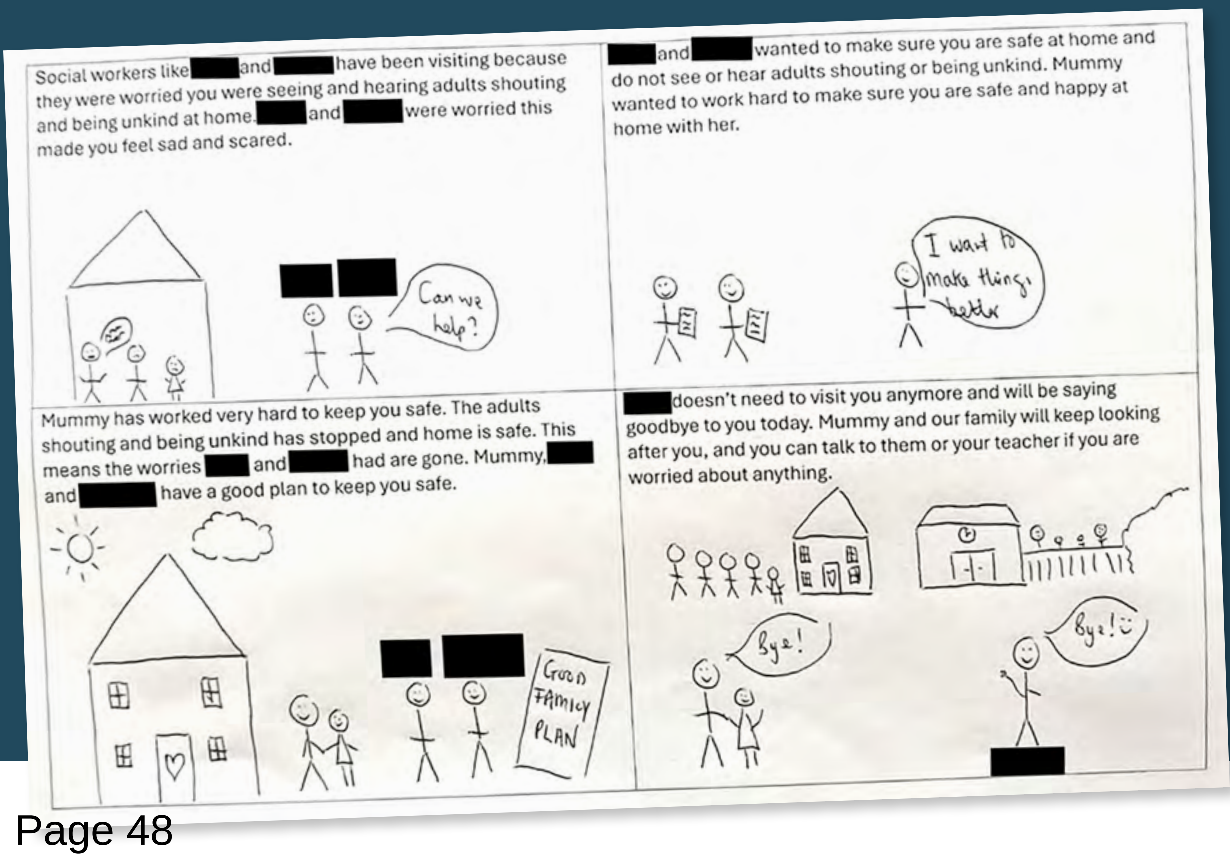
Quality assurance audits are used to help understand how effective the new model is and what results it is achieving.

CASE STUDY:

A SIGNS OF SAFETY APPROACH

This information here shows how words and pictures were used to help a child understand why social services became involved and what their role was in supporting the family.

The case had a positive outcome, with the mother working well with professionals and her support network. The social worker used the Signs of Safety approach, focusing on the family's strengths and practical solutions to help achieve positive changes.



Adult Social Care

Voice and Control

Voice, choice and control are also central to our Adult Social Care Services. We talk to people, actively listen and include them in decisions, so services fit what people need and care about most.

Here is a brief summary of established groups that work together to improve services across the borough:

Better Together Bridgend

Better Together Bridgend is a partnership that works to improve services and support for adults with learning disabilities in Bridgend county borough.

It brings together people with learning disabilities, families and carers, Bridgend County Borough Council, health services, support providers, housing organisations, voluntary sector groups, and regional partners to help shape services and drive positive change.

The partnership focuses on four key areas:

- Parent and Carer Forum
- Communication and Relationships
- NHS Health Profile
- Strategic Development

Supported by People First Bridgend, with a member of People First as chair, the partnership meets regularly to discuss what matters most to people with learning disabilities, including where they live, how they spend their time, and the support they receive.

Together, partners oversee a shared plan to improve services and outcomes for people with learning disabilities across Bridgend.

Having a Say Group

The Having a Say Group is now in its fourth year of meeting and continues to go from strength to strength.

It brings together people with learning disabilities who live in their own homes and are supported by Bridgend staff.

The meetings are always lively, creative and supportive They are a safe space for sharing, learning, informing and supporting each other and the services that operate in the area.

It has grown into a group that not only helps people make friends and connect with others but also gives them a chance to share their views and influence the council's work.

Recently, members of the group went to a scrutiny meeting to talk about what matters most to them.

Plan-it Wel

During the year, a new group called Plan-it Wel (Work, Education and Leisure) was set up. It is an advisory and co-production group that works with council staff to explore and plan meaningful day opportunities for now and in the future.

The name of the group was decided by people with learning disabilities and reflects what is important to them. They have recently been involved in developing a questionnaire for people with a learning disability to ensure they have a voice, choice and control in how they spend their time now, and what they would like for the future. The group explores peoples hopes, dreams and aspirations and how, with support from the Council and partners, they can work towards fulfilling these.

The group has recently been involved in the development of the roles of Day Opportunity Mentors, a new role supporting individuals to move into meaningful occupation such as education, volunteering, supported employment and paid employment.

Evidence Based Review of Bridgend Resource Centre

A review of Bridgend Resource Centre and other day opportunities was carried out with people who use the services, staff and partners. A new approach has been developed with a focus on expanding opportunities, including paid employment, volunteering, work experience, education and training, community groups, and greater access to mainstream community opportunities. This gives people more choice, increase independence and help them achieve their personal goals.

Bridgend Resource Centre is now an assessment and transition service. 10 people are currently being supported to move into community based services that better meet their needs.

Work is also taking place with partners to make better use of local buildings and community spaces, creating a wider range of inclusive specialist and mainstream activities across daytime, evening and weekend services. People, families, carers and staff are helping shape these developments.

Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

Embedding the Strength-Based Outcome-Focussed Practice Model

Our practice model puts people's goals, capabilities and networks at the centre of assessment and support.

We ran strength-based practice training for the fourth year in a row. The two day course was aimed at new and newly qualified staff focussing on people's strengths, independence, choices and wellbeing, rather than just their needs or problems. Staff also learned how to have better conversations with people and families to support positive change.

While the approach is now well embedded in assessment and care management, it needs to be used more consistently in direct care services which will be a focus in 2026-27.

CASE STUDY:

STRENGTHS-BASED, OUTCOMES-FOCUSED PRACTICE

Adult B, aged 38, described how experiencing domestic abuse, trauma and substance misuse from an early age had a significant impact on their life.

"I was scared all the time. I'd snap instantly because that's all I knew."

As an adult, B experienced addiction, repeated periods in prison and fractured family relationships. Prior to receiving support, they described becoming increasingly isolated and withdrawn.

"I wouldn't leave my house except to walk my dog. I stayed in my bedroom for 15 years. I didn't care about myself before. I just let myself go."

Following a series of seizures, Adult B recognised they could no longer cope alone and sought support.

"I felt my body shutting down and I was like, 'Right, now is the point. I can't ignore this anymore'."

Practitioners took time to understand Adult B's experiences, strengths and what mattered most to them. Through strengths-based conversations, they helped Adult B understand the impact of trauma, build on their own motivation to change and draw on support from family and wider networks. Support included detox, rehabilitation and ongoing therapeutic support.

Reflecting on this experience, Adult B said:

"The team built me up. It's mad that someone cares so much about someone they didn't know."

The outcomes that mattered most were improving wellbeing, rebuilding family relationships and living independently.

"My eyes are open. I'm just living my life now. It's an amazing feeling being off the drugs and reuniting with your family."

Outcome: By focusing on Adult B's strengths, resilience and aspirations, practitioners supported sustained recovery, improved wellbeing, stronger family relationships, increased independence and greater voice, choice and control over their future.

People: 2026-27 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES
Ensure that access to prevention and wellbeing services are co-ordinated so people get the right support from the right service at the right time.
Progressing long-term community wellbeing and leisure strategies to support sustainable, community-led services.
Continue to strengthen carers networks, improving awareness of support available, increasing engagement with carers, and acting on what carer's tell us matters to them.
Ensure a consistent and impactful wellbeing offer to all our workforce.
Develop progression pathways so staff are able to see how they can progress their careers in Bridgend County Borough Council.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
Ensure children know who their social worker is and are informed of any changes in a timely way.
Develop a Parent Advocacy Network that helps shape service delivery and improvement.
Increase the opportunities for children and young people to participate and guide the services we provide.
Embed the Most Significant Change and Signs of Safety practice model to ensure practice is consistently of a good quality standard.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE
Implement the Adult Social Care Workforce Plan which includes recruitment, retention, succession planning, leadership development and workforce wellbeing.
Ensure all service areas actively capture and respond to the voice of the person and carers.
Co-produce and implement a Carers Strategy, improving support, assessment, and outcomes for unpaid carers.
Ensure our Community Mental Health services are evidence based, resourced, and organised to meet need and prevent escalation of need.

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

We work with a range of trusted partners to support people to live well and prevent escalation of need.

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.

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

Local Community Co-ordinators and Community Navigators

Preventative services help people get the right support earlier within their own communities. Community Navigators and Local Community Co-ordinators are an important part of this approach, working alongside third sector partners, community groups and other services.

Local Community Co-ordinators work directly with individuals and families to help them stay independent and prevent or delay the need for more formal care and support. They focus on people's strengths, skills and existing support from family, friends and their local community.

Community Navigators complement this work by helping people find and access local groups, activities, services and third sector support. They provide information, signposting and connections into community opportunities, supporting people to remain connected and build their own resilience.

Demand continues to grow significantly, with adults supported by Local Community Co-ordinators increasing by 32% (from 606 to 797) and children and young people supported increasing by 121% (from 140 to 310) between 2024-25 and 2025-26.

Going forward, the focus will be on strengthening how Local Community Co-ordinators, Community Navigators and other preventative services work together. This will include clearer roles and pathways and strengthened links with community and third sector organisations.

Overall, this approach helps people stay independent, connected and supported within their communities, while reducing or delaying the need for more formal care and support.

What Matters to our Carers?

A “what matters” conversation is about understanding what is important to each person. These conversations are as important for carers and young carers as they are for the people they look after. They focus on the carer as a person, not just their caring role, making sure their feelings, goals, and hopes are heard.

The Bridgend Carers Wellbeing Service helps carers by connecting them to local help. The Council carries out carers’ assessments, while TuVida provides advice, support, and helps carers connect with local and community services.

We seek to understand what each carer needs and getting them the right help as soon as possible. This can include practical help, local groups, and activities to improve wellbeing and reduce loneliness. For young carers, wellbeing sessions give them a safe place to build confidence, make friends, and cope better with challenges.

This year, we have seen a 41% increase in carers’ assessments and have held a number of listening events to understand people’s experiences. We understand that for many carers, navigating the social care system has not been easy and that they have not always felt the Council listened to and acted on their concerns. We are working on a plan with them to address this. In addition, we have recruited a new worker to undertake assessments in Adult Social Care.

Supporting *“What Matters”* to Carers & Young Carers

OUR PARTNER TUVIDA:

- Supported **485** new referrals.
- and, signposted **5917** carers to wellbeing support.

THE COUNCIL:

- Supported **852** Young carers with wellbeing opportunities
- **35** assessments for young carers completed during the year.
- **215** assessments for carers of adults completed in the year.

NEXT STEPS::

- Build stronger support networks.
- Reach carers who are not yet known to services.
- Help carers access support earlier.
- Work more closely with partners to provide better, joined-up support.

Young Carers: *We Are Valued Days*

The We Are Valued Days have continued to provide an important opportunity for young carers to have time away from their caring responsibilities, enjoy themselves and spend time with other young people who understand some of the challenges they face.

During 2025-26, 136 young carers attended the We Are Valued Days, supported by local educational settings. Young carers were also encouraged to bring a buddy, helping the days feel welcoming and inclusive and enabling them to enjoy the experience alongside a friend.

The days provide a relaxed and supportive environment with a range of fun and wellbeing activities. Most importantly, they give young carers the opportunity to simply be young people – trying new activities, building friendships, developing confidence and having some valuable time for themselves.

The buddy approach has also helped increase understanding of the young carer role amongst their peers, while ensuring young carers do not feel different or singled out because of their caring responsibilities.

The We Are Valued Days form part of the wider support available through the Bridgend Young Carers Network, helping young carers feel recognised, connected and valued. They complement the wider wellbeing offer, including Young Carer Ambassadors, wellbeing sessions and the Young Carers ID Card.

Impact: The days are helping young carers build positive friendships, reduce isolation, improve confidence and wellbeing, and importantly provide time away from their caring role to focus on themselves and have fun.

Improving Transition Support for Young People with a Disability

Planning transition early for young people with a disability helps ensure that any changes in support happen gradually, so there are no gaps in care, healthcare, or education. We know for most children moving between Children into Adult services, this is a smooth process with continuity of support. However, we also recognise this is not the case for all families and there are areas for development. To support this, a rapid review of how transition support works was completed. This review made recommendations on how to improve support for children, young people, and their families as they move into adulthood.

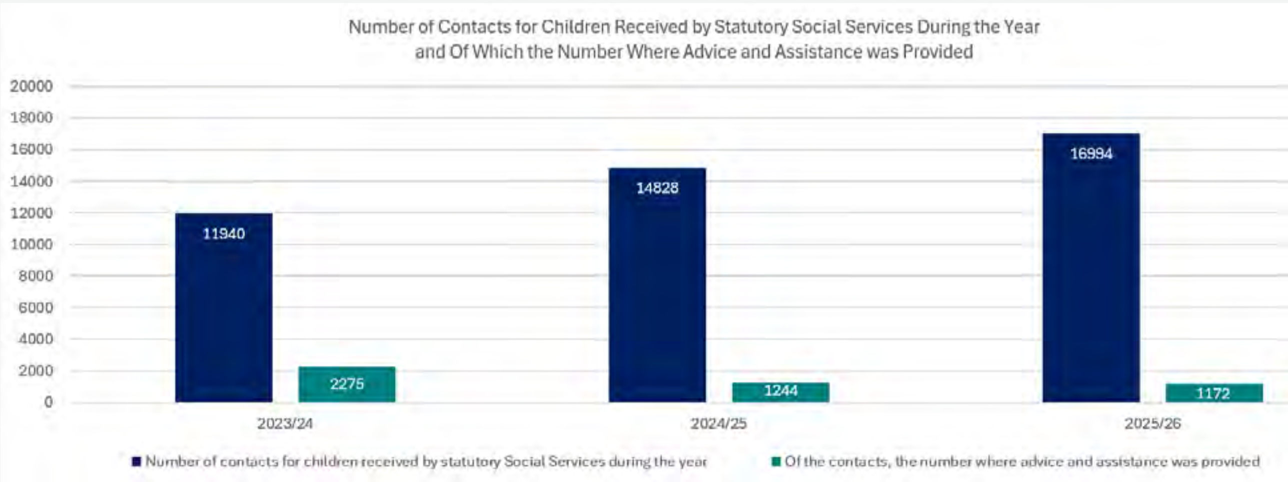
The review found that improvements are needed in how transition is overseen, how decisions are made, having clearer processes, joint training for staff, and giving better information to children and families about the transition process. Addressing these findings is one of our priorities for 2026-27.

Children and Family Services

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

Overview of Contact and Care & Support Needs

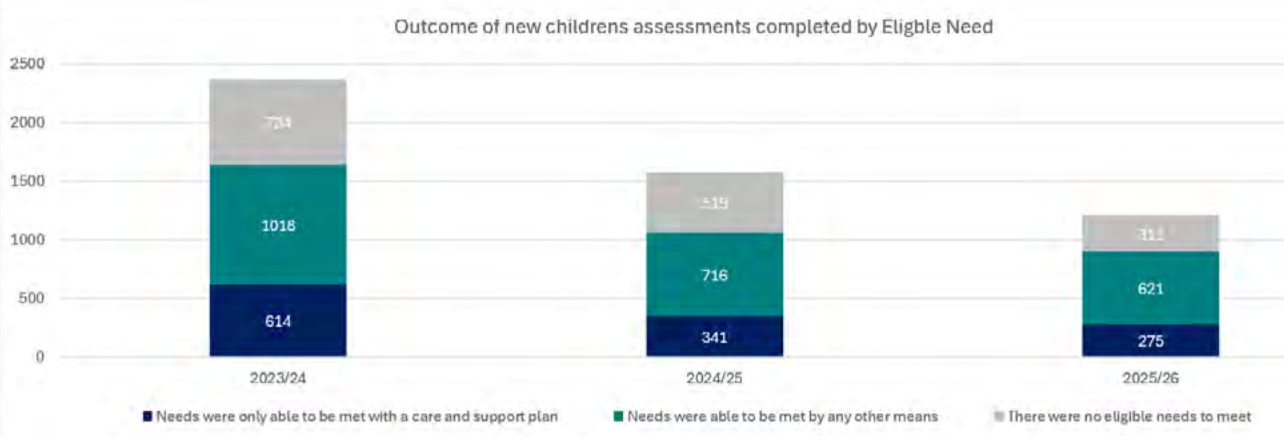
During 2025-26, Children and Family Services received 16,994 contacts, a 15% increase from 14,828 the previous year.



Despite higher numbers of contacts, the proportion progressing to statutory assessment fell from 8% to 7%, reflecting improved screening, decision-making and use of early help support services.

The police remained the highest referrer, consistent with previous years and highlights the importance of strong multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Between April 2025 and March 2026, 1,207 assessments for children and young people were completed, a 23% reduction from 1,576 in the previous year.



This decrease can be attributed in part to the implementation of the Signs of Safety practice framework, which supports earlier and more structured screening of referrals and helps ensure that only children requiring statutory intervention progress to assessment. Signs of Safety has also improved safety planning and decision making by focusing on understanding risks, family strengths, existing support networks, and what matters most to children and their families.

In addition, increased use of Early Help and partnership support may mean that many families' needs are being identified and addressed earlier, reducing the need for statutory assessment while ensuring appropriate support is provided.

Delivering Support for Families

In 2025–26, our Family Support Commissioning Strategy has helped create a clear, joined up approach to early help and prevention. Services now work more closely with frontline teams, with simpler and more consistent ways to make referrals, better oversight of support, and stronger links with safeguarding, Early Help and CFSS. This includes recommissioning parenting and disability support through Barnardo's and strengthening the support available for children with additional needs and their families and making improvements in how we manage direct payments.

Multi agency working has improved, leading to earlier, better co-ordinated support for children and families and less duplication, particularly for those with complex needs. Work with partners across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region has improved consistency and access to services, including support for emotional wellbeing, neurodiversity, pre birth and complex care.

The voice of children, young people and families are shaping services, highlighting the need for flexible, consistent and relationship based support. Investment in the workforce has supported these changes.

Early signs indicate that more families are being supported without the need for statutory intervention, despite increasing demand.

- Children and Family Services received 16,994 contacts in 2025-26, up 15% from 14,828 in 2024-25.
- The proportion of contacts progressing to a statutory assessment fell from 8% to 7%.
- This means a smaller proportion of families required statutory assessment, despite the increase in contacts.

CASE STUDY:

GETTING THE RIGHT HELP WHEN IT MATTERS

A family with two children, one of whom had additional needs linked to neurodiversity, was referred for support due to increasing stress within the home, difficulties accessing appropriate services and concerns around family resilience. The parents reported feeling overwhelmed and unsure how to navigate support systems, which was beginning to impact on relationships within the family and the child's emotional wellbeing.

The family were supported through a co-ordinated multi-agency approach involving Early Help, commissioned parenting and disability support services, education and health professionals. A clear plan was developed with the family, focusing on what mattered most to them and identifying practical support that could reduce stress and improve day-to-day stability.

The family accessed targeted parenting support alongside community based provision, while professionals worked together to improve consistency and communication across services. This ensured support was better aligned to the child's needs.

Over time, parents reported feeling more confident in managing challenges and better able to access the right support at the right time. Relationships within the home improved, school engagement stabilised and the family described feeling more listened to and involved in decision making. The case study highlighted the positive impact of integrated, working in supporting children with additional needs and preventing escalation into more intensive intervention.

Strengthening Fostering Provision and Local Growth

During 2025-26, we improved fostering services by increasing support for carers, improving placement stability and growing local fostering capacity. This supports the Council's aim of helping more children remain in stable family based care, close to their communities, schools and support networks.

A key development was the introduction of the Placement Support Team, which provides practical and therapeutic support to carers and children seven days a week. The team provides early support, helping to support foster families to continue caring. Support includes direct work with children, advice for carers and out-of-hours support. The service is also using referral trends and carer feedback to better understand pressures and improve support.

We worked with Foster Wales to strengthen local recruitment and raise awareness of fostering in Bridgend. Cabinet approved and promoted the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for foster carers, kinship carers and Special Guardians, and progressed a No Detriment policy for kinship carers who become Special Guardians.

The number of approved foster carers remained stable at 63 in March 2026. There was a small increase in available fostering placements, reversing the previous decline in capacity. Carers also reported improvements in some areas of support, although consistency remains a priority.

Priorities for 2026-27 include further developing the Placement Support Team to address the issues that matter to foster carers, strengthening support and training for carers, improving placement stability, increasing local fostering capacity and progressing Step-Down Fostering, Support Care and an enhanced Parent and Child offer which diversify the offer in Bridgend.

Promoting Resilient Communities

Supporting independence and Keeping Families Together

Early Help and CFSS strengthened the offer during 2025–26, improving access to support, delivering strong outcomes for families, and helping more children remain safely at home through timely, targeted intervention.

An improved screening process made it easier for families to access support, enhanced joint working with partners, sped up decisions, reduced duplication, and strengthened support for children with disabilities and their families.

SCREENING TEAM

- **2,661** contacts received
- **2,242** assessments completed (84%)
- **42%** of referrals directed to advice, community support or commissioned services rather than statutory intervention

EARLY HELP HUBS

- **380** referrals received since September 2025
- Most families supported without escalation
- No repeat referrals in the last six months

CFSS

- Supported **322** children at risk of entering care
- **94%** remained safely at home

RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

- **86%** of families remained out of care six months after support ended

We improved support for teenagers this year. The Adolescent Crisis Team and Safer Connections provided targeted support to young people experiencing family breakdown, exploitation and other crises.

Through the use of trauma informed based approaches, services helped to build family resilience, with feedback from families indicating that they felt listened to, understood and well supported throughout their involvement.

CASE STUDY:

ADOLESCENT CRISIS TEAM

A 15-year-old young person was referred to the Adolescent Crisis Team (ACT) following a significant breakdown in family relationships. Conflict at home had escalated, affecting their parent and two younger siblings, both aged under 10. There was an immediate risk that the young person would be unable to remain safely at home and could enter local authority care.

ACT responded immediately to help resolve and de-escalate the crisis. The team undertook intensive visits with the young person and their family, providing practical and emotional support. They helped the family understand what was contributing to the crisis and developed strategies to manage conflict, improve communication and maintain safety within the home.

ACT also co-ordinated support with the wider professional network to ensure everyone was working towards a consistent plan.

As a result, the immediate crisis was de-escalated, family relationships improved, and the young person was able to remain safely at home. The family reported feeling listened to and better equipped to manage future difficulties. This prevented the situation from escalating further and reduced the likelihood of the young person entering care.

Key Priorities for 2026–27:

- Improve timeliness of screening and access to Early Help.
- Strengthen quality assurance.
- Embed consistent practice.
- Expand community-based support services

Supporting Children to Remain with their Families or Return Home Safely

There was positive progress in 2025-26 with our strategy to support more families to live together safely. There are fewer children in care, more children remaining safely with their families or returning home, and clearer, more consistent care plans.

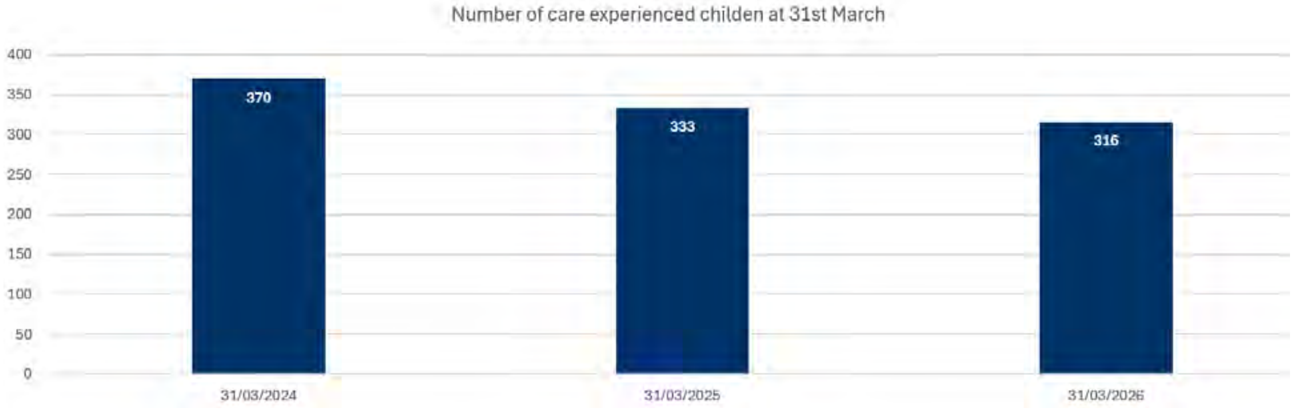
- The number of children in care was 316 at March 2026, 17 fewer than the previous year, continuing a steady decline since 2023.
- 22 children returned home.
- Only 16% of children receiving statutory support required admission to care.
- More children are remaining safely with their families
- During the year, decision-making for children improved, successful returns home increased, and joint working across services strengthened.

Some children need additional support to meet their more complex needs. To address this, we will:

- Establish a specialist team using ‘invest to save’ Council investment to provide intensive support.
- Improve the use of short-term residential care as part of plans to support children to return home.
- Strengthen oversight of connected person care arrangements.
- Build staff confidence in managing more challenging situations.

Care Experienced Children

The number of Care Experienced Children (CEC) has reduced by 5% over the past year, from 333 to 316 children, a decrease of 17 children.



The reduction has been supported by stronger permanence planning, timely decision-making and effective multi-agency working, helping more children achieve stable outcomes.

Placement Commissioning Strategy, Children and Family Services 2025-2030

The Placement Commissioning Strategy, approved by Cabinet in March 2026, outlines how the Council will ensure sufficient suitable accommodation, care and support for care experienced children and young people. It aims to expand local options so children can remain connected to their families, schools and communities where possible, while also supporting safe family reunification when appropriate.

The strategy focuses on strengthening in-house services and not for profit options, improving stability and outcomes, increasing choice and removing reliance on for-profit placements in line with the Health and Social Care (Wales) Act (2025).

Operating Without Registration (OWR) arrangements reduced during the year. In 2024-25, there were 5 children in 7 OWR placements, reducing to 4 children in 4 placements in 2025-26. No new OWR arrangements have started since November 2025.

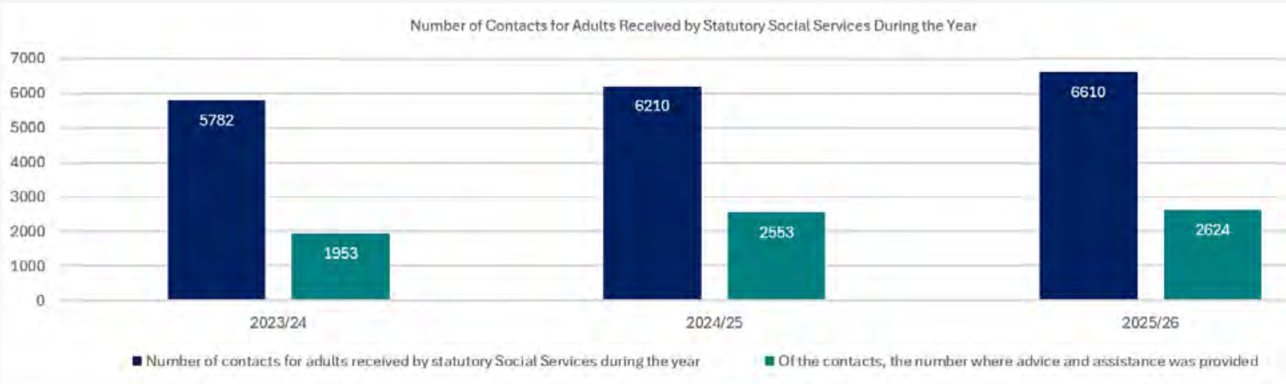
This is a positive trend, helping to ensure children and young people are cared for in regulated services that have been inspected and can provide safer, stable care.

Adult Social Care

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

Overview of Contact and Care & Support Needs

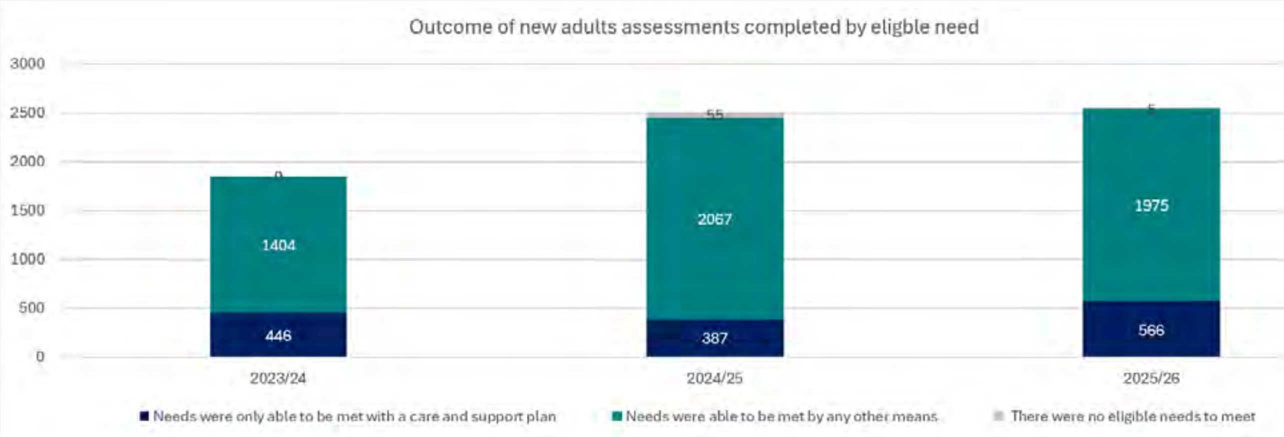
Contacts to Adult Social Care increased by 6%, in 2025-26, rising from 6,210 to 6,610. Health remain the main source of referrals, reflecting continued system pressures.



The proportion of contacts progressing to assessment has remained stable (40% compared to 41% last year). Whilst this demonstrates our ongoing focus providing early advice, information and preventative support the overall numbers of assessments have increased as contacts increased.

Most people do, however, receive the help they need at first contact without requiring a formal assessment, supporting our early intervention and prevention approach. We will be undertaking work to determine if we can support even more people preventatively.

Assessments increased by 2%, from 2,509 in 2024-25 to 2,546 in 2025-26. The increased numbers highlight the challenges of managing the needs of an ageing population and the pressures in the health and social care system.



The proportion of assessments leading to a care and support plan increased from 16% to 22% whilst more work is needed, this may reflect growing complexity of need.

Assisted Recovery in the Community (ARC)

ARC is a key early intervention mental health service in Bridgend, providing accessible advice, guidance, and practical support to people experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties. The service supports Welsh Government priorities around prevention, early intervention, recovery, and reducing pressure on GPs and secondary mental health services.

ARC SERVICES 2025–26

- **578** Advice & Guidance contacts
- **152** Employment Support referrals
- Growing support for neurodiverse individuals
- Strong employment outcomes: **65 people remained in or returned to work**
- New direct pathways into Local Primary Mental Health Support Service (LPMHSS)

We are carrying out a joint review of the ARC service with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.

This review will explore how the service model can be developed and improved. It will involve engagement with key stakeholders, most importantly people who use the service, and consider practical ways to make access to mental health support easier and more effective throughout the county borough.

Unpaid Carers Strategic Group

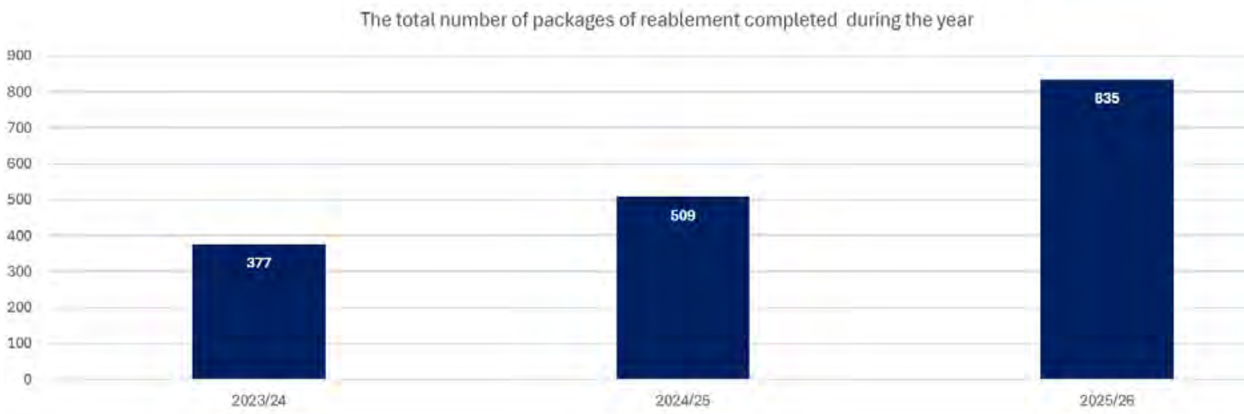
We have established a Carers Steering Group to improve our systems and processes and ensure that more unpaid carers are identified and offered an assessment. Each social work team now has a dedicated link worker to promote good practice and improve support for unpaid carers across services.

At our listening events earlier this year we clearly heard carers views. Using this feedback, we are developing an action plan and training programme. The action plan and guidance will be shared with carers to ensure they shape future improvements.

Here is a video from one of our listening events, bringing carers and professionals together. We want to make sure carers feel heard and valued.

Supporting Independence: Care and Support at Home

The Council's care and support at home service is a reablement service which helps people regain confidence and independence after illness, injury or a stay in hospital. It supports people to rebuild daily living skills so they can do more for themselves and reduce the need for ongoing care and support.



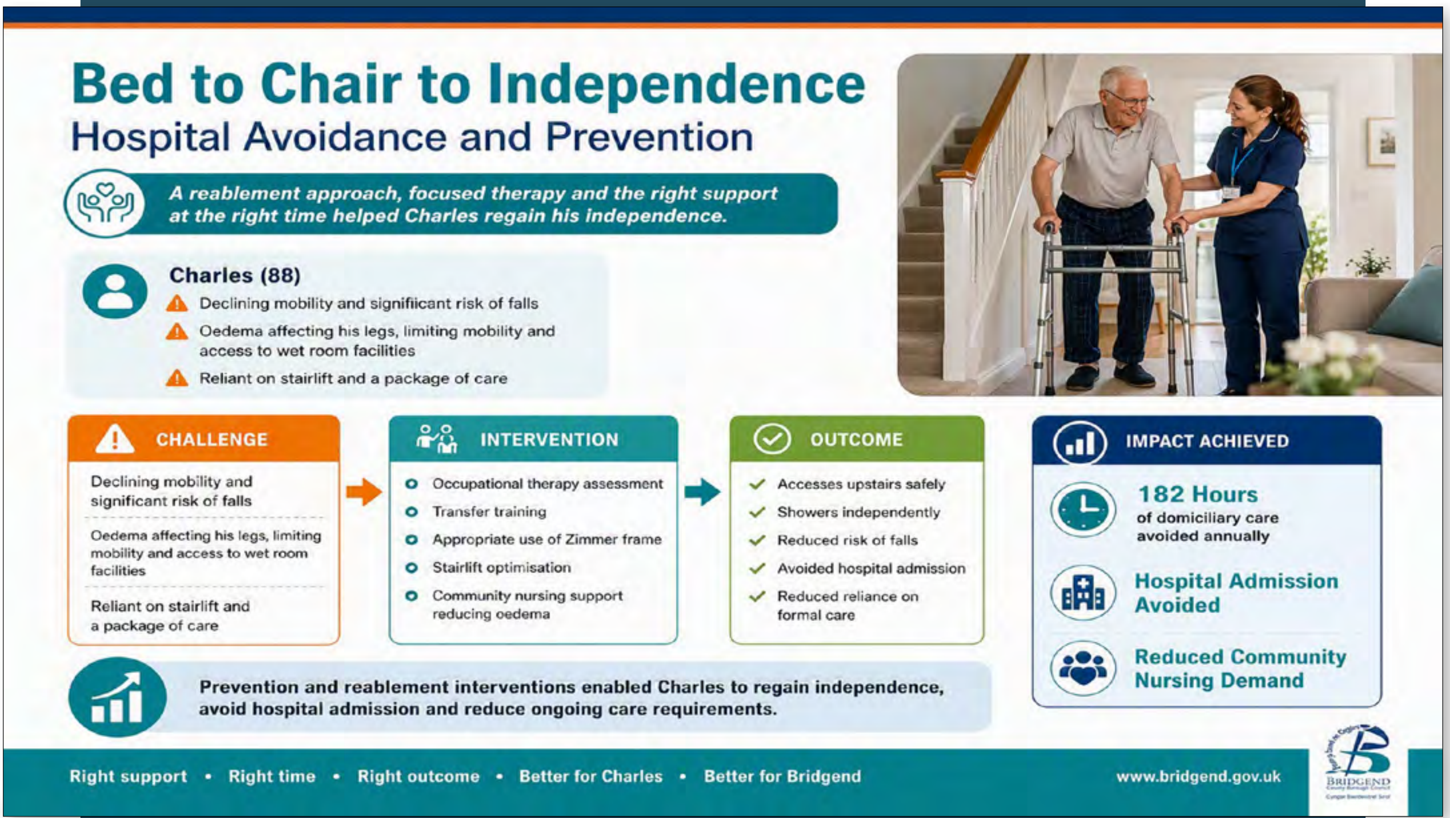
A total of 835 reablement packages were completed in 2025-26, representing a 121% increase over the past three years. This growth is a deliberate strategy as we aim to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to retain or regain independence. Reablement outcomes were:

	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Reablement Packages that **Mitigated** the need for support	67%	56%	50%
Reablement Packages that **Reduced** the need for support	14%	17%	19%
% of Reablement packages that **Maintained** the need for the same level of support	14%	16%	20%
% of Reablement packages that **neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated** the need for support	5%	11%	11%

As the service continues to expand access to short-term reablement support, more residents are benefiting from interventions that help them remain as independent as possible. The service is part of our care and support at home service which delivers excellent person-centred care. We have also developed other initiatives through our integrated initiatives such as our 'bed to chair' project supported by multi-disciplinary teams so everyone has the opportunity to retain as much independence as possible.

CASE STUDY:

PROMOTING & SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE



Supporting People Living with Dementia and their Carers

Improved Pathways to Primary and Secondary Mental Health Care & Support

A new weekly multidisciplinary team (MDT) process has been set up in Older Adult Mental Health Services following learning from a recent safeguarding case to improve communication and coordination between community teams and the Mental Health Liaison Team, which supports care homes and patients at the Princess of Wales Hospital.

The Liaison Team updates on patients in care homes and hospital wards, helping ensure issues are not missed.

We recognise the particular strain on carers who's loved ones are living with dementia and are working creatively to provide person-centred support.

SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY:

THE TEATIME CLUB

The Teatime Club runs late afternoon to support at a time when people living with dementia often experience increased confusion, restlessness and agitation.

The purpose of the group is to provide meaningful engagement and support during this difficult period, helping individuals feel calmer and more settled.

The club offers a safe, structured and welcoming environment with activities such as refreshments, music, reminiscence, crafts and light movement.

These activities aim to reduce distress and promote wellbeing through social interaction and gentle stimulation.

The group also supports carers by offering reassurance and a short period of respite at a particularly challenging time of day.

SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY:

SPECIALIST INTEGRATED DEMENTIA SERVICE AT TY PEN Y BONT

We have developed a community based “outreach” service. This service was designed to help people living with dementia or other cognitive difficulties access the support and services they need early and at the right time.

The service redesign was led by a multidisciplinary team consisting of a Team Leader, Assistant Team Leader, Day Service Assistants, Mental Health Nurse, Occupational Therapist and Occupational Therapy Assistant.

As part of this work, the team:

- Reviewed the dementia resource at Bridgend Resource Centre with a view to developing a community-based outreach model.
- Introduced a Dementia Step-Up/Step-Down Tool in October 2025.
- Developed a Dementia Hub.

Key outcomes of the service are:

- Between April and August 2025, the service supported 91 people living with dementia and their carers, who reported increased resilience and confidence in their caring role.
- 38 hospital admissions were avoided by providing support at the right time.
- The team provided 64 aids and adaptations to help people remain safe and independent at home.
- 32 behaviour plans are developed.

Prevention:
2026-27 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES
Improve transition between children and adult services, progressing the recommendations from the rapid review and integrating with health and education.
Strengthen support for unpaid carers and young carers by increasing the numbers of carers assessments and delivering the carers action plan.
Develop community hubs and local services that help people stay independent and connected.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
Embed support for foster carers to prevent placement breakdowns providing children with stability whilst in care.
Deliver key priorities in relation to foster care recruitment and retention including Step Down foster carers, place based support.
To implement the regional approach to emotional wellbeing, specifically the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Connect Wellbeing panel, which brings partners together to provide the right support from the right service at the right time.
To improve information advice and support to children and families, strengthening quality and the impact of services, expanding community based support.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE
Implement actions arising from the independent evaluation of the adult social care operating model to ensure Information, Advice and Assistance are delivered consistently.
Address increasing need for social care preventatively through enhanced reablement and targeted prevention programmes.
Transform Learning Disability services, including transition, accommodation, progression planning, and daytime opportunities.
Review Occupational Therapy and Sensory Support Services to ensure effective preventative support and independence-focused pathways.
Develop accommodation plans that ensure services are available locally and meet future demand.

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"

Working as One Social Services and Wellbeing Approach

Our social services and wellbeing operating model has effective partnerships at its heart. Partnerships are key to delivering seamless person-centred services.

Regional Arrangements

We work closely with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, and third sector partners as part of the Regional Partnership Board, which is chaired by Bridgend Council's Deputy Leader.

The regional Adult Services Programme Borad has set its priorities for the next five years with a focus on dementia, unpaid carers, mental health, learning disabilities, older people, neurodiversity and people with sensory impairments and disabilities.

The Children's Programme board launched its "Whole System, Whole Heart" strategy which highlights a shared commitment to support emotional wellbeing, early support for families, help for care experienced children, and support for children with disabilities or complex needs.

We are also part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board. This is the statutory safeguarding board which commissions Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews (SUSRs) and oversees the implementation of learning arising from the reviews.

A priority for 2025-26 was the launch and implementation of Regional Threshold and Eligibility Support Guidance to ensure all partners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how services can be accessed. The guidance explains when children and young people need safeguarding support and at what level. It helps all agencies act early, make consistent decisions, work together, and improve protection for vulnerable children across the region.

Local Arrangements

The Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) brings together Children and Family Services, Adult Safeguarding, South Wales Police, education, and probation services. By working together in one place, partners can respond more quickly and effectively to safeguarding concerns.

In Adult Social Care, we work closely with the Health Board through our Community Resource Team (CRT) and Integrated Cluster Network Teams. The CRT provides short term health and social care services to support hospital discharge and prevent admission to hospital. The network teams support people in the community, especially those with long-term health conditions. The service is organised into three local networks linked to GP surgeries. This helps people get care close to home and allows support to change as their needs change. Nine different professions work together meaning we can respond quickly, prevent problems from getting worse, and look at people's overall needs. We also involve families, so people do not have to repeat their story to different professionals and have more choice and control over their care.

We have approved a new formal governance arrangement - a Section 33 agreement - with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board which signals our lasting commitment to our integrated model for community services in Bridgend.

Third Sector Arrangements

Our Prevention and Wellbeing Service works in partnership with third sector organisations, Awen Cultural Trust and Halo Leisure Trust to provide leisure, cultural and wellbeing opportunities that help people stay healthy, independent and connected.

Through targeted services, leisure support, referral programmes and community initiatives, people of all ages are supported to improve their health and wellbeing, build confidence and access activities that enable them to make positive choices and live independently.

During 2025–26, we worked with partners to expand accessible community-based activities for unpaid carers, young carers and their families. Shaped by feedback from carers, people living with dementia and older adults, these opportunities supported wellbeing, social connections and access to local services.

People Supported via Partnership Arrangements

WELLBEING MEMBERSHIPS

2,360 Supporting access to health and wellbeing opportunities

FREE SWIM OFFER

21,683 Community free swimming attendances

SUPER AGERS PARTNERSHIP

3,700 Older people supported to stay active and connected

NATIONAL EXERCISE REFERRAL SCHEME

1,900 People supported through targeted health pathways

LIBRARY & CULTURAL SERVICES

13 Welsh Public Library Standards achieved

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Highest Per capita event attendance in Wales

Partnership working has strengthened referral pathways and increased access to physical activity, dementia-friendly support, wellbeing sessions and community events. Feedback from carers continues to be positive, with many valuing the opportunity to connect with others and access support in welcoming community settings.

In 2026–27, we will focus on developing sustainable, community-led wellbeing and leisure opportunities that continue to meet the needs of carers and local communities.

Effective Partnerships

National Framework for the Commissioning of Care

Following the introduction of the National Framework for the Commissioning of Care and Support in Wales, we undertook a self-assessment against the standards set out.

As a result we have made a number of improvements including changes to our contract templates and contract monitoring arrangements. This has also resulted in additional investment into our Commissioning Team. There has been a recommissioning of care and support at home services this year with new contractual arrangements coming into effect from 1st April 2026. The commissioning emphasises the quality of service and outcomes for individuals supported by care providers.

Emergency Duty Partnership

Following the Care Inspectorate Wales improvement check of Children and Family Services in June 2025, there was a recommendation we provide assurance that emergency duty arrangements are effective across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

An action plan has been developed to ensure improvements, including improved communication between the regional Emergency Duty Team (EDT) and local authority safeguarding teams.

Strengthening Community Navigation and Early Support Pathways

We aim to enable community groups and organisations to have their voice heard. We work closely with:

BAVO: Building resilient and coordinated communities through developing cross sector working with the third sector to support community resourcefulness and resilience.

Bridgend Inclusive Network Group: An umbrella group of organisations who represent children and young people who are differently abled as well as their carers

Young Carers Network: A platform for young carers and young adult carers, the network is driven by young carer ambassadors.

Healthy Living Network: There is a focus on enhancing community support and services enabling local community members to remain independent for as long as possible. The Feel Good for Life programme supporting people living with dementia or cognitive impairment and carers and supports 100+ people. The programme has evidence of 65% increase in confidence levels regarding visiting leisure facilities.

Ageing Well Network: Protecting and promoting older people's rights, making them feel an integral part of the community and recognising that every person has inherent value regardless of age

Active 4 Life:

Supporting Activities Through Town and Community Partnerships

Town and Community Councils support Active 4 Life activities during school holidays. Funding from partners has made it easier for children and young people to take part in holiday activities in their local communities.

The programme has had a positive impact, shown by high participation and continued involvement from families and partners. A total of 2499 individual children and young people were supported in 2025-26, with 7930 attendances recorded.

Attendance data, feedback from families, and continued support from partners show that the programme helps children and young people stay active, connect with others, and remain engaged during school holidays. Working with Town and Community Councils has been a strength, allowing activities to be offered within local communities.

People As Equal Partners

Working with Partners and People to Develop Community Opportunities

The Bridgend Young Carers Network has helped more children, young people and families take part in community wellbeing, leisure and support activities. Here is a snapshot of support provided via the Young Carers Network:

Bridgend Young Carers Network

The Bridgend Young Carers Network, led by young carer ambassadors aged 11–25, continued to provide opportunities for young carers to have their voices heard and help shape future services and activities

852	Young Carers ID cards rolled out	23	Opportunities where Young Carers have volunteered or supported events
227	Primary school children involved	136	Carers attended the 'We Are Valued' days, supported by educational settings
615	Comprehensive and Young Adult Carers involved	160	Young Carers attended the Network Day
64	Partner organisations supporting the Young Carers network	403	Halo Young Carers memberships
33	Young Carer Ambassadors	927	Halo Young Carers household memberships

Work with BING and partner organisations has helped more than 220 children and young adults with disabilities, along with their families, to take part in inclusive wellbeing and leisure activities through community programmes and referrals. BING has also supported 27 community organisations, created 30 community opportunities, and supported over 80 individuals with a disability to get involved.

Participation data, feedback from those involved, and ongoing partnership work all show a positive impact. There are now improved opportunities for young carers and families to access support in their local communities. In the coming year, priorities include strengthening the network, increasing participation in events, and developing more inclusive, community led opportunities.

Library, Culture and Community Hubs

Work to consult and engage people about future priorities for Library, Culture, and Community Hub services has been commissioned through partnerships, strategic discussions, and early community mapping.

The first Community Hub Strategic Board met in February, bringing together a range of partners, strengthening partnership working and strategic oversight. Feasibility tenders have also been awarded and expressions of interest submitted for future capital funding opportunities to support community hub development. Town and Community Councils has been a strength, allowing activities to be offered within local communities.

Children and Family Services

People As Equal Partners

Bridgend Youth Voice Forum

We support the Bridgend Youth Voice, a forum for care experienced young people and care leavers aged 12 to 21. The forum gives young people a chance to share their views and help shape services that affect them.

The forum is run by TGP Cymru, with support from the Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer and works with national organisations, including the Children's Commissioner for Wales, to improve outcomes for children in care.

To recognise the achievements of care experienced children and young people, a range of activities were held over the past year. This included a celebration day at Pencoed College, where children, young people and their families and carers took part in a variety of activities.

To find out how our work had made a difference over the year, the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing met with the Youth Forum and asked them three important questions. Their answers identified a number of key themes.

1. What has gone well?

Supportive relationships

- Carers, personal advisors and care home staff provided support.
- The Advocacy Service is helpful.
- Forum works well in ensuring voices are heard.

Education, skills and future goals

- Young people reported doing well academically.
- Supported to pursue interests and hobbies.
- Supported to obtain necessary training for future employment.

Preparation for Independence

- Provided with support to move to independent living.
- Supported with navigating housing and next steps.

2. What has not gone so well?

Lack of Information and Guidance

- More timely information needed on further education options.
- Don't always know who or how to ask for support.
- More signposting and reference points needed.

Inconsistent Support

- Changes in social worker, hard to build trust.
- Social Workers not always available.
- Changes in social workers not always explained.

Placement Stability

- Placement moves.
- Moved at short notice.

3. How can the support be improved?

Better planning and preparation

- Placement moves should be planned and explained

Communication

- More timely responses from professionals.
- Communication of changes.

Support and Communication

- Fewer changes in social workers.
- Social workers should meet the young person first, before reading their profile.
- More support needed for care leavers.
- Support should extend beyond 9–5, especially evenings.

These comments were shared by forum members with the Director during the meeting.

Adult Social Care

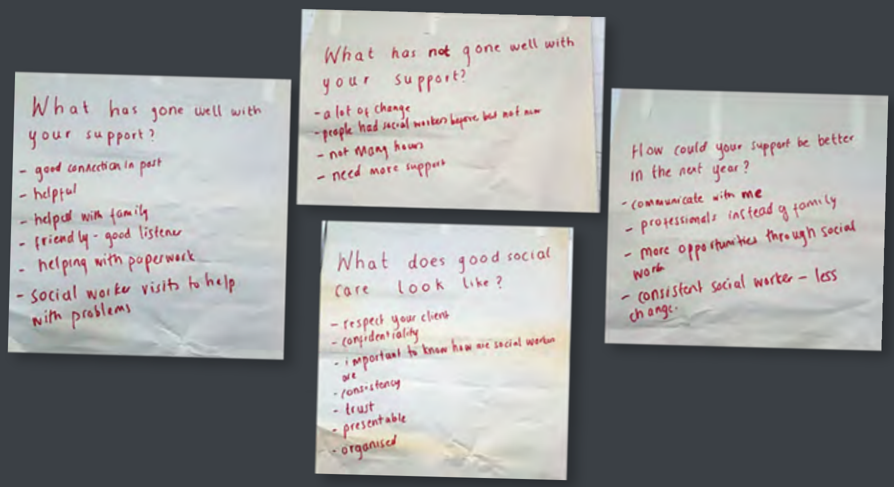
People As Equal Partners

People First Bridgend

People First Bridgend is a third sector organisation that supports adults with learning disabilities in Bridgend. They empower people to understand and use their rights, access services, and take an active part in their communities.

We work closely with People First Bridgend and to understand the difference this partnership has made over the past year, the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing met with the group to discuss a number of questions.

Before the Director's meeting, the group met to talk through the questions and help everyone feel prepared and confident to give their own answers.



Discussions between Bridgend People First and the Director identified several key points.

What has gone well during the year?

- People feel supported and safe
- Confidence and independence are growing
- Advocacy makes a big difference
- People are active in their community
- People First are supporting a parent to set up a Parent and Carer Forum

What has not gone well in the year?

- No allocated worker, rely on duty workers
- Difficulties accessing transport links
- Some activities are not suitable / interesting
- Limited employment opportunities

How can we make things better?

- Consistent Social Work Support
- Accessible (easy read) information across the Council
- Training on travel skills to further support independence
- Day time activities that suit our interests
- More volunteering and employment opportunities to be made available

Partnership & Integration: 2026-27 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES
Involve people with lived experience in designing and improving services.
Strengthen our work with Halo Leisure, Awen Cultural Trust , BAVO and other key network / partners.
Progress integrated community hubs providing local access to health, wellbeing support and community services.
Improving partnership data and impact reporting.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
Training for partner agencies across the region to support consistent application of the threshold guidance.
Involve partners from education, health, police, parents and carers in our work to safely support more families to stay together.
To continue to develop and improve working practices between partner agencies to improve outcomes for children and families.
To review support for our care-experienced children and care leavers by reviewing our 15+ team and explore opportunities around developing lifelong links approach involving key partners.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE
Lead joint reviews and service redesign with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board including Assisted Recovery in the Community (ARC), Continuing Health Care (CHC), Section 117, Section 28A and Bridgend Resource Centre arrangements.
Embed integrated management arrangements and governance structures within CRT and the Community Networks with strengthened leadership capacity.
Strengthen collaboration with housing, health, third sector and community partners.

Wellbeing

Quality Standards

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

"People are supported to actively **manage their wellbeing** and make their own decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and **live independently** for as long as possible"

Across Social Services

Wellbeing is supported through a range of services, activities and safeguarding arrangements that help people stay healthy, safe, independent and connected to their communities.

People are Protected and Safeguarded

The Corporate Safeguarding Board

The Corporate Safeguarding Board oversees how the Council corporately protects children and adults at risk. It makes sure all parts of the Council manage safeguarding effectively and follow the law, including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

An Internal Audit report for 2025-26 confirmed that the Board is well established and effectively oversees safeguarding across the Council. We have introduced safeguarding self-assessments across directorates. These help services review their own strengths and areas for improvement using a simple rating system to identify and ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding across the Council.

We have raised awareness of safeguarding across the wider workforce by updating intranet guidance, promoting referral processes, and improving communication between the Board, services, and partners. This helps ensure safeguarding is understood and embedded across all areas of Council work.

Training and Development: Single Unified Safeguarding Reviews (SUSRs)

In 2025-26, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board published 2 SUSRs relating to Bridgend Adults: 1 Domestic Homicide Review (2022) and 1 Adult Safeguarding Review (2021). There were no SUSRs for children published this year.

Learning from the reviews included raising awareness of domestic violence, mental health and suicide support across the region including preventative education in schools for children and young people. Learning also included educating education and social care staff on identifying the indicators of domestic violence, mental health and suicide for children, adults and families.

Over 2025-26 the Regional Safeguarding Board has taken learning from its quality assurance activity and SUSR's into its annual training and work program for 2026-27. Focussing on aligning the safeguarding training the with Wales Safeguarding Procedures and ensuring the areas of Domestic Violence, Mental health and Suicide awareness take the focus. The Board is developing it's 2026-2029 strategic plan which will be published later this year.

In Bridgend, we are implementing the regional exploitation strategy for children and young people which will be reviewed as part of the Board's annual quality assurance workplan for 2026-27.

A safeguarding review in North Wales has also been considered within Bridgend and across the region to ensure the learning identified within that report is taken forward in all parts of Wales. A sub-group of the corporate safeguarding board has been developed to ensure the actions identified within the review are implemented in Bridgend, providing further protection to our children and young people.

Children and Family Services

People are Protected and Safeguarded

Implementing the Regional Exploitation Strategy

Since September 2025, a regional exploitation pathway, guidance, and processes have been introduced. Multi-agency training, staff briefings, and member updates have supported the rollout, alongside a local partnership workstream over the past year. The strategy is supported by guidance for social workers and ACT which provides intensive support to young people and families facing exploitation risks.

CASE STUDY:

MULTI AGENCY INTERVENTION & IMPROVED OUTCOMES

Young Person B first came to the attention of the local authority in September 2024 after an incident involving anti-social behaviour. Over the following months, they were involved in several similar incidents, including criminal damage, disorderly behaviour in public, and causing nuisance to local residents and businesses.

In response, agencies put a structured plan in place to address their anti-social behaviour. However, during mid to late 2025, concerns continued. Young Person B was still involved in incidents such as criminal damage and behaviour that caused distress to others. At the same time, there were growing worries about Young Person B's safety and wellbeing. They were reported missing on several occasions and were spending time with people who placed them at risk.

Due to these concerns, a multi-agency meeting was held and safeguarding procedures were started. By December 2025, the case moved onto the Child Sexual Exploitation family pathway due to concerns about the peer group, substance misuse, and ongoing missing episodes. During this period, Young Person B was also not attending mainstream school due to exclusion.

A range of targeted support was put in place. Young Person B received support from Youth Justice services and began attending an education setting. They also became involved in positive activities, including mechanics and training, which gave them structure and a positive focus. Progress was supported by strong relationship based work, particularly the trust Young Person B developed with their social worker.

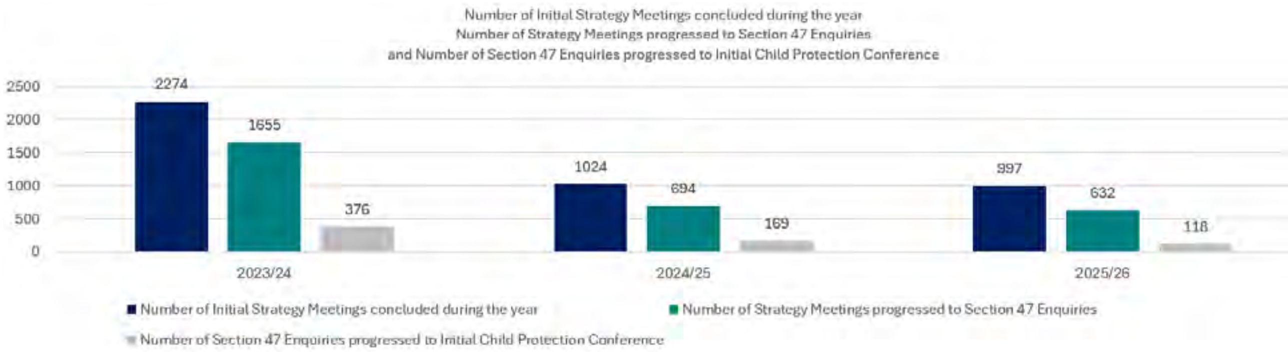
Since these interventions were introduced, there has been significant improvement. Young Person B has not been reported missing for several months, has re-engaged with education and continues to take part in activities.

Family feedback:

The family report that Young Person B is now calmer and no longer going missing. This has reduced stress within the home, allowing family members to relax and focus on each other and their work. They are now able to work shifts without worrying about Young Person B's safety. They also shared that Young Person B has developed a strong interest in training, which has been a very positive outlet.

Children Safeguarding Enquiries

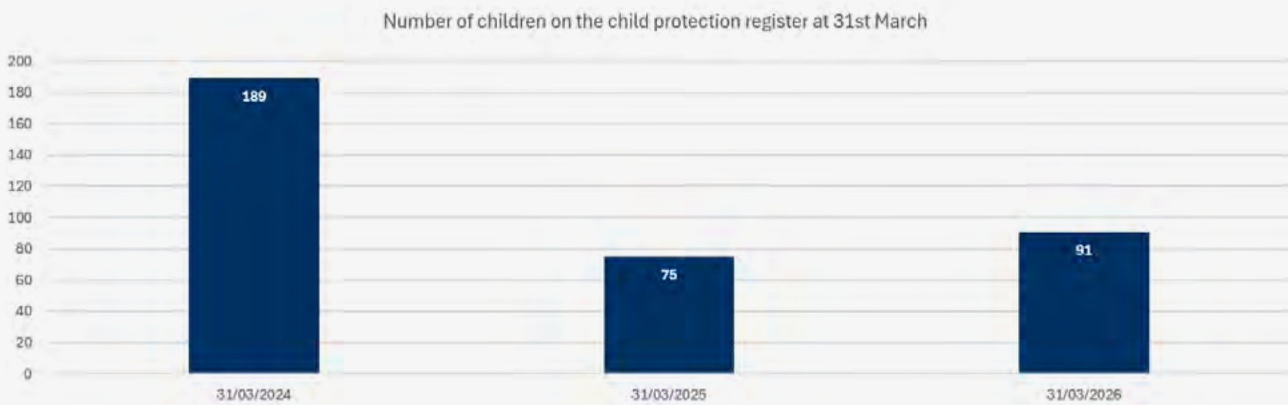
Over the last year, the number of initial safeguarding strategy meetings fell slightly by 3%, from 1,024 to 997. Fewer cases went on to require further safeguarding action, those progressing to Section 47 enquiries reduced by 9% and those progressing to an initial child protection conferences reduced by 30%.



This reflects a more proportionate response, with statutory intervention used only when necessary. Work with partner agencies, including reflective learning sessions and the use of Signs of Safety mapping has supported more consistent, effective and well-informed multi-agency decision-making.

Child Protection Registrations

At the end of March 2026, 91 children were on the Child Protection Register (CPR), compared with 75 at the same time last year.



The introduction of the Signs of Safety framework, alongside a more stable and experienced workforce, has strengthened risk assessment, planning and decision making. CPR numbers are now more closely aligned with regional and Welsh averages.

Promoting Children's Engagement and Consistent Record Keeping in Case Conferences

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service has taken steps to increase young people's attendance at their reviews by developing tools and approaches that make the process more accessible. This includes creating an animation to help children and their families understand what a Signs of Safety Child Protection Conference is and what to expect. The service has also introduced an online feedback system using QR codes, allowing participants to share their experiences. This has been in place since February 2026 and is based on research, helping the service to better understand and improve how meetings are experienced.

Alongside this, the IRO Service has engaged directly with children and young people through forums and events, and this feedback has helped shape the co-produced IRO Pledge to Young People.

The service places strong emphasis on ensuring the child's voice is central. Preparation before meetings has increased to help children feel more able to take part, for example by offering advocacy, flexible ways of attending (including virtual or partial attendance), and opportunities to share views separately. Children's views and wishes are consistently included in reports and decision making. Where children are unable to attend, their views are still represented through other means, such as trusted adults or direct work carried out by social workers and follow-up communication is provided through child-friendly letters and resources.

EXAMPLE OF FEEDBACK FROM A YOUNG PERSON WHO RECENTLY ATTENDED A CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE:

"It was okay. I don't like people much; I have social anxiety but don't mind talking. The building was okay. I was given lots of options for speaking and sharing my views."

How the Service Responded to the Feedback:

As the young person also reported feeling overwhelmed by the number of attendees in the meeting, the IRO team is taking steps to improve practice by limiting professional attendance where appropriate, ensuring representation through a single spokesperson, and critically reviewing attendee lists to ensure they are proportionate to the decision-making requirements of the meeting.

Adult Social Care

People are Protected and Safeguarded

Safeguarding Team

Over the past year, Bridgend's Adult Safeguarding Team has performed strongly both locally and regionally, and is leading developments for the Regional Safeguarding Board. Several approaches developed in Bridgend, including the safeguarding consultation process, are now being adopted by other local authorities.

The team is responding to concerns more quickly, providing proportionate support and carrying out thorough enquiries. Lead Co-ordinators now oversee Police Protection Notices (PPNs), MARAC and MAPPA processes, strengthening professional oversight and improving support for people at risk.

In HMP Parc, the team's work has received positive feedback, particularly the contribution of the Occupational Therapist, the Significant Attempts Group and the STEPS Project, which uses peer support and lived experience. Together, these initiatives have helped reduce violence and suicide attempts within the prison.

CASE STUDY:
SAFEGUARDING BEST PRACTICE

An 18-year-old care leaver entering custody for the first time was referred to the Severe Self-Harm Rapid Response Panel due to a history of serious self-harm and suicide attempts.

A multi-agency plan was put in place to manage risk, promote wellbeing and build on the individual's strengths. Support included safety planning, family contact, access to positive activities and emotional wellbeing support.

Despite challenges linked to court delays and uncertainty, the individual engaged well with services and developed positive relationships with professionals. As a result, risk was better managed, wellbeing improved and plans were put in place to support future stability and resettlement.

HMP Parc Social Work Team

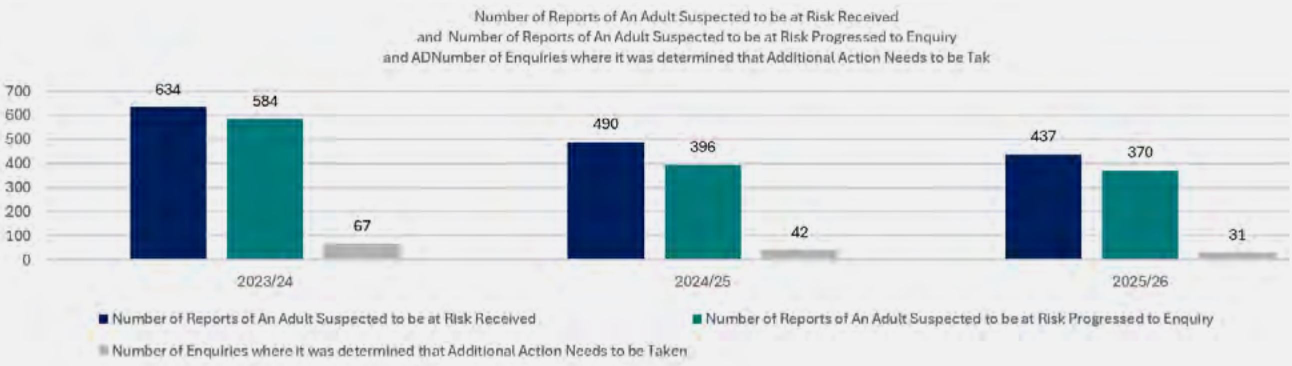
The HMP Parc Social Work Team has strengthened its relationship with prison staff through joint working and training, helping staff better understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

The team is now fully integrated within the prison, providing advice and support across all areas and helping prisoners access the right support at the right time.

The introduction of a Significant Attempts of Suicide and Self-Harm Forum has improved support for high-risk prisoners through tailored plans and timely interventions, This has contributed to a reduction in violence.

Strong safeguarding arrangements are maintained through regular partnership meetings, with the prison's Safeguarding Lead actively who is involved in Safeguarding Board discussions and working closely with MASH to seek advice and share good practice.

Safeguarding Reports



During 2025-26, the team received 437 contacts, compared with 490 in 2024-25, a decrease of 11%.

This reduction is due to the consultation process now being well established within the team. Professionals are encouraged to discuss concerns with the team before deciding whether an Adult at Risk (AAR) referral is needed. As a result, the Adult at Risk referrals received by the team are now more appropriate and consistent, with a high proportion progressing to an enquiry.

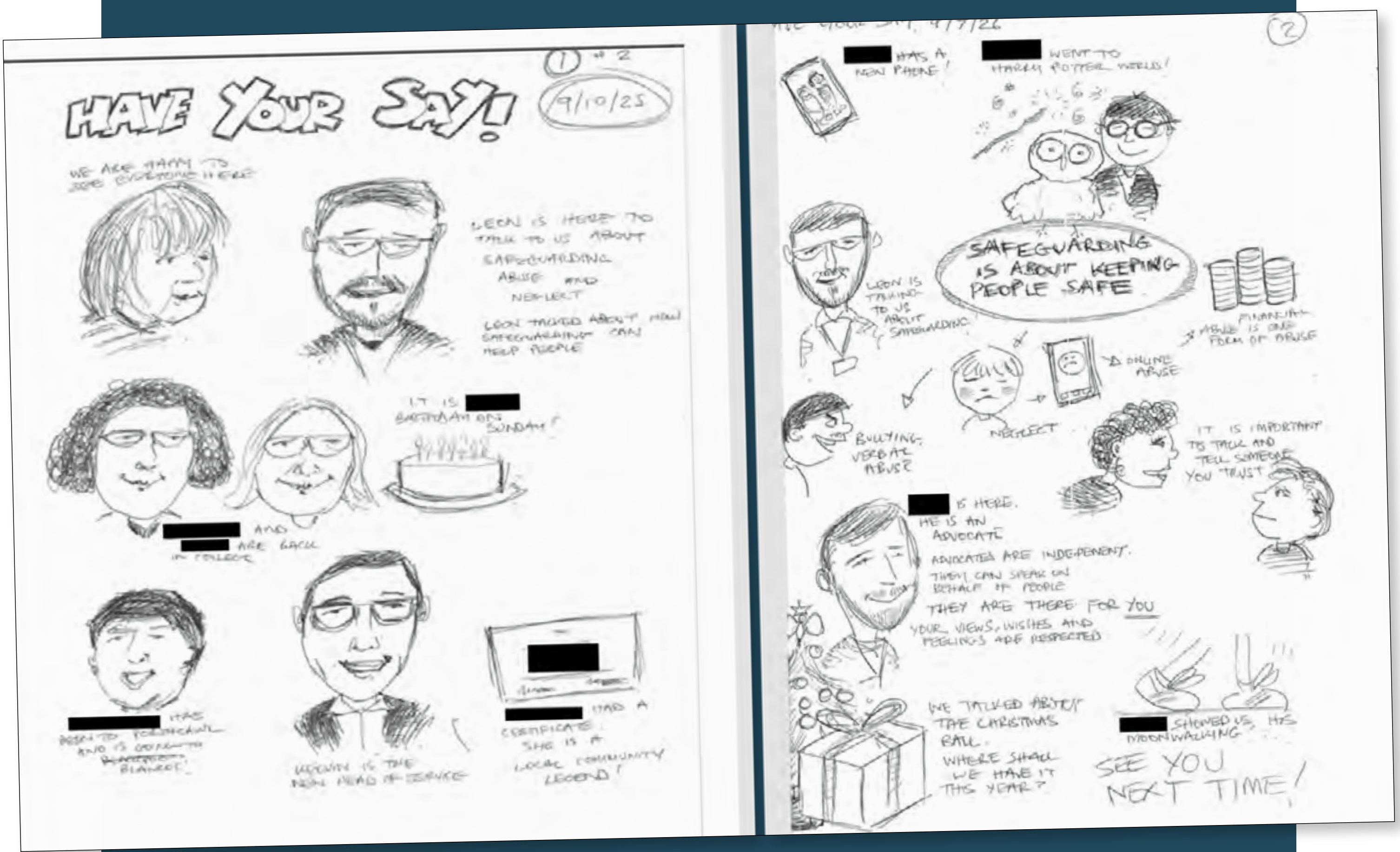
Learning Disability Safeguarding Group

A safeguarding focus group was established to improve understanding of adult safeguarding among adults with learning disabilities and to explore their experiences of the safeguarding process.

Accessible workshops were delivered using easy read materials, bringing together members of the Having a Say and People First groups to promote engagement, learning, and discussion.

The sessions increased participants' understanding of safeguarding, including recognising abuse, reporting concerns, and understanding what happens during a safeguarding enquiry.

Here are examples from the minutes of two separate Having Your Say meetings that highlight the people's engagement.



Wellbeing, Choice and Independence

While safeguarding is an important part of wellbeing, wellbeing is about more than keeping people safe from abuse, neglect or harm. It also means supporting people to stay as healthy, independent and connected as possible, make their own choices, and achieve the things that are important to them.

This report outlines a number of key examples that reflect these wider aspects of wellbeing, including promoting health, independence, choice and positive outcomes. The following case studies from Children's and Family Services and Adult Social Care provide further examples of how wellbeing is actively supported in practice.

CASE STUDY:

SUPPORTING FAMILY WELLBEING AND BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

A family with three children were supported by Early Help following involvement from statutory services due to concerns relating to domestic abuse, escalating conflict within the home and difficulties managing the behaviour of one of the children. The family reported feeling overwhelmed and described relationships within the home as increasingly strained, with communication having broken down between family members.

An Early Help Family Support Worker completed a Signs of Safety assessment with the family, focusing on understanding what mattered most to them and identifying existing strengths and support networks. The intervention centred around improving routines and boundaries within the home, supporting positive communication, and helping parents develop confidence in managing challenging behaviour. The family were also linked into community based domestic abuse support and parenting interventions.

Work was delivered in a flexible and relationship based way, with regular home visits and practical support tailored around the family's needs. Over time, the family began to engage more consistently, conflict within the home reduced, school attendance improved and parents reported feeling more confident in managing situations independently.

At the end of the intervention, the family reported that they felt listened to and supported without feeling judged. They stated that having one consistent worker helped them remain focused during a difficult period and prevented issues from escalating further.

CASE STUDY:

INCREASED INDEPENDENCE & SERVICE REDUCTION

Adult D, aged 52, experienced a stroke which had a significant impact on their independence. They initially required support from three staff members, four times a day, to meet their care needs.

Their condition was also affecting their ability to continue with their university course. Through support from the Integrated Network Team, Adult D received input from Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Dietetics and Social Work services.

Changes were made to their equipment, and therapy staff worked closely with Adult D to reduce the level of support needed. A new care package was then developed, enabling them to return to their university studies.

The changes not only increased Adult D's independence and supported them to do what mattered to them but also reduced their care and support by 728 hours a year.

Wellbeing:
2026-27 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES
Deliver the directorate's digital strategy by enhancing case management system readiness and implementing innovative technologies, including technology enabled care (TEC) Magic Notes, Copilot and quality assurance tools.
Make it easier for people to find information, advice and support when they need it.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
Fully embed the regional exploitation strategy fully ensuring young people are protected from harm.
Improve how the voice of children is reflected within their assessments and care plans.
Encourage children's participation in meetings that are about and affect them so their voice is central in decision-making about them.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE
Embed safeguarding learning from Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSRs).
Use performance, quality and customer feedback information to drive continuous improvement.

4 OTHER INFORMATION

Inspections and Reviews

Care Inspectorate Wales undertakes inspections and improvement activity to provide assurance that services are safe, effective and promote positive outcomes for people who use them. Inspection findings are used to support learning and continuous improvement across the Directorate.

Children and Family Services

In June 2025, CIW undertook an assurance check of the local authority and fostering services. The findings from the inspection highlighted "significant improvements" across the service. This included the recognition of the improved workforce position with less reliance on agency staff, our "Grow Our Own" model supporting increased permanent recruitment, our international social work recruitment programme. Improvements were noted in relation to Senior Management and Management oversight and improved morale within the workforce with 86% of staff reporting that they would recommend working in Bridgend to others.

Significant improvements were also noted within Fostering Services with all previous areas of concerns resolved and a small number of recommendations related to training and reviews of carers as areas for improvement.

CIW made a series of recommendations which are being taken forward and will be a part of a new 3-year strategic plan that will commence in September 2026.

During 2025, CIW also undertook inspections across the Council's regulated children's residential services. Overall, inspections identified good quality care and recognised the progress made since the previous inspection cycle.

Three services, Hillsboro, Harwood House and Sunny Bank (August 2025), achieved 'Good' rating across all inspection themes. Inspectors highlighted children's voices being heard, the use of advocacy and child-friendly information, trauma-informed and personalised support, increasingly stable staff teams and strong leadership and management arrangements. Children were supported to maintain positive relationships, engage in education and develop independence skills.

Following presentation of the inspection findings to Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting, further inspections were completed at Hillsboro and Bakers Way. These inspections were positive, with no Areas for Improvement identified.

Adult Social Care

During 2025–26, inspections of the Council's in-house residential services demonstrated positive outcomes and reflected the commitment of staff and managers to delivering high-quality, person-centred care.

Bryn y Care Residential Home achieved an 'Excellent' rating for Wellbeing and 'Good' ratings across Care and Support, Environment and Leadership and Management. Inspectors recognised the warm and welcoming environment, meaningful activities and community links, positive relationships between residents and staff and effective governance arrangements.

In recognition of the commitment and dedication of staff, colleagues from Bryn y Cae Residential Home attended the Buckingham Palace Garden Party during 2025. This prestigious invitation provided an opportunity to celebrate the contribution made by the team and reflected the positive culture and high standards of care delivered across Bridgend's residential services.

Ty Cwm Ogwr Residential Home achieved 'Good' ratings across all four domains. Inspectors highlighted the kindness and compassion demonstrated by staff, effective safeguarding arrangements, safe medication management and a clean, welcoming environment. Despite a period of staffing challenges, inspectors recognised the impact of leadership and positive culture within the home.

Ty Ynysawdre and Ty Llwynderw both achieved 'Good' ratings across all four domains. Inspectors highlighted positive wellbeing outcomes, person-centred care, effective safeguarding and medication management arrangements, welcoming environments and strong leadership and management. Staff teams were recognised for promoting dignity, choice and independence, with robust quality assurance arrangements supporting continuous improvement. No Areas for Improvement or Priority Action Notices were issued following either inspection.

No Areas for Improvement or Priority Action Notices were issued following the inspections of adult residential services undertaken during 2025–26.

HMP Parc

HM Inspectorate of Prison's independent review report of HMP Parc in January 2026 highlighted:

*"Social Care provision was **effective** and **well managed**."*

&

*"A well-resourced social care team was based in the prison, which created **good visibility** and **accessibility**."*

Alongside this, the team were recognised with a partnership award for providing unwavering support to individuals with complex health conditions, as well as those who are requiring end of life care:

"The team go unnoticed in such a large establishment and feel they should have the recognition they deserve for being such a fantastic team".

Learning and Improvement

Inspection findings across Children and Family Services and Adult Social Care demonstrate the commitment of staff and managers to providing safe, compassionate and person centred services.

Learning from inspections is embedded within service improvement plans and monitored through established governance and quality assurance arrangements, including the Directorate's Regulatory Tracker, quarterly corporate performance arrangements and annual self-assessment processes. This ensures that areas identified through regulatory activity continue to inform practice, strengthen services and support positive outcomes for children, young people, adults and carers.

Complaints and Representations

Complaints about social services are dealt with under the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Welsh Government's guidance, "A Guide to Handling Complaints and Representations by Local Authority Social Services." These frameworks give people a way to raise concerns about the services they receive and help ensure complaints are handled fairly and as quickly as possible.

Over the last year, the number of complaints we received increased slightly by 3%.The most common concerns raised were about communication, staff behaviour, and decisions relating to case management and reviews. Together, these accounted for 38% of all complaints received.

We always aim to provide a good local resolution for the people, families and carers who use our services. This approach was successful in 98% of cases, with complaints being resolved either informally or at Stage 1 of the statutory complaints process.

The remaining 2% of complaints were investigated via the stage two (formal) statutory procedure. At this stage, an independent investigator reviews the complaint and produces a report of their findings. The report may include recommendations to help us improve the services we provide.

We regularly review complaints to identify what we are doing well and where we can improve. We also make sure that any recommendations and lessons learned from Stage 2 complaints are put into practice. In response to stage 2 complaints received during the year, here is a summary of learning outcomes implemented:

SERVICE AREA	LEARNING OUTCOME
Adult Social Care	• Targeted service improvements in Adult Social Care included identifying the need to strengthen understanding of the duty to proactively offer carers' assessments, improve clear and accessible communication, and ensure consistent identification of eligible carers. • In response, the service has delivered staff workshops, established a dedicated Carers Assessment Social Worker role, introduced enhanced auditing and monitoring, and embedded actions within the Carers Steering Group and training programme. • This has resulted in improved staff awareness, governance, and consistency, with a stronger emphasis on proactive, person-centred support and improved experience for carers and those seeking help.

SERVICE AREA	LEARNING OUTCOME
Children and Family Services / Education Engagement Team	• Complaint investigation findings highlighted the need to strengthen governance, confidentiality, and consistency in handling referrals involving staff, alongside improving clarity for schools on safeguarding processes and thresholds. • In response, the service is developing a joint protocol for managing referrals, reinforcing a strict 'need to know' approach, and enhancing partnership working with schools through training, audits, and ongoing engagement to improve understanding of referral processes and safeguarding thresholds. • Improvements also include a focus on robust and accurate record-keeping, supporting accountability and transparency. Collectively, these actions strengthen safeguarding practice, information governance, and consistency of decision-making, leading to improved confidence in how concerns are managed.

The Citizen Voice Body

The Citizen Voice Body, known as Llais is an independent organisation that helps people have their say about health and social care services in Wales. It works to make sure that people's views are heard and considered when services are planned, delivered, and improved.

Llais, which is the Welsh word for Voice, also provides free advocacy support and advice to help people raise concerns or make complaints about health and social care services.

During 2025–26, we received one complaint about Adult Social Care that was raised with the support of a Llais advocate.

You can find more information about complaints and feedback in Bridgend in the Social Services Complaints and Feedback 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

KEY PARTNERS / ADVOCACY SUPPORT

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

KEY LEGISLATION / GUIDANCE

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

Welsh Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2035

Health and Social Care (Wales) Act (2025)

5

Glossary

Active Offer This is the Welsh Government commitment to provide health and social care services in Welsh without people having to ask for them. Welsh language services should be offered as a standard part of care.

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.

Assistive Technology Equipment or technology that helps people in Wales live more independently and carry out everyday activities.

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 wellbeing 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.

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.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Legal framework used protect the public. It brings together different organisations, such as the police, probation and prison services, to manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders.

Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) A regular confidential meeting where different organisations work together to share information and create safety plans for people who are at high risk of serious harm from domestic abuse.

Mwy Na Geiriau / More than Just 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.

Operating Without Registration (OWR) When a care provider is delivering a service that legally requires registration with the relevant regulator but is doing so without being registered.

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.

Police Protection Notice (PPN) A form completed by the police when there are concerns about someone's safety or wellbeing, so that appropriate support or safeguarding action can be considered.

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.

Section 33 Agreement A formal arrangement in Wales allowing the NHS and local councils to work together by sharing budgets, resources, and responsibilities for delivering care services.

Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) A multi-agency review of a serious safeguarding incident to understand what happened, identify learning, improve safeguarding practice, and help prevent similar incidents in the future.

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 wellbeing 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.

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
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
BRIDGEND
County Borough Council

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Meeting of:	**COUNCIL**
Date of Meeting:	**23 SEPTEMBER 2026**
Report Title:	**CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY PLAN FOR 2026-27**
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	**CHIEF EXECUTIVE** **CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES**
Responsible Officer:	**STACEY FORDE** **HEAD OF PERFORMANCE AND WORKFORCE CULTURAL CHANGE**
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	**Council priorities in the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (CPDP) inform Service Plans which form part of the Policy Framework. The Performance Framework forms part of the Policy Framework.**
Executive Summary:	**This report presents the CPDP 2026-27.** **CPDP 2026-27 reflects a transitional year; one that seeks to deliver business as usual, whilst offering an incremental level of refocus and rationalisation of Corporate Performance measures (Phase 1).** **More strategically, from September 2026, the efforts, deployment and optimisation of Corporate Performance resources will be prioritised for the design and delivery of Phase 2, of the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Corporate Performance improvement approach. Of note, Phase 2 is ‘redesign’; offering a step-change from the existing framework, shifting from ‘Reporting’ to ‘Actionable Insights and Intelligence’.** **The proposed, transitional CPDP 2026-27:** • **Builds on recommendations set out by the Panel Performance Assessment (PPA) 2025.** • **Provides a balanced approach in meeting the aims of the Corporate Plan 2023-28, whilst transitioning and paving the way for new ways of working and transformational developments for 2027 and beyond.** • **Offers a suite of refreshed and rationalised performance goals (Appendix 1)**

	• **Comprises of 23 Aims; underpinned by 58 Commitments and 53 Performance Indicators (PIs).** • **Achieves a 11.90% rationalisation in the number of Corporate Commitments and PIs from 126 (2025-26) to 111 (2026-27).**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Council the updated Corporate Plan and Corporate Plan Delivery Plan (CPDP) for 2026-27 for approval.

2. Background

2.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has a high-level five-year Corporate Plan 2023-28. In 2023, Council approved introduction of supporting, annual 'Corporate Plan Delivery Plans' (CPDPs).

2.2 CPDPs are designed to support and set out the specific aims, commitments and performance indicators, used to measure and assess how the Corporate Plan priorities are being met.

2.3 In addition to the CPDP introduction; in September 2025, the Council completed its first Panel Performance Assessment (PPA), as coordinated by the Welsh Local Government Association (WGLA).

2.4 The PPA concluded that BCBC is a well-performing authority. The PPA also highlighted the need and opportunities for Transformation, along with other changes to ensure long-term sustainability. Regarding the specific function of 'Corporate Performance and Governance', the PPA findings included:

'Overall, the Council demonstrates strong governance arrangements and systems, with a robust performance management framework already in place. The organisation's engagement with Trade Unions is effective, supporting positive relationships that contribute to a collaborative environment. Furthermore, the existing scrutiny arrangements are well-regarded by the majority of Members, highlighting their value overseeing the Council's work'.

'Performance Management: Although a good framework is in place, it needs to be more deeply embedded across the Council to ensure consistent ownership and accountability for performance goals'.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 The BCBC Corporate Performance function is currently subject to an outline, two-phase improvement approach:

Phase 1 – Refocus and rationalisation (transitional year)	January 2026 – September 2026.
• Self-Evaluation meetings held with key service areas to better understand performance and opportunities for improved delivery and reporting. • Engagement with services areas to produce a smaller, more focused and stakeholder-relevant set of goals that meets both the Corporate Plan 2023-28 priorities, whilst developing foundational areas of work aligned to the emerging Transformation Vision/Strategy. • Greater accountability built into the design of CPDP 2026-27 e.g. introduction of named 'Head of Service' assigned to performance goals. • Improved support for service areas e.g. 'CPDP Drop-in Surgeries' and new completion guidance notes issued.	
Phase 2 – Redesign (***From reporting to Actionable Insights and Intelligence)***	**September 2026 – March 2027.**
• To develop and embed a modern outcomes-focused BCBC Corporate Performance Framework, co-designed with key stakeholders, that provides a clear line of sight between the council's priorities, resources, delivery and outcomes, enabling timely insight, constructive challenge and continuous improvement. Supporting training materials and accessible guidance will also be produced. • Outline of approach and likely key activities: ➢ Project plan developed (Sept 26) ➢ Upskilling opportunities for workforce (Oct 26) ➢ Stakeholder engagement, discovery, co-design (Oct-Nov 26) ➢ Draft concept and content developed (Dec – Jan 27) ➢ Technical build/solution (Dec - Jan 27) ➢ Final concept and content agreed (Jan 27) ➢ Peer review and Testing (Feb 27) ➢ Round 1: Stakeholder engagement, promotion and system training (Feb - Mar 27) ➢ Approval (Mar 27) ➢ 'Closure' - Lessons learned; adoption as business as usual (April 27)	

➢ (If required) Round 2: Stakeholder engagement, promotion and system training (May 27+)	

3.2 The proposed CPDP 2026-27 for approval is set out in **Appendix 1.** This document is the totality of Corporate Performance measures (and their respective targets) for 2026-27 and is the focus for approval. For convenience, content has been updated to highlight which measures are ‘new’ and which have been ‘updated’.

3.3 In total, the CPDP 2026-27 comprises of 23 Aims; underpinned by 58 Commitments and 53 Performance Indicators (PIs).

3.4 When compared to the CPDP 2025-26, the CPDP 2026-27 has successfully rationalised the combined number of Commitments and PIs from 126 to 111 (11.90%). Whilst an overall Corporate ‘reduction’ has been achieved, many of the Commitments and PIs within the CPDP 2026-27 are:

- New measures introduced to reflect the current and emerging key priority areas such as establishing ‘Bridgend Works’; developing a Digital Strategy; a new Workforce Strategy; and Transformation Strategy.

- A re-introduction of measures for Corporate-level reporting e.g. reinstating measures such as GCSE and A-level results; greater detail on providing ALN; and road condition measures.

- A rebalance and appropriate allocation of measures more suited to operational, Service-Level monitoring and reporting processes.

3.5 For continuity (and as seen in Appendix 1 and specified in Section 5 of this report) all performance measures are grouped in accordance with achieving the four BCBC Wellbeing Objectives. For convenience, however, the following table provides a breakdown of the 2026-27 Commitments and PIs per Directorate area:

Directorate	Commitments	Performance Indicators	Totals
Communities	17	11	28
Corporate Services	10	3	13
Education, Early Years & Young People	8	14	22
Finance & Transformation	11	5	16
Social Services & Wellbeing	12	20	32
Totals	58	53	111

3.6 The proposed CPDP 2026-27 was presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (COSC) on the 7 September 2026. Whilst the two-phase approach was broadly endorsed, COSC has requested further information is made available and is subjected to review at their next meeting on 25 September 2026. Key information requested and feedback included:

1) A better understanding of the approach and rationale for expanding/reducing the measures; and more specifically, to clarify what had been 'removed'.

2) More information to understand the targets set for 2026-27 (when compared to actual performance in 2025-26).

To address these points:

- **Appendix 2** sets out the rationale for 2026-27 target setting and clarification on measures reassigned from Corporate level reporting.
- **Appendix 1 and 2** will be shared with COSC (in readiness for 25 September 2026), along with an invitation to meet with the COSC Chair (pre-Cabinet 22 September 2026).
- In addition, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services will offer a Member-to-Member meeting with the COSC Chair, should this be helpful.

3.7 Subject to Cabinet and Council approval of the CPDP 2026-27, and to complete Phase 1 of the improvement process; the following key performance activities are scheduled:

- To ensure guidance and a clear process for the management of service-level measures is in place
- Commence Q2 reporting
- Complete Business Plans 2026-27
- Prepare and submit the statutory self-assessment; and
- Plan for self-evaluations (2026-27).

3.8 From September 2026, in addition to closing Phase 1 (above), the 3 FTE Corporate Performance Team resource will be led and dedicated to:

- Achieving alignment and optimisation of skills from across the 'Transformation' and 'Performance' portfolios;
- Supporting the design and delivery of Phase 2 (redesign), resulting in a new Corporate Performance Framework (from 2027-28) that is the product of collaborative design and a framework to strengthen the Council's performance culture; along with
- Developing a new five-year Corporate Plan (from 2027).

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 development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

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

5.1 The CPDP 2026-27 is anchored by, and continues to map to the current, four BCBC Wellbeing Objectives:

1. A prosperous place with thriving communities
2. Creating modern, seamless public services
3. Enabling people to meet their potential
4. Supporting our most vulnerable

These objectives are a refined reflection of the Council's Corporate Plan 2023 -28; which in turn reflects the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

5.2 The five ways of working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act has contributed to the Council's own five ways of working; and the principle of these is embedded within and across the CPDP.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no specific implications of this report on climate change or nature. However, the Delivery Plan proposes measures and targets to help us assess the Council's performance on areas including climate change, including refreshed and new aims such as:

- Moving towards decarbonisation and improvement of our energy efficiency'(1.1); and
- Mitigating the impact of extreme weather events (1.8).

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no specific implications of this report on safeguarding or corporate parenting. However, the Delivery Plan proposes measures and targets to help us assess the Council's performance on areas including safeguarding and corporate parenting

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no direct financial consequences as a result of this report and the review of the Corporate Priorities is in line with the Council's agreed budget for 2026-27.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Council considers and agrees the CPDP for 2026-27 attached as **Appendix 1**.

Background documents

None.

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

Corporate Plan Delivery Plan

2026-27

WBO1: A prosperous place with thriving communities

WBO1.1: Moving towards decarbonisation and improvement of our energy efficiency

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DCO23.05 WBO1.1	Reduction in emissions (across our buildings, fleet & equipment, streetlighting, business travel, commuting, homeworking, waste, procured goods and services) (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	5%	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.1.1	Invest in energy efficiency improvements to the Council's estate and assets. (COMM)
WBO1.1.2 NEW	Initiate work on a climate adaptation plan for the Council using the Climate Change Risk Assessment undertaken by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board (COMM)

WBO1.2: Protect landscapes and open spaces

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DCO23.06 WBO1.2	Number of blue flag beaches (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	3	Annual Indicator
DCO23.07 WBO1.2	Number of green flag parks and green spaces (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	2	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.2.1	Progress our Biodiversity Plan by delivering projects such as woodland enhancement, develop and protect our natural environment in partnership with our communities and key stakeholders. (COMM)

WBO1.3: Promote the conditions for economic growth and prosperity

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DCO23.04 WBO1.3	Number of business start-ups assisted (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	30	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.3.1 NEW	Develop an annual Strategic Transport Plan which outlines the key priorities including improving sustainable and active travel choices, increasing connectivity and greener travel choices (COMM)

WBO1.4: Regenerate our town centres and Valleys

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.4.1 NEW	Review the Bridgend Town Centre Masterplan. To ensure that it accounts for policy changes and completed development, whilst ensuring an up-to-date framework is there to support new and future development across the town. (COMM)
WBO1.4.2 NEW	Ensure that the Porthcawl Waterfront Masterplan is progressed by submitting an outline planning application for determination by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), to provide a framework and support development and regeneration across the waterfront. (COMM)
WBO1.4.3	Redevelop the Ewenny Road site, including new and affordable homes, small business units, open space and green infrastructure, in partnership with the adjoining landowner. (COMM)

WBO1.5: Reduce, reuse or recycle as much waste as possible

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DCO20.05 WBO1.5	Percentage of Street cleansing waste prepared for recycling (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	40%	Annual Indicator
PAM/010 WBO1.5	Percentage of streets that are clean (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	95%	Quarterly Indicator
PAM/030 WBO1.5	Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	70%	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.5.1 UPDATED	Ensure the successful transition of the Waste & Recycling Services in house by July 2027, including a maintenance facility for vehicles and all supply chain arrangements. (COMM)

WBO1.6: Provide opportunities for culture, leisure, and play

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
SSWB83 WBO1.6	Number of active users across target population groups via health & wellbeing leisure membership provision (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	2000	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.6.1	Redevelop Porthcawl Grand Pavilion to increase the use of the new facilities and extend social and leisure facilities, in partnership with Awen Cultural Trust. (COMM)
WBO1.6.2 UPDATED	Complete the children’s play areas refurbishment programme and make sure inclusive play equipment is provided to allow opportunities for all. (COMM)
WBO1.6.3 UPDATED	Develop a Leisure Capital Strategy (SSWB)
WBO1.6.4 NEW	Delivery of a strategy to develop community hubs with partners in Bridgend communities so people’s wellbeing needs can be met in their own communities (SSWB)
WBO1.6.5 UPDATED	Improve access to wellbeing and leisure services in communities with high levels of health need and inequalities (SSWB)

NEW WBO1.7: Invest and improve the public realm in all our communities

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
PAM/020 NEW WBO1.7	Percentage of: Principal (A) roads in overall poor condition (COMM) ***Lower Preferred***	5.7%	Annual Indicator
PAM/021 NEW WBO1.7	Percentage of: Non-principal (B) roads in overall poor condition (COMM) ***Lower Preferred***	2.3%	Annual Indicator
PAM/022 NEW WBO1.7	Percentage of: Non-principal (C) roads in overall poor condition (COMM) ***Lower Preferred***	8.5%	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.7.1 NEW	Ensure the County has a safe and effective highway network by investing £4.6 million in our highway infrastructure in 2026/27, including on carriageway and footway resurfacing. (COMM)
WBO1.7.2 NEW	Complete the design & carry out major repair and replacement work on the A4061 river bridge at Blackmill, part funded by Welsh Government. (COMM)
WBO1.7.3 NEW	Complete the establishment of the Bridgend Works Initiative and start to mobilise resources to provide a visible, responsive and proactive service focused on improving the cleanliness, appearance and day-to-day condition of neighbourhoods, town centres and community spaces across the county borough, including preventative road patching, rights-of way improvements. (COMM)

NEW WBO1.8: Mitigating the impact of extreme weather events

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO1.8.1 NEW	Invest in flood protection measures to protect our communities against extreme weather events (COMM)
WBO1.8.2 NEW	Develop an emergency private household Flood Compensation Fund Policy (COMM)

WBO2: Creating modern, seamless public services

WBO2.1: Improving how we engage with people, listening to views & acting on them

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
CED70 WBO2.1	Percentage of Complaints closed within timescales (CS) ***Higher Preferred***	80%	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO2.1.1 NEW	Complete and secure Council approval of Bridgend 2040 Vision by 31 December 2026. (F&T)
WBO2.1.2 NEW	All School Councils and the Youth Council contribute to Corporate and Directorate Strategic Plans and receive formal feedback. (EEYYP)
WBO2.1.3 UPDATED	Improve how we communicate and engage with residents to help us become more customer focused and responsive (CS)
WBO2.1.4	Improve the way we gather and use resident views (CS)
WBO2.1.5 UPDATED	Improve the way we communicate with staff and how we gather and use staff views. (CS)
WBO2.1.6 UPDATED	Improve our complaints handling process and the way we learn from corporate complaints and compliments (CS)
WBO2.1.7 NEW	Renew our Welsh Language Strategy. (CS)

WBO2.2: Offer more information and services online, and in local areas

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
CED5 WBO2.2	Percentage of first call resolutions (F&T) ***Higher Preferred***	77.58%	Quarterly Indicator
CED51 WBO2.2	Number of online transactions using the digital platform (F&T) ***Higher Preferred***	80893	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO2.2.1 UPDATED	Complete a review of the corporate front door to streamline, standardise, and enhance entry points into the council, create a prioritised list of services for digital transformation and improve the resolution at the first point of contact. (F&T)

WBO2.3: Modernise and become a more efficient council

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
CHR002 (PAM/001) WBO2.3	Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per full-time equivalent (FTE) BCBC employee (CS/ALL) ***Lower Preferred***	13.48 days	Quarterly Indicator
CORPB5 WBO2.3	Percentage of staff that have completed a Personal Review/Appraisal (excluding school staff) (CS/ALL) ***Higher Preferred***	80%	Quarterly Indicator
NEW REF NEW WBO2.3	Number of services digitally transformed to enable service users to transact online (F&T) ***Higher Preferred***	5% increase	Annual Indicator

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Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO2.3.1 NEW	Complete and secure Council approval of a refreshed Digital and Data Strategy and agree a prioritised first-year delivery roadmap by 31 March 2027, aligned with Bridgend 2040, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's transformation priorities. (F&T)
WBO2.3.2 NEW	Approve and operationalise the Council's corporate transformation governance structure and establish the initial corporate transformation portfolio by end of October 2026. (F&T)
WBO2.3.3 NEW	Build the capability and capacity required to support Council-wide transformation by 31 December 2026, including approval of the proposed Transformation Portfolio Office structure, recruitment to the agreed priority roles and deployment of the initial team against the corporate transformation portfolio. (F&T)
WBO2.3.4 NEW	Develop and begin embedding version 1 of the managing change and transformation section of The Bridgend Way by 31 March 2027, providing a consistent end-to-end operating model for assessing, prioritising, designing, governing, delivering and realising benefits from transformation activity. (F&T)
WBO2.3.5 NEW	Develop, approve and begin embedding a Council-wide Risk Appetite Framework by 31 March 2027 to strengthen strategic decision-making, risk management, horizon scanning, delegation and assurance. (F&T)
WBO2.3.6 NEW	We will improve the member referral service by clarifying its purpose, standards and expectations, ensuring a more responsive, consistent and accountable approach, improved digital functionality and management information. (F&T)
WBO2.3.7 NEW	Meet major milestones for critical Education, Social Services and Finance system transitions, including BCBC's local milestones for Connecting Care. (F&T)
WBO2.3.8 NEW	Develop and embed a modern outcome-focused BCBC Corporate Performance Framework, co-designed with key stakeholders, that provides a clear line of sight between the council's priorities, resources, delivery and outcomes, enabling timely insight, constructive challenge and continuous improvement. Supporting training materials and accessible guidance will also be produced. (CS)
WBO2.3.9 NEW	Develop a new five year Corporate Plan 2027-2032 aligned to the new Bridgend 2040 Vision (CS)
WBO2.3.10	Develop and embed a forward-looking, organisational-wide Workforce Strategy that ensures BCBC has the people, skills, leadership, culture and organisational capacity required to deliver its ambitions and respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities ahead. (CS)
WBO2.3.11 NEW	Ensure progress and delivery against the eight PPA recommendations (whilst noting that much of the work will be embedded within, and across, other specific pieces of work e.g. development of a leadership programme will be addressed as part of the Workforce Strategy development project). (CS)
WBO2.3.12 UPDATED	Continue to make the most effective use of the Corporate Estate, including working with partners and property disposals as appropriate (COMM)

WBO2.4: Improve partnership working with partners, the third sector and Town and Community Councils

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO2.4.1 NEW	Review the partnership framework operating across the Council identifying key partnerships, TOR, and key milestones (F&T)

WBO3: Enabling people to meet their potential

WBO3.1: Provide an effective Childcare and Early Years Offer

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO3.1.1	All non-maintained funded settings are judged at least 'good' by external regulators; and are supported by local authority officers to achieve their outcomes. (EEYYP)

WBO3.2: Provide safe, supportive schools with high quality teaching

Performance Indicators

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PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DEFS155 WBO3.2	Percentage of schools that have self-evaluated themselves as 'green' as part of their annual safeguarding audit (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	100%	Annual Indicator
EDU016a (PAM/007) WBO3.2	Percentage of pupil attendance in a) primary schools (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	92%	Annual Indicator
EDU016b (PAM/008) WBO3.2	b) secondary schools (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	91%	Annual Indicator
PAM032 WBO3.2	Average Capped 9 Score for pupils in Year 11 (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	360	Annual Indicator
EDU008a NEW WBO3.2	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year, per 1,000 pupils, from primary schools. (EEYYP) ***Lower Preferred***	0.45	Annual Indicator
EDU008b NEW WBO3.2	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year per 1,000 pupils from secondary schools. (EEYYP) ***Lower Preferred***	2.3	Annual Indicator
DEFS2 NEW WBO3.2	The percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A-A* at GCSE. (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	18.5%	Annual Indicator
NEW REF NEW WBO3.2	The percentage of pupils achieving A-A* at A Level. (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	23.9%	Annual Indicator
NEW REF NEW WBO3.2	Percentage attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) in mainstream and special schools (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	85%	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO3.2.1 UPDATED	No Bridgend school or Pupil Referral Unit will be placed in an Estyn follow-up category. (EEYYP)

WBO3.3: Provide Welsh medium education opportunities

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DEFS138 WBO3.3	Percentage of Year 1 learners taught through the medium of Welsh (EEYYP) ***Higher Preferred***	10%	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO3.3.1	Deliver the actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) (EEYYP)

WBO3.4: Modernise school buildings

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO3.4.1 UPDATED	Deliver Band B School Modernisation Projects throughout 2026-2027 working towards final completion by September 2028. o Enlarge Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr to a 2.5 form-entry new-build school. o Provide a new-build for Mynydd Cynffig Primary School. o Enlarge Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr to a two form-entry new-build school. o Provide a new two-form entry English-medium school to replace the existing Afon Y Felin and Corneli Primary Schools. o Relocate Heronsbridge School to a new-build 300-place school. (EEYYP)

WBO3.5: Be good parents to our care experienced children

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
CH/052 WBO3.5	Percentage of care leavers who have experienced Homelessness during the year (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	0%	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB86 WBO3.5	Percentage of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 24 months since leaving care (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	75%	Quarterly Indicator
NEW REF NEW WBO3.5	The percentage of children looked after on 31st March who have had three or more placements during the year. (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	10%	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB78a WBO3.5	Timeliness of visits to children who are care experienced (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	100%	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB39 (CH/039) WBO3.5	Number of Care Experienced Children (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	315	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO3.5.1 UPDATED	To ensure care-experienced children have access to stable, long-term living arrangements, access good quality education, training and employment opportunities and opportunities to enhance their social and emotional development. (SSWB)

WBO3.6: Help people get the skills they need for work

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Reporting Frequency
DEFS82 WBO3.6	Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme going into employment (COMM) ***Higher Preferred***	230	Quarterly Indicator
PAM046 WBO3.6	Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training, or employment (NEET) (EEYYP) ***Lower Preferred***	2%	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO3.6.1 NEW	Support young people into education, employment or training through targeted school-based and post-16 youth work, and tailored support for those at risk of disengagement and NEET (EEYYP)
WBO3.6.2	Employability Bridgend will support participants and deliver a comprehensive employability and skills programme (COMM)

WBO4: Supporting our most vulnerable

WBO4.1: Provide high-quality children's & adults social services / early help services

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Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Performance this period
SSWB87 WBO4.1	Percentage of reablement packages implemented with a positive outcome (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	68%	Quarterly Indicator
New NEW WBO4.1	Reduction in number of children residing in external residential care (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	19	Quarterly Indicator
New NEW WBO4.1	Number of hours of domiciliary care to be in the lower quartile in Wales relative to other authorities (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	Lower quartile	Quarterly Indicator
New NEW WBO4.1	Number of adults per 100,000 population receiving support in long-term care home accommodation (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	Lower quartile	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO4.1.1 NEW	Build a resilient, skilled and sustainable Adult Social Care workforce. (SSWB)
WBO4.1.2 NEW	Improve the quality, consistency and impact of social work practice. (SSWB)
WBO4.1.3 NEW	Strengthen prevention, early intervention and support for carers. (SSWB)
WBO4.1.4 NEW	Deliver sustainable and sufficient care and support services through effective commissioning and partnerships (SSWB)
WBO4.1.5	Address the gaps in Adult Social Care provider services by implementing the priority commissioning areas identified in our commissioning strategies and detailed service reviews. (SSWB)

WBO4.2: Support people in poverty

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Performance this period
CED43 WBO4.2	Percentage of people supported through FASS (Financial Assistance and Support Service) where support has resulted in increased income through claims for additional/increased benefits and allowances (F&T) ***Higher Preferred***	85%	Quarterly Indicator
CED44 WBO4.2	Percentage of people supported through FASS who have received advice and support in managing or reducing household debt (F&T) ***Higher Preferred***	85%	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO4.2.1	Support eligible residents to receive the financial help available to them. (F&T)

WBO4.3: Support people with housing needs

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Performance this period
CED60 WBO4.3	Number of additional affordable homes provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) across the County Borough (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	96	Annual Indicator
DOPS39 WBO4.3	Percentage of people presenting as homeless or potentially homeless, for whom the Local Authority has a final legal duty to secure suitable accommodation (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	25%	Quarterly Indicator
PAM/012 (DOPS15) WBO4.3	Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	40%	Quarterly Indicator
NEW REF UPDATED WBO4.3	Average (MEDIAN) number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	542 days	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO4.3.1	Continue to improve our housing and homelessness service to reduce homelessness across the borough through implementation of the agreed action plan (SSWB)
WBO4.3.2	Continue to target those long-term empty properties that have the most detrimental impact on the community, focusing on the Top 20. (CS/SRS)
WBO4.3.3 NEW	Grow the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) that are used to temporarily support homeless households and reduce reliance on bed and breakfast and Airbnb accommodation. (SSWB)

WBO4.4: Support children with additional learning needs

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Performance this period
NEW REF NEW WBO4.4	Number of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) tribunals (EEYYP) ***Lower Preferred***	5	Quarterly Indicator
NEW REF NEW WBO4.4	Number of learners placed in non-maintained settings out of county (EEYYP) ***Lower Preferred***	10	Quarterly Indicator
NEW REF NEW WBO4.4	Average (median) waiting time (from referral date) for specialist placement through Access to Education. (EEYYP) ***Lower Preferred***	No target Baseline to be established	Annual Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO4.4.1 NEW	Promote inclusive education by enabling more learners with ALN to learn, participate and succeed within Bridgend's mainstream schools (EEYYP)

WBO4.5: Safeguard and protect people at risk of harm

Performance Indicators

PI Ref, Type & Aim	PI Description and Preferred Outcome	Target 26-27	Performance this period
CH/003 WBO4.5	Percentage of children's safeguarding referrals where a decision is made within 24 hours (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	100%	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB62 WBO4.5	Percentage of child protection investigations completed within required timescales (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	100%	Quarterly Indicator
CH/026 WBO4.5	Number of children on the child protection register (SSWB) ***Lower Preferred***	91	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB57 WBO4.5	Percentage of enquiries to the Adult Social Care front door which result in information and advice only (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	80%	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB78b WBO4.5	Timeliness of visits to children on the child protection register (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	100%	Quarterly Indicator
SSWB77 WBO4.5	Percentage of adult safeguarding enquiries which receive initial response within 7 working days (SSWB) ***Higher Preferred***	85%	Quarterly Indicator

Commitments

Code	Commitment
WBO4.5.1	Work as One Council to effectively safeguard children and adults at risk (SSWB)
WBO4.5.2 NEW	All youth provision including Youth Justice and Youth Support is judged at least 'good' by external regulators. (EEYYP)

KEY:

	Directorate Responsible
ALL	All Directorates
CS	Corporate Services
COMM	Communities Directorate
EEYYP	Education, Early Years, and Young People Directorate
SSWB	Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate
F&T	Finance and Transformation

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Appendix 2

Corporate Plan Deliver Plan 2026-27 Performance Indicator Targets

Section A – Corporate Plan Performance Indicators and Targets 2026-27

WBO 1 - A prosperous place with thriving communities

Aim 1.1 Moving towards decarbonisation, and improving our energy efficiency

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Actual Year-end Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Reduction in emissions (across our buildings, fleet & equipment, streetlighting, business travel, commuting, homeworking and waste) (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	5%	**5% YELLOW**	↓	5%	To see a reduction in emissions and progress our corporate energy efficiency

Aim 1.2 Protect landscapes and open spaces

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of green flag parks and green spaces (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	2	**2 YELLOW**	↔	2	Maintain the 2 current Green Flag sites (Coychurch Crematorium and Maesteg Welfare Park
Number of blue flag beaches (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	3	**3 YELLOW**	↔	3	Maintain the 3 current Blue Flag sites (Rest Bay, Trecco Bay and Porthcawl Marina)

Aim 1.3 Promote the conditions for economic growth and prosperity

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of business start-ups assisted (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	30	**52 YELLOW**	↓	30	Continue to assist and capitalise on the strong new business demand

Aim 1.5 Reduce, reuse or recycle as much waste as possible

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of street cleansing waste prepared for recycling (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	40%	**41.25% GREEN**	↑	40%	To maintain the existing targets which remain challenging to achieve
Percentage of streets that are clean (COMM) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	99%	**88.59% RED**	↓	95%	Target reviewed to more realistic level based on current service delivery model
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted (COMM) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	70%	**69.08% AMBER**	↙	70%	To maintain the existing targets which remain challenging to achieve

Aim 1.6 Provide opportunities for culture, leisure, and play

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of active users across target population groups via health & wellbeing leisure membership provision (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	700	**2,360 YELLOW**	New 25-26	2,000	2025/26 was the first year this PI was introduced. The target for 2026/27 has been set slightly below the 2025/26 actual figure to allow for any initial issues with data collection

Aim 1.7 Invest and improve the public realm in all our communities

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of: Principal (A) roads in overall poor condition (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	4%	**5.7 RED**		5.7%	To maintain 2025-26 performance
Percentage of: Non-principal (B) roads in overall poor condition (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	4%	**2.3% GREEN**		2.3%	To maintain 2025-26 performance
Percentage of: Non-principal (C) roads in overall poor condition (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	8%	**8.5% AMBER**		8.5%	To maintain 2025-26 performance

WBO 2 - Creating modern, seamless public services

Aim 2.1 Improving how we engage with people, listening to views & acting on them

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of Complaints closed within timescales (CS) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	80%	39.35% RED	↑	80%	To see improvement in performance

Aim 2.2 Offer more information and services online, and in local areas

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage first call resolutions (via Customer Contact Centre)(F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	75.92%	77.58% GREEN	↑	77.58%	To maintain or improve on 25-26 annual actual
Number of online transactions using the digital platform (F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	81,034	80,893 AMBER	↙	80,893	To maintain or improve on 25-26 annual actual

Aim 2.3 Modernise and become a more efficient council

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of working days/shifts lost to sickness absence per full-time equivalent (FTE) Bridgend County Borough Council employee (CS/ALL) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	No target	13.48 days	↑	13.48 days	To maintain or improve on 25-26 annual actual.
Percentage of staff that have completed a Personal Review/Appraisal (excluding school staff) (CS/ALL) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	80%	67.05% RED	↙	80%	Target set to ensure all eligible staff have an annual review
Number of services digitally transformed to enable service users to transact online (F&T) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	New 26-27	awaiting data	n/a	5% increase	To increase in online delivery options for customers

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WBO 3 - Enabling people to meet their potential

Aim 3.2 Provide safe, supportive schools with high quality teaching

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of schools that have self-evaluated themselves as ‘green’ as part of their annual safeguarding audit (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	100%	**93% AMBER**	↔	100%	Target set line with guidance, to ensure schools are exercising their legal safeguarding obligations.
Percentage pupil attendance in primary schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	94%	**93.1% AMBER**	↑	92%	Targets have reduced as the vulnerability profile of children has become more pronounced, with increasing numbers presenting multiple and overlapping indicators of vulnerability and complexity that affect their participation in and engagement with learning.
Percentage pupil attendance in secondary schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	92%	**87.6% AMBER**	↑	91%	
Average ‘Capped 9’ score for pupils in Year 11 (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	360	**358.80 AMBER**	↑	360	Target maintained
Number of permanent exclusions during the academic year, per 1,000 pupils, from primary schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 2026-27	0.6	n/a	0.45	25% reduction on 2025-26 performance
Number of permanent exclusions during the academic year per 1,000 pupils from secondary schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 2026-27	3.1	n/a	2.3	25% reduction on 2025/26 performance
Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A-A* at GCSE (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	New 2026-27	19.7%	n/a	18.5%	2025/26 results were above previous trend. Target set to see 0.5% improvement on all Wales average results

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Percentage of pupils achieving A-A* at A Level (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	New 2026-27	22.4%	n/a	23.9%	Improve on 2025/26 results
Percentage attendance for pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) in mainstream and special schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	New 2026-27	85.91%	n/a	85%	To continue to narrow the gap between eFSM and non-eFSM learners at a time when complexity of learner's needs are intensified.

Aim 3.3 Provide Welsh medium education opportunities

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of Year 1 pupils taught through the medium of Welsh (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	8.85%	**8.2% AMBER**	↙	10%	Target to increase learners studying through the medium of Welsh as per Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019. To achieve 14% target by 2032

Aim 3.5 Be good parents to our care experienced children

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	10%	**7.69% GREEN**	↑	0%	To Improve performance. No care leavers to have experienced homelessness
Percentage of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 24 months since leaving care (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	65%	**70.42% GREEN**	↑	75%	To continue to improve performance
Percentage of children looked after who have experienced three or more placements (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	New 26-27	n/a	10%	To improve placement stability

Timeliness of visits to children who are care experienced (SSWB)*(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	87%	**90.54% GREEN**	⬆	100%	To improve performance
Number of care experienced children (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	325	**316 GREEN**	⬆	315	Continue to safely reduce the number of care experienced children

Aim 3.6 Help people get the skills they need for work

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme going into employment (COMM) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	290	**241 RED**	Trend not applicable	230	Funding arrangements can vary from year to year therefore target set to maximise use of funding secured for the year.
Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training, or employment (NEET) in the Careers Wales annual destination statistics (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	2%	**1.8% GREEN**	⬆	2%	Previous target retained in recognition of the increasing needs that young people are currently presenting with. The increase is in line with a national rise in numbers of pupils presenting as NEET.

WBO 4 - Supporting our most vulnerable

Aim 4.1 Provide high-quality children's & adults social services / early help services

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of reablement packages implemented with a positive outcome (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	69%	**68.66% AMBER**	↙	68%	Maintain performance given that more older and frailer people require rebablement services
Reduction in number of children residing in external residential care (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	New 26-27	n/a	19	Target set in line with safer reduction strategy
Number of hours of domiciliary care to be in the lower quartile in Wales relative to other authorities (quarterly snapshot) (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	New 26-27	n/a	Lower Quartile	Based quarterly snapshot, our position relative to the other authorities in Wales is to be in the lower quartile of providers of Domiciliary care (measured by hours)
Number of adults per 100,000 population receiving support in long-term care home accommodation (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	New 26-27	n/a	Lower Quartile	Based quarterly snapshot, our position relative to the other authorities in Wales is to be in the lower quartile

Aim 4.2 Support people in poverty

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of people supported through FASS (Financial Assistance and Support Service) where support has resulted in increased income through claims for additional/increased benefits and allowances (F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	85%	**96% YELLOW**	↔	85%	Target retained

Percentage of people supported through FASS who have received advice and support in managing or reducing household debt (F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	85%	**98% GREEN**	↑	85%	Target retained

Aim 4.3 Support people with housing needs

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of additional affordable homes provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) across the County Borough (SSWB) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*	110	**177 GREEN**	↑	96	Working with RSL's to utilise capital income streams, such as the Social Housing Grant (SHG) – to develop 500 units over a 5-year programme.
Percentage of people presenting as homeless or potentially homeless for whom the Local Authority has a final legal duty to secure suitable accommodation (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	20%	**26.6% RED**	↙	25%	Target set to see reduction in the number who fall into the final legal duty category. This is where the Authority has not been able to relieve homelessness within 56 days.
Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	20%	**43.3% GREEN**	↑	40%	Target set at realistic level considering the legislative changes in terms of priority need which has a significant impact on number of households included in this measure
Average (median) number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	542 days	Awaiting data	n/a	542 days	The target reflects increased demand for DFGs and limited annual capital funding

Aim 4.4 Support children with additional learning needs

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Number of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) tribunals (EEYYP) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	0	n/a	5	Target set at 5 or fewer to allow for cases outside the Council's control while maintaining strong performance in preventing tribunals through early resolution
Number of learners placed in non-maintained settings out of county (EEYYP) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	5	n/a	10	Due to a higher demand on specialist services and increased permanent exclusions it is anticipated that out of county placement may increase.
Average (median) waiting time (from referral date) for specialist placement through Access to Education. (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*	New 26-27	New 26-27	n/a	No target Baseline to be established	No target set as we need to establish a baseline. This measure will demonstrate how quickly a child/young person with identified ALN can access specialist provision.

Aim 4.5 Safeguard and protect people at risk of harm

Performance Indicator Description	2025-26 Target	Actual 2025-26 & RAYG	Trend	2026-27 Target	Rationale for Target
Percentage of Childrens safeguarding referrals where decision is made within 24 hours (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	99.5%	**99.86% YELLOW**		100%	To sustain high performance and ensure children are protected from harm and

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					target takes account of occasional system glitches.
Percentage of child protection investigations completed within required timescales (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	80%	**82.47% YELLOW**	↙	100%	To continue to improve performance
Number of children on the child protection register (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*	120	**91 YELLOW**	↓	91	Sustain safe reduction in the Child Protection Register
Percentage of enquiries to the Adult Social Care front door which result in information and advice only (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	83%	**77.73% AMBER**	↙	80%	To improve on 2025-26 performance
Timeliness of visits to children on the child protection register (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	87%	**90.49% GREEN**	↑	100%	To improve performance
Percentage of Adult safeguarding enquiries which receive initial response within 7 working days (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*	85%	**88.62% GREEN**	↑	85%	The 7 days response relates to the Local Authority and other key partners. We will continue to improve our own performance and those of our partners.

Section B – This section provides clarity on the previously reported Performance Indicators as rationalised for 2026-27. Where appropriate, service-level monitoring and reporting of these PIs will be in place.

WBO 1 - A prosperous place with thriving communities

Aim 1.1 Moving towards decarbonisation, and improving our energy efficiency

Performance Indicator Description
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) pollution in the air (micrograms per m^3) (CS/SRS) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*
Annual Gas Consumption across the Authority (kWh) (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*
Annual Electricity Consumption across the Authority (kWh) (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*

Aim 1.3 Promote the conditions for economic growth and prosperity

Performance Indicator Description
Number of businesses receiving support through Local Growth Fund (previously SPF) (COMM) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 1.4 Regenerate our town centres and Valleys

Performance Indicator Description
Number of commercial properties assisted through the enhancement grant scheme (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 1.6 Provide opportunities for culture, leisure, and play

Performance Indicator Description
Number of play areas that have been refurbished (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*
Participation in the national free swimming initiative for 16 and under (SSWB) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

WBO 2 - Creating modern, seamless public services

Aim 2.1 Improving how we engage with people, listening to views & acting on them

Performance Indicator Description
Level of engagement (Welsh / English) across consultations (CS) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*
Level of engagement (Welsh / English) with corporate communications to residents using the digital communications platform (CS) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 2.3 Modernise and become a more efficient council

Performance Indicator Description
Number of council owned assets transferred to the community for running (CATs) or transferred from a short-term agreement to a long-term agreement for running during the year (COMM) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 2.4 Improve partnership working with partners, the third sector and Town and Community Councils

Performance Indicator Description
Percentage of Assia service users reporting increased feelings of safety at their exit evaluation (F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*
Percentage of high-risk domestic abuse victims / public protection notices received by the service contacted within 48 hours (F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*
Percentage of medium risk domestic abuse victims / public protection notices received by the service contacted within 72 hours (F&T) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*
Number of active referrals supported by Local Community Coordinators (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*
Number of children and young adults supported during school holidays (SSWB) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

WBO 3 - Enabling people to meet their potential

Aim 3.1 Provide an effective Childcare and Early Years Offer

Performance Indicator Description
Number of two-year-olds accessing childcare through the Flying Start programme (EEYYP) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 3.2 Provide safe, supportive schools with high quality teaching

Performance Indicator Description
Percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the school year in primary schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*
Percentage of school days lost due to fixed-term exclusions during the school year in secondary schools (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, lower preferred)*

Aim 3.3 Provide Welsh medium education opportunities

Performance Indicator Description
Percentage of learners studying for assessed qualifications through the medium of Welsh at the end of Key Stage 4 (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*
Number of learners studying for Welsh as a second language at AS Level and A Level (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 3.6 Help people get the skills they need for work

Performance Indicator Description
Number of participants in the Employability Bridgend programme supported into education or training (COMM) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*

WBO 4 - Supporting our most vulnerable

Aim 4.1 Provide high-quality children's & adults social services / early help services

Performance Indicator Description
Percentage of completed TAF (Team Around the Family) support plans that close with a successful outcome (SSWB) (Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)
Number of people recorded as delayed on the national pathway of care (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*

Aim 4.3 Support people with housing needs

Performance Indicator Description
Percentage of people who feel they can live more independently as a result of receiving a Disabled Facility Grant in their home (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 4.4 Support children with additional learning needs

Performance Indicator Description
Percentage of new local authority individual development plans (IDPs) delivered using the online IDP system (EEYYP) *(Quarterly Indicator, higher preferred)*
Number of pupils on the waiting lists for specialist provision (EEYYP) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*
Percentage of year 9 pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) with a transition plan in place, that have had an annual review by 31 March of each current school year (EEYYP) *(Annual Indicator, higher preferred)*

Aim 4.5 Safeguard and protect people at risk of harm

Performance Indicator Description
Average waiting time on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) waiting list (SSWB) *(Quarterly Indicator, lower preferred)*

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Meeting of:	**COUNCIL**
Date of Meeting:	**23 SEPTEMBER 2026**
Report Title:	**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG): EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**
Report Owner: Cabinet Member / Responsible Chief Officer	**CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND HOUSING** **CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES**
Responsible Officer:	**LOUIS PANNELL** **STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER**
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	**There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.**
Executive Summary:	**The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the public consultation exercise on the draft Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG document. It also seeks Council approval to adopt the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG. Adoption of this SPG will support the effective implementation of the existing planning policy framework contained within the Replacement Local Development Plan adopted 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 Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG document.

1.2 The Report also seeks Council approval to adopt the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG (**Appendix 1**), in order to support the effective implementation of the existing planning policy framework contained within the RLDP, the Council's statutory land-use Planning document.

2. Background

2.1 The RLDP plays a key role in ensuring that there is sufficient and satisfactory educational provision for the children and young people generated by new residential developments.

2.2 The RLDP makes provision for 8,628 homes to promote the creation and enhancement of sustainable communities across the County Borough over the plan period (2018-2033). As a result, existing educational facilities will be inevitably placed under pressure to accommodate the additional pupils that will be generated through these planned residential developments. Therefore, the Planning system needs to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to avoid facilities being detrimentally affected and that adequate provision is available to cater for the learning needs of the children and young people of Bridgend.

2.3 Education capacity was a key consideration during preparation of the RLDP and directly informed the selection of strategic and housing allocations. The overarching strategy of the RLDP prioritises the allocation of large strategic sites of sufficient scale to support the delivery of a new primary school as a minimum. In addition, a number of smaller housing allocations have been allocated and will be required to contribute to improvements to existing educational infrastructure and/or the provision of new supporting infrastructure, where necessary, to ensure such development is acceptable in planning terms. These requirements are specified within Thematic Policies PLA1-5 of the RLDP and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (**IDP**), providing clarity and certainty on infrastructure requirements associated with future development.

2.4 Furthermore, Policy SP10 of the RLDP sets the policy framework to ensure that all residential development proposals are supported by sufficient existing or new infrastructure. In order to mitigate likely adverse impacts and/or to integrate a development proposal, Policy SP10 requires that reasonable infrastructure provision or financial contributions must be provided by developers where necessary and secured by means of planning agreements/obligations where appropriate.

2.5 Development Control Committee was informed of the need to revise the Educational Facilities & Residential Development SPG 16 on the 2nd of October 2025. Councillors Hughes, Griffiths and Haines of Development Control Committee, volunteered to champion production of the revised Educational Facilities & Residential Development SPG, and have since been working alongside the Strategic Planning Policy Team Leader to progress the new SPG.

2.6 This draft SPG provides specific guidance on:

- Education requirements for residential developments including thresholds, pupil yields, additional learning needs provision, Welsh medium provision, cost per pupil place, investment in unsatisfactory school accommodation, new schools and how contributions will be used;

- How contributions are calculated - with a worked example; and
- The administration of policy through the various planning stages; Section 106, negotiations with developers and how issues surrounding development viability may be considered.

2.7 While a large proportion of the existing SPG 16 remains relevant, key areas requiring update include pupil yield rates and associated cost guidance. The latter is particularly necessary as costs have increased since the existing SPG's adoption in 2021.

2.8 The pupil yield rates have been revised using evidence from completed new build residential developments in the Borough, including schemes that have delivered a new primary school. Cost guidance has also been updated to reflect cost and size standards published by the Welsh Government.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 On the 10th of March 2026, a draft version of the 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 SPG.

3.2 A 6-week public consultation period was held from 17th of March 2026 to the 28th of April 2026. 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 190 targeted consultees including all Elected Members, Town and Community Councils, planning consultants, house builders, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and all head teachers.
- 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, one representation was received on the draft SPG, submitted by a planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder. Given the extensive publicity undertaken during the consultation, together with the targeted engagement of key consultees, the limited number of responses is considered a positive outcome, indicating that no fundamental objections were raised to the content for overall approach of the draft SPG.

3.4 The representation primarily sought clarification on, and raised concerns regarding, specific aspects of the guidance. These included the potential for double counting where development is required to provide both land for on-site education provision and financial contributions towards the delivery of strategic sites; the revised pupil yield assumptions; and the proposed increase to cost per pupil figures, together with the potential implications for development viability.

3.5 A summary of the representation, alongside the Local Planning Authority's (**LPA's**) responses and the reasons why certain suggested amendments have not been incorporated, is provided in **Appendix 2**. Having considered the comments received, it is concluded that only minor amendments to the SPG are necessary. These amendments have been incorporated into the final draft SPG, attached as **Appendix 1**. For ease of reference, the paragraphs amended following consultation are reproduced in full at the end of **Appendix 2** and include:

- An amendment to clarify that Section 106 agreements may include a review clause to account for any subsequent reduction in the number or type of residential units proposed, particularly where changes arise through reserved matters planning applications. The inclusion of such a review clause will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Additional wording to improve clarity and transparency regarding the assessment of whether surplus school places can be considered available and taken into account when determining developer contributions, in the context of safe walking routes from a development site to a school. A route is considered to be available if it is safe for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learners age and levels of understanding require this.
- Minor amendments to clarify the purposes for which education contributions may be used, including the provision and design of new school facilities.

3.6 A report will be presented to Cabinet on 22 September 2026 informing Members of the outcome of the public consultation exercise and seeking approval to present the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG to Council to seek its adoption. If adopted, the SPG will support the effective implementation of the existing planning policy framework, 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 on 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 new SPG for Educational Facilities and Residential Development will provide additional guidance and material weight to support adopted RLDP Policies and seek to provide clarity in respect of their future interpretation, setting out what the Council expects from applicants in respect of satisfying those policies' detailed criteria. This is a key contributory factor to delivering Local Well-being Objective 3: '*Enabling people to meet their potential*.'

5.2 The new SPG, once adopted, will also contribute to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- A prosperous Wales – Ensuring there is sufficient education provision in response to new residential development, directly supporting skills, employability and the future workforce.
- A healthier Wales – Ensuring education provision can be accessed by safe walking routes from new housing developments.
- A more equal Wales – Ensuring equal access to education provision, including Welsh-medium and Additional Learning Needs provision.
- A Wales of cohesive communities – Ensuring that education provision is provided in relation to new residential development to avoid pressure on existing schools.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no direct climate change and nature implications from this report, although the new SPG, once adopted, will provide additional guidance to ensure that existing education provision can be accessed by safe walking routes from new housing developments. This will help to encourage a sustainable modal shift, reducing carbon emissions that are released from car-born 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 the Officer's consultation responses to the representations received following public consultation on the draft SPG for

Educational Facilities and Residential Development, together with resultant amendments set out in attached **Appendix 2**;

b) Adopt the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG (**Appendix 1**) for immediate application in making development management decisions and in the determination of planning applications along with the adopted RLDP;

c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to make minor presentational changes, typographical of factual corrections as necessary prior to publication of the adopted Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG; and

d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to undertake and publish annual index-linked updates to Table 2 – Cost per Pupil Place (page 14), of the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG, to ensure such costs remain up to date.

Background documents

None

Bridgend County Borough

Local Development Plan

2018-2033

Educational Facilities & Residential Development

Supplementary Planning Guidance

September 2026

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

BRIDGEND County Borough Council

Contents

Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this supplementary planning guidance (SPG) is to explain in detail the Council's approach to the provision of educational facilities and outlines how the Council will, where appropriate, seek planning obligations to provide or enhance education and school facilities as part of new residential developments throughout the County Borough of Bridgend.

1.2 This adopted SPG will be a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications for residential development including applications for renewal of consents.

1.3 Anyone wishing to submit an application for residential development within the County Borough is urged to consider this SPG and to contact the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in advance of submitting an application, to discuss the issues that are raised in this document on a site-specific basis.

1.4 This SPG provides specific guidance on:

- Education requirements for residential developments, including thresholds, pupil yields, additional learning needs provision, Welsh medium provision, cost per pupil place, investment in unsatisfactory school accommodation, new schools and how contributions will be used;
- How contributions are calculated, providing a worked example; and
- The administration of policy through the various planning stages, Section 106, negotiation with developers and how issues surrounding development viability may be considered.

2.0 Policy and Legislative Context

2.1 The National Planning Policy context for the provision of educational facilities through the planning system is set out in Future Wales: the National Plan 2040 and Planning Policy Wales (PPW).

2.2 **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** is a key piece of legislation which aims to further improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales now and in the longer term. The Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which is a duty for public bodies to "act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". The Act is underpinned by seven well-being goals, which public bodies must work to achieve (a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, an equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language and a globally responsible Wales.

2.3 **Future Wales: The National Plan** is the National Policy Framework setting out the direction for development in Wales to 2040. Whilst the plan does not address education facilities specifically, it sets the spatial framework within which local and regional development plans can integrate new education provision, in line with national goals around sustainable growth and community well-being.

2.4 **Planning Policy Wales (PPW): Edition 12** states the importance of planning authorities developing a strategic and long-term approach to the provision of community facilities (including schools) when preparing development plans. Community facilities should continue to address the requirements of residents in the area and can contribute to a sense of place which is important to the health, well-being and amenity of local communities and their existence is often a key element in creating viable and sustainable places.

2.5 Inclusive Design: PPW emphasises the need for good design and placemaking to be incorporated within all development proposals. Good design should place people at the heart of the design process and must also involve the provision of measures that help to reduce the inequality of access to essential services, education and employment experienced by people without access to a car.

2.6 Infrastructure: Adequate and efficient infrastructure, including services such as education facilities, is crucial for economic, social and environmental sustainability. It underpins economic competitiveness and opportunities for households and businesses to achieve socially and environmentally desirable ways of living and working. Infrastructure which is poorly designed or badly located can exacerbate problems rather than solving them.

2.7 Active and Social Linkages: The Active and Social Places of PPW seeks to actively create sustainable and cohesive communities through development plan policies, including specific allocations, and development management decision making. In particular, policies will: enable sustainable access to housing, employment, shopping, education, health, community, leisure and sports facilities and green infrastructure, maximising opportunities for community development and social welfare; It emphasises that when planning and managing future development, planning authorities need to ensure that residents of existing and new communities have access to jobs and an appropriate range of community facilities including recreation, leisure, health and education.

2.8 PPW identifies that planning obligations are useful arrangements to overcome obstacles that may otherwise prevent planning permission from being granted. Contributions may be used to offset negative consequences, to help meet local needs, or to secure benefits which will make development more sustainable. It is essential that arrangements are fair to both the developer and community, that the process is transparent as possible, and that development plans provide guidance on the types of obligations that the Council may seek.

2.9 **Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (SCfL)** formerly known as the *21st Century Schools and Education Initiative* is a long-term investment for schools and colleges to develop them as hubs for learning and reduce buildings in poor condition. In January 2022, it adopted the new title SCfL, reflected renewed emphasis on environmental sustainability, community cohesion, and the needs of future generations. The main aims of the programme include:

1) Transforming Learning Environments & Learner Experience
2) Meeting Demand for School Places
3) Improving Condition & Suitability of the Estate
4) Developing Sustainable Learning Environments
5) Supporting the Community

2.10 The SCfL now includes approximately £2.3 billion in combined capital and revenue investment for education infrastructure, delivered through a more flexible "rolling programme" rather than fixed, multi-year cycles.

2.11 **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board Well-being Plan 2023-2028** The Well-being Plan (the Plan) outlines how the Public Service Board will work together to deliver the seven wellbeing goals for Wales as referenced in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act. The Plan is framed around tackling inequalities in relation to our lifestyles, our communities, and our environment to improve the well-being for people living here now and building towards a fair future. Two well-being objectives have therefore been developed, which are:

1) Healthy Local Neighbourhoods
2) Sustainable and Resilient Local Neighbourhoods

2.12 This plan recognises the need to help people to access support, services and opportunities in their local neighbourhood such as community buildings like education facilities.

2.13 **Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013** makes walking and cycling the preferred option for shorter journeys, particularly everyday journeys, such as to and from a workplace or education establishment, or in order to access health, leisure or other services or facilities. The Active Travel Act requires local authorities to identify the walking and cycling routes required to create fully integrated networks for walking and cycling to access work, education, services and facilities.

Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen

3.0 Background

3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) receives a high number of applications each year for new housing development. These new residents create a demand for school places and as a result, there may be a need for new educational facilities or an improvement to existing provision. In order to ensure communities are not disadvantaged and that there is sufficient and satisfactory educational provision for the children and young people generated by new developments, the Council will, where appropriate, seek contributions towards providing or enhancing educational facilities. To meet this demand Policy SP10 of the RLDP requires the provision of educational facilities and/or their upgrades.

3.2 The Council urges anyone intending to submit an application for residential development within the County Borough to read this SPG. To discuss any issues on a site-specific basis they may contact BCBC in advance of making a planning application for pre-application discussions (see Section 7 at the end of the SPG).

Pencoed Primary School

4.0 Education Provision

4.1 **Corporate Plan and Education and Family Support Directorate Plan 2023-2028** sets out the Council's priorities and how the Council will work alongside local people and partners to provide services over the next five years.

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

4.2 Education contributions secured through Section 106 will specifically support the fourth objective. The importance of delivering this objective is also detailed within the Education and Family Support Directorate Plan.

4.3 **Education and Family Support Directorate Plan** identifies the directorate's priorities and commitments, the contribution the directorate will make in the Corporate Plan, and how this will be measured.

4.4 **School Modernisation** – BCBC has embarked on a challenging programme of school modernisation across the County Borough. Creating schools that are fit-for-purpose and valued by their communities is one of the Council's major priorities, as outlined in the Corporate Plan. Throughout the modernisation process, discussions are being held with learners, schools and their communities. Consideration is being given to the circumstances of each school with the best long-term interests of the children and young people in its locality being the priority while ensuring the current quality of education is maintained. Using the most up-to-date information held by the Council, the effects of the School Modernisation Plan on schools in the vicinity of new residential development will be taken into account at the planning application stage and this will form part of the negotiation process at that time.

4.5 **School Catchment Areas** – All primary and secondary schools have geographical catchment areas that are used to administer admission arrangements. Out of the 60 Schools throughout the County Borough, there are 5 Welsh medium schools, 5 voluntary aided, 1 voluntary controlled, 2 special schools and there is 1 pupil referral unit. Due to the reduced number, and therefore more sparsely located nature of schools such as Welsh medium schools and special schools, they have wider catchment areas.

4.6 It should be noted that the defined catchment areas for schools are sometimes subject to review and the Council recommends that the developer contacts the Council prior to the submission of a planning application to ascertain the most up-to-date catchment information.

4.7 In order to make effective use of future contributions, the terms of any future Section 106 agreement should allow for the fact that school catchment areas change and that contributions can be utilised for education facilities within any subsequent school’s catchment area within which the development falls at the time of implementation.

4.8 **School Capacity** – Welsh Government’s Circular No. 021/2011 ‘Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales’ describes the method of assessing the capacity of primary and secondary schools and deriving appropriate admission numbers from the capacity. Local Authorities in Wales are required to set pupil admission numbers (the PAN) based on this methodology as part of their annual determination of admission arrangements for the schools.

4.9 The Council holds up-to-date information relating to the capacities of each school, which will be used to determine whether a surplus or deficit in available capacity exists for schools by catchment area. Where a development is likely to place pressure on the existing capacity of schools in a catchment, the Council will seek to negotiate an agreed financial contribution towards the provision of additional school places or facilities.

4.10 It is necessary to retain some spare places to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils in particular year groups. This allows for preference and demand volatility (e.g. year-on-year changes in the birth rate, parental choice etc.). **The level of spare places needed to be retained at schools is unlikely to exceed 10%. Any school which has achieved 90% occupancy would therefore be regarded as having no surplus capacity.**

4.11 **School Standards** – Each school has been assessed in terms of any significant investment that is required to bring it up to a satisfactory standard. The Council holds information in connection with the suitability, sufficiency and condition of school buildings throughout the county borough. The standard of school buildings / facilities is a valid consideration for this SPG and Section 106 negotiations as additional numbers of pupils generated by new development could exacerbate arrangements to such an extent that the individual school would not be suitable to accommodate additional pupils. Circumstances are likely to differ significantly between schools depending on their configuration, layout, facilities and use of internal space that may need to be brought back into beneficial use to accommodate new pupils.

4.12 The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 describe and advises on meeting the minimum standards for the premises of all maintained schools in Wales. The Regulations set minimum standards for all existing and new maintained schools in Wales and they require that the premises of non-maintained special schools, and approved independent schools suitable for the admission of children who have special educational needs conform to some of the standards contained within them. The surveys undertaken by the Council are based on the above guidance. Current guidance such as Building Bulletins, are also consulted.


Pencoed Primary School

5.0 Developer Contributions

5.1 Thresholds

5.2 Residential developments large enough to place increased pressure on the educational facilities within whose catchment area the development is located will result in the Council seeking an appropriate level of contribution from the developer to accommodate the additional places or bring existing floorspace up to a satisfactory standard.

5.3 Contributions for educational facilities will be sought from all proposed developments with a net gain of 5 or more residential units. In the case of flats or apartments contributions will be required for 15 or more eligible units (i.e. 1 bedroom flats would be excluded from the total number of units).

5.4 Contributions will be sought where:-

a) The pupils potentially arising from the development will cause the surplus capacity of local schools within the catchment area to be exceeded; or

b) Existing surplus capacity exists to accommodate some or all of the pupils potentially arising from the development, but refurbishment is required to make those places ‘fit for use’.

5.5 The only forms of accommodation that will be exempt from contributions are bedsits, 1-bed dwellings, sheltered or elderly accommodation, houses in multiple occupation, hotels, hostels and student accommodation (including residential schools, colleges or training centres).

5.6 Each residential development exceeding the above thresholds will be assessed to determine how many children and young people are likely to be generated from that development and its potential demand and impact on local schools and education facilities.

5.7 Pupil Yields

5.8 The number of children and young people that will be generated by a proposed housing development is based on the following pupil yield factors:

Table 1: Number of children generated per dwelling

Age Group	Number of Children Generated per Dwelling	
	Apartments	Houses
Nursery (under 4)	0.02	0.05
Primary (4-11)	0.10	0.33
Secondary (11-16)	0.06	0.21
Post 16	0.18 x secondary	0.18 x secondary
ALN* – Primary	1.5% of primary	1.5% of primary
ALN* - Secondary	1.5% of secondary	1.5% of secondary

* ALN = Additional Learning Needs

5.9 The pupil yield numbers above are based on the actual take up of school places from completed new build housing developments in the borough, which include the provision of a new Primary School.

5.10 The number of pupils generated by a proposed development will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole pupil, and will be assessed against the capacity of the school(s) in whose catchment area(s) the new housing development is proposed. The Council will take account of the number of pupils on the school roll (NOR) to assess whether any surplus capacity exists within the development catchment(s).

5.11 Net pupil places required above projected capacity are then calculated by offsetting a developments projected pupil yield against any existing school place surplus. The figures used to calculate the school numbers will be made available to developers as part of the justification for requesting a financial contribution.

5.12 Safe Walking Routes

5.13 Notwithstanding para. 5.11, any surplus school capacity within the development catchment(s) must also be considered in the context of Safe Walking Routes (A route is considered to be available if it is safe for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learners age and levels of understanding requires this) before assuming that capacity can offset a development's projected pupil yield. The local authority will only accept the use of surplus places within a relevant catchment area, where the following criteria is met:

1) The distance from the development to the school(s) is within the national statutory distances of two miles for primary school pupils and three miles for secondary school pupils; and

2) The journey from the development to the school(s) is served with an available walking route, as defined by the local authority (as per the Leaner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – See Appendix A for further guidance).

5.14 If the local authority has not assessed the route from the development to the relevant schools with surplus places, the onus will be on the developer to demonstrate under the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance, that the route can be considered 'available'. This could be incorporated within a transport assessment or other supporting information submitted with a planning application.

5.15 Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision

5.16 Additional Learning Needs pupils are those taught in either a special school or in a specialist facility on the site of a mainstream school.

5.17 Welsh-Medium Provision

5.18 An evaluation of different educational settings (i.e. English-medium, Welsh-medium, faith and voluntary aided schools) is undertaken on historical take up of places in the catchment and how place availability would drive parental choice. The Local Education Authority will determine if contributions will be used for Welsh or English-medium school places, which will be subject to a separate process outside of any planning application.

5.19 Costs per Pupil Place

5.20 The costs per pupil place are based upon Welsh Government standardised size and costs for new build schools under the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

Table 2: Cost per Pupil Place

Year Group	Cost per Pupil Place
Nursery	£25,009
Primary	£25,009
Secondary	£36,318
Post 16	£36,318
ALN – Primary	£75,027
ALN – Secondary	£108,954

5.21 The figures above have been tested against the costs of recently completed new school construction projects and will be regularly reviewed to reflect changes in school building costs. The most up-to-date data will be used at the time of the application. The figures quoted in this SPG are therefore subject to change.

5.22 The Welsh Government's standardised costs are based on the area in a school building required per pupil, according to the maximum size range of Building

Bulletins 98 and 99 for secondary and primary pupils respectively. Once the size is established, costs are applied which account for the following elements:

- Standard build costs (includes sub structure, externals and design costs);
- Furniture, fittings and equipment; and
- ICT

5.23 The costs do not include abnormal build costs associated with gradients, contamination, flood protection works or any associated highway works outside the school boundary.

5.24 Investment in Unsatisfactory School Accommodation

5.25 In circumstances where a school does have the capacity with regards to floor space, but the space is considered to be of an unsatisfactory standard to accommodate additional pupils created by a development and would require investment to make it suitable, the costs of bringing this floor space up to standard will be based on 65% of the cost of providing a new additional space.

5.26 New Schools

5.27 Where large scale development generates sufficient pupil numbers to justify a new primary or secondary school, there will be a requirement on developers to provide this within the development. If not physically possible to accommodate the facility on site, the developer will be required to make an equivalent financial contribution (e.g. land value and building costs) towards its off-site provision.

5.28 Use of Contributions

5.29 The Council will seek contributions for all age groups for all maintained schools where the need arises. Contributions may be used for:

- provision of new schools;

- design of new schools in accordance with the Area Guidelines for Schools in Wales – Building Guidance, which sets out requirements for high-quality, inclusive and sustainable learning environments, including appropriate outdoor learning and play spaces, accessibility, wellbeing and environmental sustainability;
- provision of new classrooms;
- improvements and refurbishment of existing facilities to provide additional capacity;
- provision of additional resources or improvements to existing resources necessitated by the additional demand;
- provision of any necessary interim school measures which, in some circumstances, might be required when it is not possible to ensure that permanent measures will be in place on time.

6.0 Calculating the Requirement

6.1 Contribution formula

6.2 Using this guidance the calculations towards providing additional places or investment required to make the school suitable for additional pupils will be worked out using the following formula:

(Number of dwellings x Number of children generated per dwelling)
X
Cost per pupil place
+
Any additional related costs*
=
Total cost of providing school places or investment required to make the school suitable to accommodate additional pupils

*See Appendix 1 for an indication of potential additional costs

6.3 Worked Example

6.4 The following is a worked example using the formula above for a development of 500 houses in an area with no surplus Primary School capacity:

Number of dwellings = 500

Number of primary aged children generated by each dwelling = 0.33

Number of primary aged ALN children = 1.5% of total

Cost per pupil place = £25,009

Cost per ALN pupil place = £75,027

500 x 0.33 = 165 pupils

165 x 1.5% (ALN) = 2.47 (rounded down to 2)

165 – 2 = 163 pupils and 2 ALN pupils

163 x £25,009 = £4,076,467

2 x £75,027 = £150,054

Total Contribution = £4,226,521

7.0 Administration of the Policy

7.1 Implementation of the Policy

7.2 The implementation of the SPG strategy operates through a number of procedures which are broadly as follows:

7.3 Pre-Application Stage

7.4 Prospective applicants for housing developments are strongly advised to contact the Council's Planning Department prior to submitting a planning application. Amongst other matters, this will enable an officer from the Strategic Planning section to liaise with the Education, Early Years and Young People Directorate and outline the anticipated Council's requirements relating to education and other Section 106 contributions. This is to ensure that any anticipated costs relating to provision of education facilities are highlighted prior to, or during, the developer's initial site evaluation exercise.

7.5 Application Stage

7.6 Should pre-application discussions not take place, applicants for housing developments will be informed of the requirements for the provision of education facilities following the submission of a planning application. Should a housing development trigger the threshold for a contribution, an applicant will be required to enter into a Section 106 legal agreement with the Council to ensure a contribution is made towards education facilities. A clause will be included within the Section 106 agreement to assess the available capacity at the point the obligation is triggered, ensuring that the required mitigation is accurately aligned with conditions at that time.

7.7 As part of any request for a planning obligation, an applicant will be provided with:

- The number of children potentially arising from the development.
- The capacity of the relevant local schools and the existing number of pupils on the school roll.
- The amount of financial contribution that will be required to create additional school places.

7.8 Section 106 Agreements

7.9 Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990, as amended by Section 12 of the Planning and Compensation Act (1991), and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), is the legislative framework for planning obligations. Any obligation must meet the following three tests:

1) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
2) Directly related to the development; and
3) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

7.10 Furthermore, it should be noted that the CIL Regulations (Regulation 123) restricts the pooling of Section 106 contributions. Regulation 123 states a Section 106 obligation cannot constitute a reason for granting planning permission if five or more separate planning obligations already exist for a specific single infrastructure project (entered into since 6th April 2010). The Council keeps up to date records of all Section 106 agreements entered onto the Planning Register. In discussions with developers, the Council will consider whether the pooling restriction is relevant and seek to ensure that the development can be appropriately mitigated through planning obligations, whilst ensuring that the pooling restriction is not breached. If a development is not capable of delivering appropriate infrastructure because of the pooling restriction, this may make it unacceptable in planning terms.

7.11 Given the uncertainty regarding the future of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the devolved powers Welsh Government inherited to modify existing secondary legislation in April 2018, the Council has agreed that progress on CIL is to be placed into abeyance until there is a clear direction from Welsh Government. In the meantime, the Council will continue to use planning obligations secured through Section 106 agreements to secure necessary infrastructure.

7.12 Site Extensions

7.13 In cases where a greater number of dwellings are proposed than originally allocated, additional contributions will be required and secured through subsequent reserved matters applications. Alternatively, a review clause may be incorporated into the wording of a Section 106 agreement to account for any increase or reduction in the number or type of units proposed. The need to include a review clause within a Section 106 agreement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

7.14 Negotiations with Developers

7.15 Negotiations with developers on planning agreements will include:

- the project(s) to which their contributions may be used;
- the timing of the payment of agreed contributions; on large sites payments may be phased by agreement with the authority;
- when contributions will be spent; this will normally be within 5 years of receipt of the final payment.

7.16 In order to make effective use of future contributions, the terms of any future Section 106 agreement should allow for the fact that school catchment areas change and that contributions can be utilised for education facilities within any subsequent school's catchment area within which the development falls at the time of implementation.

7.17 Development Viability

7.18 Certain proposals may be eligible for discounted or reduced contributions if it can be proven that the value of the contribution required will jeopardise a proposal's viability. Appropriate supporting evidence must be provided to substantiate any such claim, and this evidence must be comprehensive. For example, it would not be acceptable to solely highlight a change in one variable (such as build costs), without clearly evidencing how other variables (such as house prices), may have also changed. A comprehensive viability appraisal must therefore be provided, with all inputs and assumptions being robustly evidenced. Unsubstantiated commentary will not be acceptable.

7.19 Applicants must robustly demonstrate any site-specific constraints, abnormal costs and/or other viability challenges that could necessitate a deviation. The LPA will work collaboratively with developers in such instances to evaluate site-specific evidence. The LPA reserves the right to reject any development viability claims without comprehensive supporting evidence being provided.

7.20 In all cases, it is recognised that some information necessary to demonstrate viability may be commercially sensitive. However, this is not a sufficient reason to avoid providing the appropriate evidence to the LPA and this information will be used solely to consider whether any deviation from this SPG is justifiable.

7.21 There is a common viability appraisal model in use across the South East Wales Region known as the Burrows-Hutchinson Ltd Development Viability Model (DVM). The DVM has been created as a comprehensive, user-friendly model to assess the financial viability of development proposals. The LPA is able make the DVM available to applicants to appraise the financial viability of a proposed development and demonstrate any necessary deviation from the requirements of the SPG. The primary inputs required to undertake a financial viability appraisal through the DVM are provided in Appendix B.

7.22 The DVM and user guide can be released to any applicant subject to the LPA receiving payment of a standard fee (set out in the Council's latest Fees and Charges Schedule). The fee is intended to cover the LPA's administrative costs of locking and distributing the model, verifying the completed appraisal and providing a high-level review to the applicant. However, payment of a fee will not guarantee that a reduced education contribution will be deemed acceptable or directly result in the granting of planning permission. The fee will only enable the LPA to consider whether:

a) the DVM has been completed correctly and appropriately;
b) the evidence supplied to support the costs and values submitted is sufficient and proportionate;
c) the suggested timescales for the development are realistic; and
d) the appraisal accords with policy requirements of the RLDP and with other guidance and/or policy statements that are pertinent to the assessment of viability in a planning context.

7.23 The preliminary fee does not allow for any further time that an applicant might wish to spend debating the findings of the LPA's initial high-level review. It also does not allow for any officer time necessary to re-appraise subsequent submissions of the model and supporting evidence, which will be rechargeable. Alternative viability models can be used subject to prior agreement with the LPA. In the event of any unresolvable disputes, the LPA may need to draw upon expertise from a third party to act as an independent arbitrator. The costs associated with this must be met by the developer/applicant. For larger sites (of several hundred units), mixed-use developments or sites of a strategic scale, it may be more appropriate for an applicant to commission an independent arbitrator from the outset, following discussion with the LPA.

7.24 Irrespective of the outcome of a viability appraisal, it may be necessary for the Council to secure a certain level of developer contributions, in order to mitigate the impact of the development. Such a circumstance could be where a failure to make some provision for certain infrastructure items would make the development unacceptable in planning terms, contrary to policy and an unacceptable burden. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. In such circumstances, failure to secure the contributions, deemed necessary to support the proposal, could result in a recommendation of refusal.

7.25 Planning Appeal Decisions

7.26 If an appeal is made for reasons other than the provision of an education contribution, the applicant should ensure that an appropriately worded Unilateral Undertaking is signed prior to the determination of any appeal, to make provision for the appropriate contribution. Failure to provide such an undertaking would be likely to result in the Council making an objection on education capacity grounds at appeal.

Appendix A – Safe Walking Routes to Schools

1.1 Local authorities are under a legal duty to assess the travel needs of learners who walk to school. In making an assessment, local authorities must take into account the following physical route provisions by law:

- Route conditions;
- Traffic;
- Traffic flow on roads;
- Collision history;
- Footpaths;
- Crossing points;
- Canals, rivers, ditches and embankments;
- Lighting;
- Planned changes in the area; and
- Level crossings.

1.2 The intent of the guidance is to ensure that the relationship between learners and traffic is considered by the local authority in making a judgement as to whether the route they are to travel, is available (safe) to walk. It is important therefore that for any new development, pedestrian routes are adequate and meet the physical requirements outlined in the Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance. Particular consideration should be given (but not limited to) the following:

- The provision of continuous adequate footways
- Adequate street lighting
- Adequate sight lines
- Pedestrian refuges where necessary
- Adequate visibility
- Traffic flow and sight lines to allow enough opportunities to cross safely
- Sufficient crossing facilities (for example, zebra, pelican crossings)

- Sufficient pedestrian phases at traffic lights (including necessary refuges)

1.3 A local authority cannot automatically consider a route to be available on the basis it meets some or all of these physical requirements. The local authority will also need to consider any social danger associated with the route, which is also required under the operational guidance. The local authority will also need to consult and consider the views of learners as well as parents/carers in its assessment of the availability of a walked route to school.

1.4 Therefore, developers should ensure that for any new developments, the local authority is able to consider positively associated pedestrian routes, in line with the physical route requirements summarised above, but detailed more comprehensively in the aforementioned Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance.

Appendix B – Additional Related Costs

1.1 Potential Additional Related Costs include the following:

- Land acquisition
- Associated infrastructure requirements (e.g. major highway infrastructure or excessive ground levelling requirements)
- Temporary accommodation
- Initial cost of school transportation for up to 3 years (whilst new accommodation is being built)
- Building regulations
- Preliminary site investigations

1.2 The above highlights those additional related costs referred to that may be necessarily incurred, and which may form part of the contributions sought from the developer by the Council.

Appendix C – Data Inputs Required for Financial Viability Appraisals

1) List of open market dwelling types, specifying for each one:
   a) Number of bedrooms
   b) Number of habitable rooms
   c) Gross/net internal floor areas
   d) Estimated open market value (freehold selling price) with supporting evidence
   e) Total number of each dwelling type within the proposed development

2) List of affordable dwelling types, specifying for each one:
   a) Number of bedrooms
   b) Number of habitable rooms
   c) Gross/net internal floor areas
   d) Estimated open market value (unrestricted freehold selling price) for intermediate dwellings
   e) Transfer values for social rented dwellings
   f) Total number of each dwelling type within the proposed development

3) Site layout plan for the development (outline, or detailed if available) with net developable areas and dwelling numbers for each element/phase of the proposed development.

4) Estimated construction and sales programmes for the development.

5) Details of current land ownership or details of the contractual terms and stage of transaction reached for its acquisition by the developer. This must include the land price paid (or, if estimated and not yet paid, the basis for that estimate) and allowance made for acquisition fees and Land Transaction Tax.

6) Planning costs and anticipated period before commencement of development (in months) after land acquisition has been completed.

7) Housing construction costs (plot costs), as a total sum or £/m2, noting any additional allowance made for achieving compliance with forthcoming building regulations. Evidence must be provided to justify what these costs are based on.

8) Physical infrastructure costs, broken down between:
   a) Off-site drainage, highway and/or other works, with detailed analysis/justification
   b) Normal on-site costs for providing road access and services to individual plots (including “externals” such as detached garaging and landscaping, which may be assessed on a fixed average sum per dwelling, or as a percentage of plot

costs)

c) Abnormal site costs (if any) with detailed analysis/justification

9) Allowance made for professional fees in connection with:
   a) Planning and building regulations approvals
   b) Housing construction costs
   c) Physical infrastructure works

10) Estimated sum (or percentage allowance) for contingencies

11) Section 106 contributions necessary to achieve full RLDP policy compliance and anticipated timing of payments

12) Sale and marketing costs for open market dwellings

13) Finance costs, including interest rate(s) applied, and the basis for their calculation

14) Details of any proposed non-residential uses, including gross external and net internal floor areas, together with estimated costs and revenues associated with those parts of the development. This will include, where available, estimated freehold and rental values for each element/unit, the investment yield(s) on which estimated freehold values have been based/calculated, and details of any pre-lets or forward sale arrangements.

Cygnor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
BRIDGEND
County Borough Council

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Appendix 2: Consultation Representations, Responses and Resultant Action

Do you have any comments on the proposed thresholds in Section 5?	
Organisation	Planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder
Representation	It is recognised that proposed development at strategic sites would clearly exceed the thresholds set out in Section 5 and would therefore be expected to contribute towards education provision. In principle, this is accepted, and it is acknowledged that developments of this scale will generate a need for additional school places. However, concern is raised not with the principle of the threshold, but rather its operation in practice when applied to large, phased developments. For example, strategic sites make provision for on-site education infrastructure, including the safeguarding of land for a new primary school. The SPG does not clearly set out how such on-site provision is to be taken into account when calculating financial contributions. This creates a lack of clarity as to whether, and to what extent, the provision of land and associated infrastructure will offset or reduce the requirement for standardised financial contributions. In this context, it is considered unreasonable to apply standard “per pupil” capital cost contribution, which are primarily intended to fund incremental expansions to existing schools, to developments that are already required to make a significant on-site contribution through the provision of serviced land and the integration of education facilities within the masterplan. In the absence of a clear mechanism to offset these contributions, there is a real risk of double counting, whereby developers are required to both provide land for a new school and pay full financial contributions towards pupil places. This would result in a disproportionate and unjustified financial burden. The SPG should therefore include explicit provisions to address how in-kind contributions, such as the provision of land and associated infrastructure for a new school, will be factored into the overall

	contribution requirement. This should include a clear and transparent methodology for offsetting land value and infrastructure costs against any financial contributions sought. Without such clarity, there is a risk that the policy will be applied inconsistently and in a manner that undermines development viability. In summary, whilst the threshold approach is understood, it does not adequately account for the specific circumstances of large strategic developments. The SPG should be revised to ensure that on-site provision is properly recognised and that contributions are applied in a fair, proportionate and transparent manner, avoiding the risk of double counting and supporting the deliverability of key strategic sites.
Local Planning Authority Response	Since the existing SPG was adopted in 2021, construction costs have risen significantly. Accordingly, the cost multipliers have been updated to reflect the latest Welsh Government Cost and Size Standards, published in 2023, using the applicable 2026 rates. The Welsh Government Costs Standards apply standardised cost benchmarks to as many elements of school construction as possible. These benchmarks include, but are not limited to: • Construction cost per m^2; • Furniture, fitting and equipment price per pupil pupil/student; • ICT price per pupil/student. However, the cost standards do not account for land acquisition costs or the costs associated with providing utility services to the site boundary. As these costs are excluded from the cost's multipliers, the methodology avoids double counting where developer contributions are required in addition to the provision of serviced land.
Resultant Action	No action required.
Do you have any comments on the proposed pupil yields in Section 5.7?	
Organisation	Planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder

Representation	A strong objection is maintained to the proposed pupil yield assumptions set out within Section 5.7. The SPG continues to apply a blanket yield of 0.33 for primary school pupils and 0.21 for secondary school pupils per dwelling. Whilst the Council states that these figures are based on the actual take-up of school places from completed developments within the Borough, the evidence base underpinning this approach remains unclear and insufficiently robust. No detailed information is provided regarding the number or type of developments analysed, nor whether the data reflects a representative range of dwelling sizes, tenures or locations. The apparent reliance on a limited dataset, potentially including a single development, is not an appropriate basis upon which to establish borough-wide planning assumptions. This is particularly concerning given the significant pupil yield compared to neighbouring authorities, which has not been convincingly justified. It is widely recognised that pupil yield varies considerably depending on dwelling size and household composition. Larger family homes typically generate higher numbers of school-aged children, whereas smaller units such as two-bedroom dwellings generate significantly lower yields. The application of a single average yield across all house types fails to reflect this fundamental relationship and results in an overestimation of demand in many cases. This issue is particularly relevant to the proposed strategic allocations, where a broad mix of housing is intended to be delivered, including a substantial proportion of two and three-bedroom dwellings. Applying a blanket primary yield of 0.33 per house assumes that all units perform at a level equivalent to larger family homes, which is neither realistic nor supported by evidence. As a result, the approach leads to inflated education contributions that are not proportionate to the likely impact viability of the development. Other local authorities have adopted different, more evidence-based methodologies. In Cardiff, for example, pupil yields are calculated based on the number of bedrooms within a dwelling, with

	significantly lower yields applied to smaller units and higher yields applied to larger dwellings. Notably, even the highest yields applied in Cardiff are lower than the blanket figures proposed within this SPG. This highlights a clear discrepancy and suggests that the current approach in Bridgend is overly simplistic and potentially excessive. In light of the above, it is considered that the Council should undertake a more comprehensive and transparent evidence-based assessment of pupil yields, drawing on a wider range of data sources including Census information, school roll data and multiple housing developments. A differentiated approach based on dwelling size should be adopted to ensure that contributions are fair, proportionate and reflective of actual demand.
Local Planning Authority Response	The consultee's comments are noted. Pupil yield rates within the existing SPG were based on the actual uptake of school places from a completed residential development within the borough, which included the provision of a new primary school at Broadlands. Yield rates were calculated separately for each academic year including nursery, primary, secondary and post-16, by dividing the number of pupils in each provision by the overall development population. This methodology was previously challenged by developers, specifically due to the over reliance on a single completed development to inform pupil yield assumptions. As part of this review, the robustness of the pupil yield evidence base has been strengthened through the reassessment of school uptake at Broadlands, alongside the inclusion of data from a second completed housing development, Parc Derwen, which was not fully complete at the time of the previous review. Both developments included the provision of an on-site primary school and comprise a broad mix of dwelling types, including one, two, three, four and five-bedroom homes. To determine the pupil yield arising from the two developments, an exercise was undertaken that involved interrogating post codes to identify the number of pupils (on roll) arising from the individual housing developments. This data provided a breakdown of the number of pupils within each academic

	year. Average pupil yield rates for each education provision were then calculated separately for both housing developments by dividing the number of pupils within each education provision by the total population of each development. The generated pupil yield rates were analysed in detail through a comparative assessment of the demographic profiles of the two developments. Officers' analysis indicated that new housing developments are likely to generate a demographic profile more closely aligned with Parc Derwen, which, as a recently completed site, has a higher proportion of younger families and therefore greater demand for nursery and primary education provision. In contrast, Broadlands represents a more established and settled community, with lower demand in the early years' provisions and comparatively higher levels of secondary and post-16 pupils, reflecting the progression of children into older education provisions as the development has matured. These differences are clearly reflected in the respective school place uptake data for each development. In order to ensure that the pupil yields rates were more representative of a new housing development, the methodology applied a weighted average between the Broadlands and Parc Derwen pupil yield rates for each education provision, with a 75% weighting applied to Parc Derwen deemed to better reflect the anticipated demographic profile of future residential developments. Several alternative approaches were explored, including census data in addition to calculating pupil yields based on the number of bedrooms within each dwelling. However, these methods were discounted due to the absence of sufficiently robust evidence. There are several limitations associated with using census data to derive pupil yield assumptions for new residential developments. Firstly, census data identifies the number of school-aged children residing within an area but does not identify which schools those children actually attend, meaning that some pupils may attend schools outside the local authority area. Secondly, the data reflects the

	demographic characteristics of existing housing stock rather than the pupil yield generated when new homes are first occupied. This is significant because existing housing may have a different demographic profile to new residential developments as aforementioned, which typically attract a higher proposition of young families during the initial occupation period. Finally, reliance on the 2021 Census should be treated with caution, as the data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic when population movements, household composition and educational attendance patterns were atypical, potentially affecting its representativeness for forecasting pupil yields from new development. Instead, the Council's methodology is based on evidence derived from actual pupil numbers generated by completed residential developments. This approach captures how new developments are occupied by families in practice, reflects the characteristics of new housing rather than existing housing stock, and uses actual pupils associated with actual developments to provide a more direct measure of education demand arising from new housing. It therefore provides a robust, locally derived evidence base that is more representative of the types of development likely to come forward across Bridgend, including large strategic sites where new schools are delivered as part of the development. As such, the Council considers this to be a more reliable and proportionate basis for forecasting pupil yields and planning future education infrastructure. Furthermore, adopting an approach that calculates pupil yields based on the number of bedrooms would present significant practical and data protection challenges. Establishing robust, property specific pupil yield rates would require access to highly granular data linking pupils' home addresses to the size and number of bedrooms within individual properties. Such data is not readily available and would be difficult to compile accurately. Moreover, the collection, and use of address-level pupil data would raise significant data protection and GDPR compliance concerns. Consequently, it is not considered to be a practical or proportionate methodology for deriving pupil yield assumptions.
Resultant Action	No action required.

Do you have any comments on the proposed cost per pupil place figures in Section 5?	
Organisation	Planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder
Representation	The proposed increases in cost per pupil place represent a significant uplift from previous figures and raise substantial concerns regarding both their justification and their cumulative impact on development viability. The SPG indicates that these figures are based on Welsh Government standardised costs and recent school construction project, however, there is limited transparency regarding how these costs have been derived or applied within the local context. As demonstrated in Table 1.1, the scale of the increases is considerable. For example, the cost per pupil place for nursery and primary education has increased from £18,599 in 2021 to £25,009 in the draft SPG, representing an increase of approximately 34.47%. Similarly, secondary and post-16 costs have risen from £29,406 to £36,318, an increase of approximately 23.51%. The uplift in costs for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision is also substantial, with primary ALN costs increasing from £55,797 to £75,027 (34.46%) and secondary ALN costs increasing from £88,218 to £108,954 (23.51%). When these figures are compared with those applied by neighbouring authorities, further concerns arise. For example, Cardiff's Education SPG, updated in 2023 cost per pupil place is £19,855 for primary education and £32,798 for secondary education, both of which are notably lower than the figures proposed within this SPG. This disparity raises questions regarding the consistency and proportionality of the proposed costs and whether they accurately reflect local delivery conditions. The magnitude of these increases, when combined with the elevated pupil yield assumptions, results in a very significant escalation in overall education contributions. This has direct implications for development viability, particularly for large strategic sites where the cumulative cost burden is already substantial.

	Table 1.1 Comparison of Cost per Pupil Place (Adopted vs Draft SPG)
Local Planning Authority Response	Since the existing SPG was adopted in 2021, construction costs have risen significantly. Cost multipliers have therefore been revised to reflect Welsh Government's Size and Cost Standards published in 2023, using the 2026 rates for this purpose. To ensure the SPG remains current and effective over the longer term, these costs will be reviewed and updated annually in line with indexation.

Table 1.1 Comparison of Cost per Pupil Place (Adopted vs Draft SPG)

Year group	Cost Per Pupil Adopted	Cost Per Pupil Draft	% increase
Nursery	£18,599	£25,009	34.47%
Primary	£18,599	£25,009	34.47%
Secondary	£29,406	£36,318	23.51%
Post 16	£29,406	£36,318	23.51%
ALN - Primary	£55,797	£75,027	34.46%
ALN - Secondary	£88,218	£108,954	23.51%

The cost calculations for each type of education provision (excluding Additional Learning Needs (ALN)) are based on multiplying the size (m^2) of a representative school, by the 2026 construction cost rate (£/m^2) contained within Welsh Government's Cost and Size Standards.

For clarity, the calculations are as follows:

<u>Nursery and Primary Provision</u>

A school size of 1,364m^2 was selected, representing a 1-form entry primary school with nursery (225 places - 210 primary plus 15 nursery). A construction cost rate of £3,768m^2 was applied in accordance with the cost standards.

Calculation:

1,364m^2 x £3,768m^2 = £5,139,552

£5,139,552 / 225 = £22,842 per pupil.

Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FFE) and Information Technology (IT): £2,167

Total cost multiplier = £25,009 per pupil.

<u>Secondary and Post-16 Provision</u>

A school size of 5,974m^2 was selected, representing a 4-form entry secondary school (600 secondary). A construction cost rate of £3,430m^2 was applied in accordance with the costs standards.

	Calculation: 5,974m^2 x £3,430m^2 = £20,490,820 £20,490,820 / 600 = £34,151 per pupil. FFE and IT: £2,167 per pupil. Total cost multiplier = £36,318 per pupil. **ALN Provision** The cost multiplier for ALN provision is calculated by applying a factor of three to the standard primary and secondary cost multipliers respectively. This reflects the higher costs associated with specialist provision, including the need for smaller teaching areas. This approach is consistent with the space requirements set out on page 81 of Welsh Government's Area guidelines for Schools in Wales: Building Guidance. While it is recognised the representor has referenced lower rates in other SPGs, those rates pre-date the more recent data upon which the Bridgend SPG is based upon.
Resultant Action	No action required.
Do you have any additional comments to make regarding Section 5?	
Organisation	Planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder

Representation	A further concern in relation to Section 5 is that the SPG lacks any clearly defined mechanism to adjust or scale education contributions where the quantum of development changes over time. For large, strategic and phased sites, it is common for housing numbers to evolve through the planning process in response to a range of factors, including design considerations. In its current form, the SPG does not provide clarity on how obligations would be recalculated in circumstances where the total number of dwellings is reduced, thus creating uncertainty. Without a clear mechanism for adjustment, there is a risk that contributions could be fixed at a level that does not reflect the true scale and impact of the development, resulting in disproportionate obligations and potentially threatening viability. It is considered essential that the SPG incorporates a flexible approach to recalculating contributions in line with any changes to the number or type of units. In the absence of such flexibility, the SPG risks imposing rigid requirements that do not respond to changing circumstances, which could ultimately hinder delivery and undermine viability.
Local Planning Authority Response	Comments noted. A review clause may be incorporated into the wording of s106 agreements to account for any reduction in the number or type of units proposed. The need to include a review clause within s106 agreements will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
Resultant Action	Paragraph 7.13 will be amended to clarify that a review clause may be incorporated into the wording of s106 agreements to account for any reduction in the number or type of units proposed.
Do you have any comments to make regarding Section 7 and the administration of the policy?	
Organisation	Planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder
Representation	It is acknowledged the provisions set out within Section 7, however there are concerns regarding the practical application of the policy, particularly in relation to viability and engagement. The SPG places

	a significant evidential burden on developers to demonstrate that contributions would render a scheme unviable, requiring detailed financial appraisals and supporting information. Whilst the need for robust viability assessment is acknowledged, the approach does not adequately recognise the cumulative impact of multiple policy requirements. For large strategic sites, viability must be assessed holistically, taking into account all infrastructure and planning obligations rather than considering each requirement in isolation.
Local Planning Authority Response	A new Planning Obligations SPG is being prepared which aims to provide further guidance and clarity regarding the holistic consideration of multiple policy requirements.
Resultant Action	No action required.
Do you have any comments to make regarding Appendix A, B or C?	
Organisation	Planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder
Representation	It is acknowledged that Appendices A, B and C are intended to provide supporting detail to the operation of the SPG; however, several concerns are raised regarding their clarity, application and potential implications for development viability and deliverability. In relation to Appendix A (Safe Walking Routes to Schools), the guidance provided is broadly consistent with national requirements and is supported in principle. However, it is considered that there is insufficient clarity as to how this will be applied in practice when assessing available school capacity. The SPG indicates that surplus capacity within a two-mile radius may only be considered where safe walking routes are available, yet the process by which such routes are assessed, agreed and evidenced is not clearly defined. There is a risk that capacity which is theoretically available may not be accepted in practice due to subjective or evolving assessments of route safety, thereby increasing the requirement for developer contributions. This introduces a level of uncertainty that is difficult to account for at the planning and viability stage. Greater clarity is therefore required on the

	methodology for assessing safe routes, the evidential requirements, and how any necessary mitigation measures will be scoped and costed. Overall, whilst the appendices provide useful supplementary information, there is a clear need for greater clarity, transparency and proportionality in their application. Without this, there is a risk that additional uncertainty and cost will be introduced into the development process, with potential implications for viability and delivery across BCBC.
Local Planning Authority Response	Comments noted. The local authority will only accept the use of surplus places within a relevant catchment area where the distance from the development to the school(s) is within the national statutory distances of two miles for primary school pupils and three miles for secondary school pupils, and where the journey is served by an ‘available’ walking route, as defined within the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance. The purpose of Appendix A is to provide clarity on the criteria that will be applied when determining whether surplus school capacity can reasonably be relied upon to mitigate the impact of development. The requirement for an available walking route reflects existing national guidance rather than introducing a new policy requirement. Where the local authority has not previously assessed the route between a development and the relevant school(s), it will be the responsibility of the developer to provide appropriate evidence demonstrating that the route meets the definition of an available walking route. This evidence may form part of a transport assessment or other supporting information submitted with a planning application and will be considered by the local authority. Further detail will be included within the supporting text to add further clarity and transparency in the assessment of safe walking routes.

Resultant Action	Paragraphs 5.13 and 5.14 have been amended to add further clarity and transparency in the assessment of safe walking routes.

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.

5.13 Notwithstanding para. 5.11, any surplus school capacity within the development catchment(s) must also be considered in the context of Safe Walking Routes (A route is considered to be available if it is safe for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learners age and levels of understanding requires this) before assuming that capacity can offset a development's projected pupil yield. The local authority will only accept the use of surplus places within a relevant catchment area, where the following criteria is met:

1) The distance from the development to the school(s) is within the national statutory distances of two miles for primary school pupils and three miles for secondary school pupils; and
2) The journey from the development to the school(s) is served with an available walking route, as defined by the local authority (as per the Leaner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance – See Appendix A for further guidance).

5.14 ~~Where school capacity exists within 2 miles of a new development, walking routes must be considered to be available, which must be assessed by the local authority, in line with the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational GuidanceFurther guidance is contained within Appendix A~~. If the local authority has not assessed the route from the development to the relevant schools with surplus places, the onus will be on the developer to demonstrate under the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance, that the route can be considered 'available'. This could be incorporated within a transport assessment or other supporting information submitted with a planning application.

5.29 The Council will seek contributions for all age groups for all maintained schools where the need arises. Contributions may be used for:

- provision of new schools;
- design of new schools in accordance with the Area Guidelines for Schools in Wales – Building Guidance, which sets out requirements for high-quality, inclusive and sustainable learning environments, including appropriate outdoor learning and play spaces, accessibility, wellbeing and environmental sustainability;

- provision of new classrooms;
- improvements and refurbishment of existing facilities to provide additional capacity;
- provision of additional resources or improvements to existing resources necessitated by the additional demand;
- provision of any necessary interim school measures which, in some circumstances, might be required when it is not possible to ensure that permanent measures will be in place on time.

7.13 In cases where a greater number of dwellings are proposed than originally allocated, additional contributions will be required and secured through subsequent reserved matters applications. Alternatively, a review clause may be incorporated into the wording of a Section 106 agreement to account for any increase or reduction in the number or type of units proposed. The need to include a review clause within a Section 106 agreement will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Meeting of:	**COUNCIL**
Date of Meeting:	**23 SEPEMBER 2026**
Report Title:	**INFORMATION REPORT FOR NOTING**
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	**MONITORING OFFICER**
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 update Council with an Information Report published since the last meeting.**

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Background

2.1 It was previously resolved to approve a revised procedure for the presentation to Cabinet and Council of Information Reports for noting.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 Information Report

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

Title	Date Published
Democratic Services Committee Annual Report	16 September 2026

3.2 Availability of Document

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

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

4.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh Language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

5. Well-being of Future Generations Implications and Connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

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

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

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

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications from this report.

8. Financial Implications

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

9. Recommendation

9.1 That Council acknowledges the publication of the report referred to in paragraph 3.1 above.

Background documents

None

Meeting of:	**COUNCIL**
Date of Meeting:	**23 SEPTEMBER 2026**
Report Title:	**DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT**
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	**CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL, REGULATORY & ELECTORAL SERVICES** **CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES**
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 2025 to May 2026** • **The Structure of the Democratic Services Team covering May 2025 to May 2026**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Council with the Democratic Services Committee's Annual Report for the period May 2025 to May 2026 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 The Democratic Services Committee approved their Annual Report at its meeting on 25 June 2026.

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 2025.

3.2 The Committee is serviced by the Democratic Services Manager. The role also has the responsibility of being the Head of Democratic Services.

3.3 During previous consideration of the Committee's Annual Report, requests have been made to incorporate details of the Committee's attendance at Democratic Services Committee meetings, to provide an indication of hours, whether full time or part time for the Democratic Services staff listed in the report and also to better reflect mandatory training participation for Members.

Membership of the Democratic Services Committee

3.4 The Membership and attendance details for the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2025 to May 2026 is as follows:

Councillor	26 June 2025	20 November 2025
Cllr Tim Thomas (Chair)	Present	Present
Cllr Sean Aspey	Present	Present
Cllr Paula Ford	Not Present	Present
Cllr Richard Granville	Apologies - Other Council Business	Present
Cllr David Harrison	Present	Present
Cllr Martin Hughes	Present	Present
Cllr Malcolm James	Present	Apologies – medical appointment
Cllr Heidi Bennett	Present	Present
Cllr Ian Spiller	Apologies – Work Commitments	Present
Cllr Graham Walter	Present	Present
Cllr Elaine Winstanley	Present	Present

Democratic Services Committee Terms of Reference

3.5 The remit of the Democratic Services Committee is set out under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and is to:

- 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.

3.6 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.

Activities of the Democratic Services Committee for the period May 2025 to May 2026

3.7 **Member Development** - Regular Member Development updates have been received by the Committee who have provided valuable comments and suggestions which were added to the Member Development Programme. The Committee also received and discussed details of mandatory e-learning modules for Members. Following the Committee's focus on this, with requests for regular reminders, drop-in sessions and detailed reports, it is confirmed that has resulted in 37 Members completing their modules, with 50 having accessed the system to commence them at the time of drafting this report.

3.8 **Member Development Working Group** - At its meeting in November 2025 the Committee agreed to establish a Working Group to assist with preparations for Member Development ready for the upcoming local election in May 2027. This Working Group will look to undertake detailed work on the Member Development Strategy, the Member Induction Programme and ongoing Member Development Programme as well as assist with planning for the potential Candidate events. The Group has now met on two separate occasions, starting with a planning session to determine how to set out their work over the forthcoming months. They also met again this month to consider and discuss the arrangements for the Candidate sessions that are now scheduled for the evenings of 13th and 14th October 2026.

3.9 **Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) Annual Remuneration Report 2026/27** – At its meeting in November 2025, the Committee considered the draft DBCC Annual Remuneration Report for 2026/27 and provided the following response back to the Commission:

In relation to the Democracy and Boundary Commission Cymru (DBCC) Draft Annual Remuneration Report for the municipal year 2026/27 the Committee expressed diversity of opinion in relation to the 6.4% increase to the basic salary increase for Councillors. Members highlighted that whilst this was in line with all-Wales 2024 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the proposed increase was written at a time when the UK inflation rate was at 3.2%. Concerns were expressed about this significant gap and the fact that this could result in very negative public perception of Councillors and Local Government as a whole.

Whilst noting this, there were also concerns from the Committee that sufficient provision had to be put in place to ensure that certain groups are not disincentivised as potential candidates in the 2027 Local Government Elections. Members noted that the financial aspect should not become a barrier preventing individuals from standing, especially from marginalised groups.

The Committee felt that there was a fine balance between the two that needed to be considered and monitored, particularly for any new Framework for 2027 onwards. A balance to prevent a greater divide between the public and local government that also did not discourage or exclude any potential candidates from putting themselves forward as a future Councillor to represent their community. Whilst appreciating that the purpose of using the ASHE was to try and align salaries to national average, the proposal was made for keeping Councillor salaries in line with current inflation rates.

Further comment was also made in relation to the disparity between Bands 1 and 2 within the report, for Leader and Deputy Leader. Members proposed that this be considered as part of the new framework and whether this gap was too large and needed addressing. Members also suggested that consideration be given to splitting the bands for Councillor salaries (as with staff), to have performance-based levels within each band.

On the subject of resettlement payments for councillors who are unsuccessful when seeking re-election, the Committee agreed that this did not sit comfortably with them. Whilst understanding that for some roles, such as that of an Executive Member, councillors may have given up other jobs to commit to these positions, the Committee agreed that councillors are fully aware and understand the risk when putting themselves forward in an election; the risk that, whether new or returning, the title could be limited to one term of 5 years. There was also the view that councillors do not always go into roles for financial reasons and wanted to do so for the good of their community. Any financial recompense, therefore, should not be necessary and would again risk public perception of Councillors and Local Government.

3.10 These comments were submitted to the DBCC as part of the consultation process.

Democratic Services Team for the period May 2025 to May 2026

3.11 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.

3.12 Following Medium Term Financial Strategy Budget Reductions in both 2024/25 and 2025/26, the Democratic Services Team underwent a restructure with the removal of some posts and an agreement for a reduction of hours for certain Members of staff. Secondments and backfilling were also necessary during 2025/26 to ensure cover for maternity leave. The structure therefore for the majority of 2025/26 is 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 (Full time)

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 or nature 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 2025 to May 2026.

Background documents

None