

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



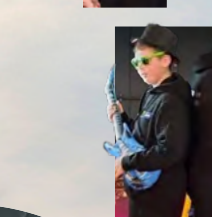
BRIDGEND COUNTY
BOROUGH COUNCIL

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF
SIROL PEN-Y-BONT AR OGWR

Social Services

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25



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DIRECTORS SUMMARY

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

This report is prepared as a statutory requirement under the Code of Practice issued under Part 8 of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act (2014).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Children and Family Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We need to:

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

Adult Social Care

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

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

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

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

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

high degree of confidence in the quality of care provided.

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

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

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

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

Our priorities for improvement in 2025-26 are:

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

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

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

Early Help, Prevention and Wellbeing

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

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

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

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

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

- Local community connectors and community navigators who work with people across the county borough to support them to make meaningful connections and live well in their own communities, developing new community activities such as bushcraft where these don't currently exist. Community connectors support individuals who are at the edge of needing statutory services; community navigators work with a wider range of people.
- The carer's wellbeing service signposted 4650 carers to appropriate services in 2024-25.
- The young carers networks which are engaging over 146 young carers in 'we are valued' days and has supported over 549 through the young carers card.
- Our new youth hub which meets twice a week in Bridgend Resource Centre and provides social opportunities children and young adults with additional needs
- Accredited training and supporting for people with meaningful occupation in Awen's Wood-B and B-Leaf supported employment.
- Our healthy living partnership with Halo leisure trust which has received the highest level of industry accreditation and has supported autism friendly swimming and the Feel Good for Life programme for those living with dementia, people who are lonely and isolated and their carers.
- Our cultural trust partner Awen who provide a range of library, cultural and wellbeing services to support people to be well and connected to their community.
- Our active young people's programme which engages children of different ages in sports, games, arts and creative activities.
- Our Bevan exemplar super agers programme which keeps us fit, active and socially connected as we grow older.

Workforce

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

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

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

Financial Performance, Risks and Issues

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

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

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

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

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

The Code of Practice for Part 8 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act requires that *'as a member of the corporate management team, a director of social services may be required to consider overall resource implications, including budgetary issues. The head of paid service and the director of social services have a responsibility to ensure councillors have clear advice on the level of resources required for a local authority to effectively deliver its social services functions'*. In light of robust analysis and professional advice, the Council has supported pressures in Social Services as far as it has been able to in recent budgets, including an investment of £2 million in the Children's workforce in 2024-25 and £8.8 million in 2025-26 budget including £3.25

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

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

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

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

Children's Placement Sufficiency

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

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

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

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

Levels of Contact into Social Care Services

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

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

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

There have been significant increases in levels of care and costs of care for people with learning disabilities in recent years. There have been pressures in the social work teams due to court of protection safeguarding work and agency workforce has increased. A transformation programme and outcome surgeries have been established to improve practice and commissioning.

Digital System Replacement

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

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

Pressures on Partner agencies

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

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

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

Priorities for 2025-26

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Looking to the Future – Sustainably Improving at a Time of Challenge for Public Services

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a review of the last year, the progress we have made, the risks and issues we face and the areas where we will continue to improve.

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

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

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

Diolch o galon,

Claire Marchant

Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing

JULY 2025

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CONTEXT

What do we do?

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

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

Our services

We provide a range of services, including:

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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

PREVENTION AND WELLBEING

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

- Building Community Resilience

Awen Partnership

- Libraries
- Theatres / Cultural Hubs
- Work Based Initiatives

Halo Healthy Living Partnership

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

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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

Who do we support?

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

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

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

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED*

Care and Support	608
Child Protection	75
Care Experienced Children	333

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

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE SUPPORTED**

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

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

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

2024-25: The year in summary

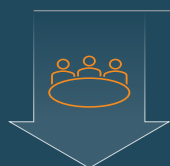
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

**24% INCREASE**

14828 contacts received in the year



1244 contacts provided with advice or assistance

**58% DECREASE**

694 section 47 enquiries held

**34% DECREASE**

1576 new care and support assessments completed in the year

**4% DECREASE**

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

**1011****25% DECREASE**

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

**333****37% DECREASE**

in the number of care experienced children at 31st March

**75****60% DECREASE**

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

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

**7% INCREASE**

6210 contacts received in the year

**31% INCREASE**

2553 contacts provided with advice and assistance

**36% INCREASE**

2509 new care and support assessments completed in the year

**9% DECREASE**

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

**2038****7% DECREASE**

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

**737****4% DECREASE**

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

**495****6% DECREASE**

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

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

Leadership

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

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

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

Bridgend County Borough Council

Delivering Together
Our Corporate Plan 2023-28



Political & Senior Leadership

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

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

Governance & Accountability

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

The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting Committee, chaired by the Deputy Leader, meets quarterly to make important policy decisions on service provision for care experienced children and care leavers.

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing is a member of the Council’s Corporate Management Board (CMB) and fortnightly Cabinet / Corporate Management Board (CCMB). CCMB and scrutiny oversee the directorate’s progress and performance against each of the Council’s key objectives. This governance ensures robust corporate leadership and a clear link between the directorate’s strategic and operational priorities and the Council’s overall objectives.

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

Workforce

Recruitment & Retention

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

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

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

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

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

Growing Our Own

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

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



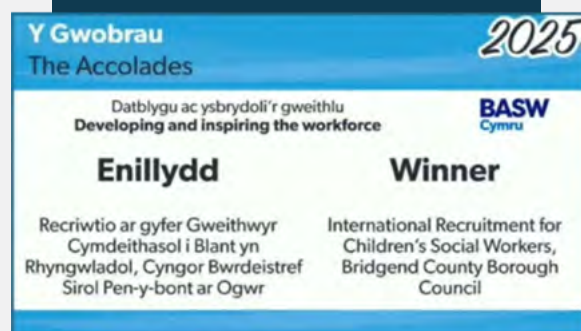
Social Care Accolades 2025

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

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

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

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



Staff Feedback

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

91%

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

85%

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

69%

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

79%

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

95%

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

58%

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

79%

Agree or strongly agree that they feel supported by their manager

89%

Agree or strongly agree that they feel supported by the colleagues

78%

Reported their morale as either moderate, high or very high

70%

Feel valued at work

93%

Know how to access support if needed

84%

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

What Next?

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

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

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

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

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

Financial Resources

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

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

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

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

ratios and are more expensive.

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

Within Adult Social Care there continues to be pressures in

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

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

2025-26 BUDGET PRESSURE ALLOCATION

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

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

3

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

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

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

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

1.

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

2.

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

3.

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

4.

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

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

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

People

Quality Standards

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

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

Across Social Services

Voice and Control

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

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



Direct Payments

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



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

Advocacy Support

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Supporting Effective Leadership

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

Workforce Development

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

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

Management and Leadership Pathway

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

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

Children and Family Services

Voice and Control

Understanding Family Engagement

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

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

CASE STUDY: Signs of Safety in Practice

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

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

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

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

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

Story Panel

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

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



Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

Supporting Practice Framework Implementation

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

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

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

'Most Significant Change'

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

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

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

Adult Social Care

Voice and Control

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

Better Together Bridgend

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

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

Having a Say Group

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

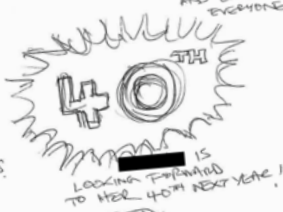
Through the meetings and events people have built meaningful connections and collaborative relationships; these inclusive approaches have helped people to place lived experiences at the heart of the discussions, decision-making and their own personal development.

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

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

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

HAVE YOUR SAY! 25/7/25 ①



25/7/25



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



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



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



THEY WILL HELP OUR VOICE TO BE HEARD.

WE WILL WORK TOGETHER.

LEON WILL ARRANGE A PRESENTATION TO GIVE MORE INFORMATION.



THANK YOU FOR COMING!
SEE YOU NEXT TIME!

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

The Welsh Language

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

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

CASE STUDY:

Mwy Na Geiriau / More than Just Words

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

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

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

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

Developing a Skilled and Supported Workforce

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

Strength Based / Outcome Focused Practice Model

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

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

Falls Prevention

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

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

Telecare/ Technology Enhanced Care

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

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

People: 2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

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

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

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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

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

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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

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

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

Prevention

Quality Standards

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

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

Across Social Services

Promoting Resilient Communities

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

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

Resilient and Connected Communities

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

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

Resilient and Connected Communities: 2024-25 Summary

THE BUILDING RESILIENT AND CO-ORDINATED COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME:

Signposted **2288** people to relevant services

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

LOCAL COMMUNITY CONNECTORS:

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

Noted **137** people attending network meetings

Reported **587** people had increased social connections

NEXT STEPS:

Build stronger cohesive partnerships across the 3rd sector

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

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

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

Carer Wellbeing

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

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

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

Young Carers

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

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

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

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

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

Support for Young Carers

Supported by the Healthy Living Partnership

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

17 Young Carer Ambassadors in schools across the borough.

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

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

NEXT STEPS

To further support young carers we will:

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

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

Young Carers Event

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

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



Children and Family Services

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

Early Intervention and Prevention

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



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

Edge of Care

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

EDGE OF CARE SERVICES



RAPID RESPONSE

Short term support for children and families in crisis



CONNECTING FAMILIES

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



BABY IN MIND

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



INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT

Long term support for families affected by trauma



DADS SUPPORT WORKER

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



RISE

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

ANALYSIS OF EDGE OF CARE: 2024-25

222 referrals were received by Edge of Care during the year

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

CONNECTING FAMILIES

97 cases in total

85 families received support

96% of cases successfully supported

BABY IN MIND

28 families

28 families received support

82% of cases successfully supported through trauma-informed support

INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

22 cases in total

86% of cases successfully supported

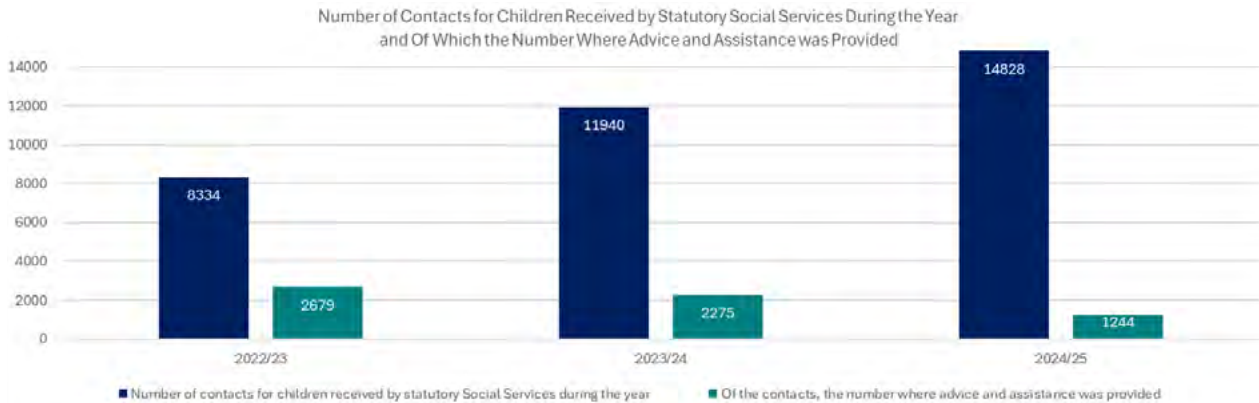
RAPID RESPONSE

61 cases in total

95% of cases successfully supported

Contacts to the Service

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



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

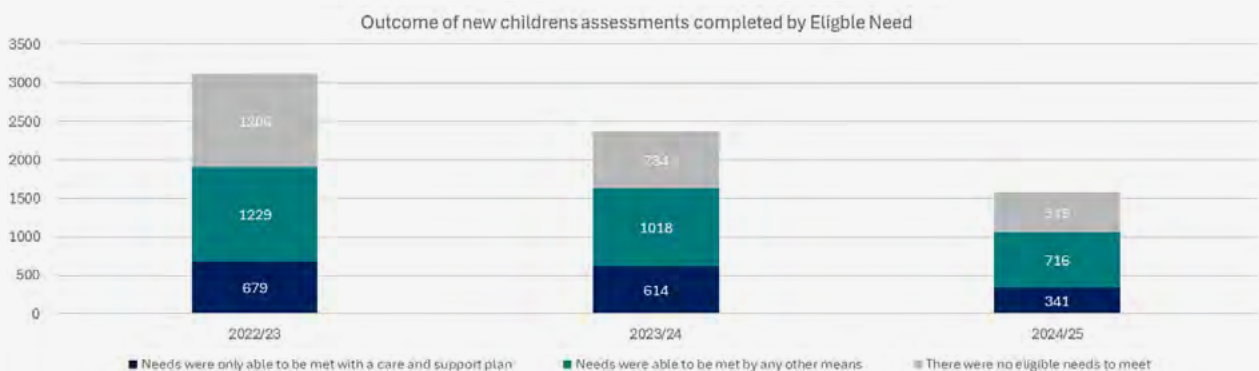
With early help co-located within MASH and locality safeguarding hubs, the ability to ensure children and families get the right support from the right service

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

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

Care and Support Assessments

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



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

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

Adult Social Care

Preventing the Escalation of Care & Support

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

Home Care Remodelling: The Support at Home Journey

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CASE STUDY:

Care Home Avoidance

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

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

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

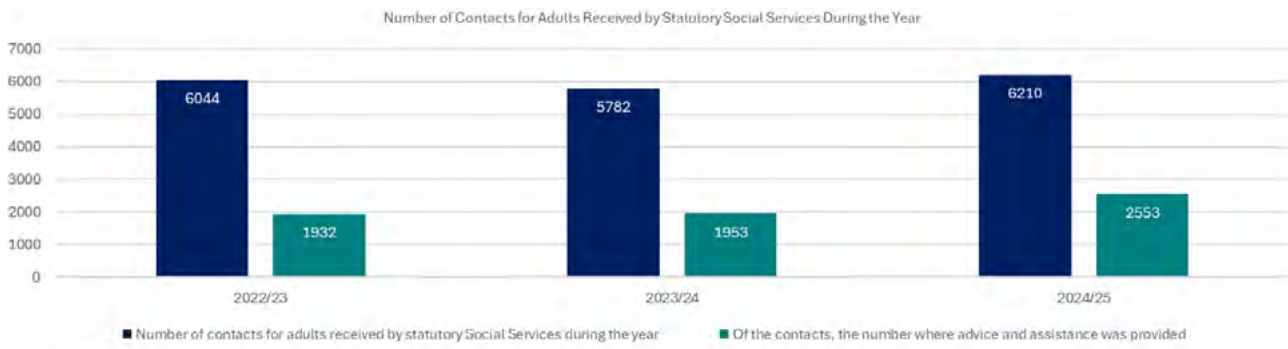
This meant that B's care calls were able to be reduced from 4 to 2 per day, the district nurse support was withdrawn and through the Social Worker, the Care Agency was changed and a new program of care designed introducing reablement approaches.

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

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

Contacts to the Service

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

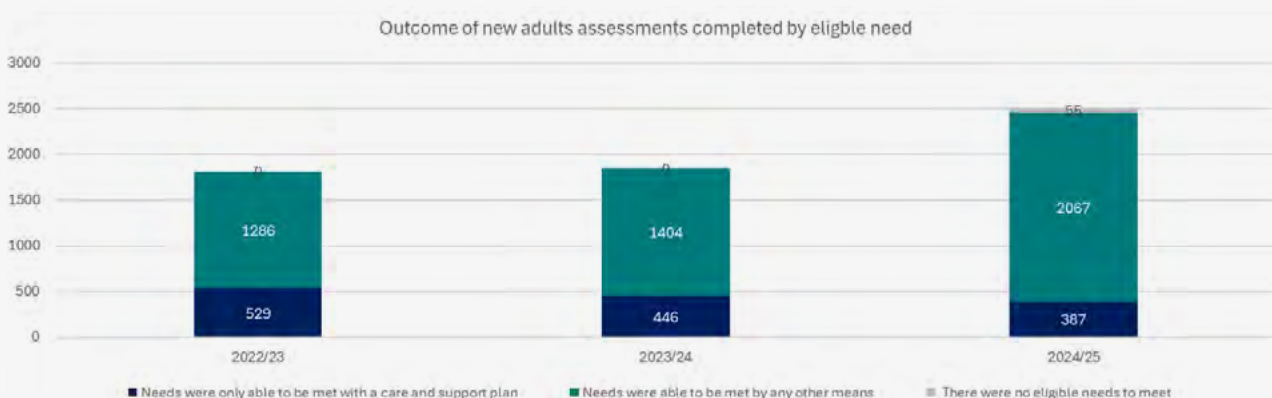


Over the latter part of the year, we implemented a change to the processes of our Early Intervention and Prevention Hub (EIPH), with contacts being directed via our Corporate Front Door.

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

Care and Support Assessments

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



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

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

The Reablement Service

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

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

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

Delayed Pathways of Care

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

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

Prevention: 2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

Preventative services to connect people to community based support.

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

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

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

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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

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

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

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

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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

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

Partnership and Integration

Quality Standards

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

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

Across Social Services

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

Regional Arrangements

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

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

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

Local Arrangements

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

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

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

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARTNER:

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

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

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

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

Detective Superintendent
SOUTH WALES POLICE

Third Sector Arrangements

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

Our partners have had a successful year:

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

Addressing the Gaps in Social Care

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Children and Family Services

Effective Partnerships

Mental Health Support for Children and Young People

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

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

CASE STUDY:

Working with Health to Safeguard from Harm

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

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

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

Homelessness

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

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

People As Equal Partners

Family Support Services Commissioning Strategy and Young People

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

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

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

FAMILY COMMISSIONING STRATEGY: KEY PRIORITIES

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

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

Bridgend Youth Voice Forum

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

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

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



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

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

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

What has not gone so well?

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

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

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

Adult Social Care

Effective Partnerships

Hospital Discharge

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

We achieved this aim by:

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

WHAT IS LEVEL 4 ENHANCED COMMUNITY CARE?

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

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

Housing

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

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

The Mental Health Operational Group

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

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

Supporting Autism Spectrum Disorder and Neurodiversity

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

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

The Substance Misuse Service

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

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

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

People As Equal Partners

Social Opportunities Panel

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

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

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

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

CASE STUDY:

Social Opportunities Panel

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

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

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

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

Enhancing Sensory Support

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

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

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

People First Bridgend

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

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

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

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

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

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

How can the support be improved?

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

Partnership and Integration:

2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

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

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

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

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

Review our out of hours Social Services arrangements.

Review the operating model of children with disabilities and transition.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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

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

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Continue to implement our 3-year strategic plan.

Well-being

Quality Standards

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

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

Children and Family Services

People are Protected and Safeguarded

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

No Wrong Door

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

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

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

Preventing and Responding to Exploitation

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

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

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

Children Safeguarding Enquiries

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



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

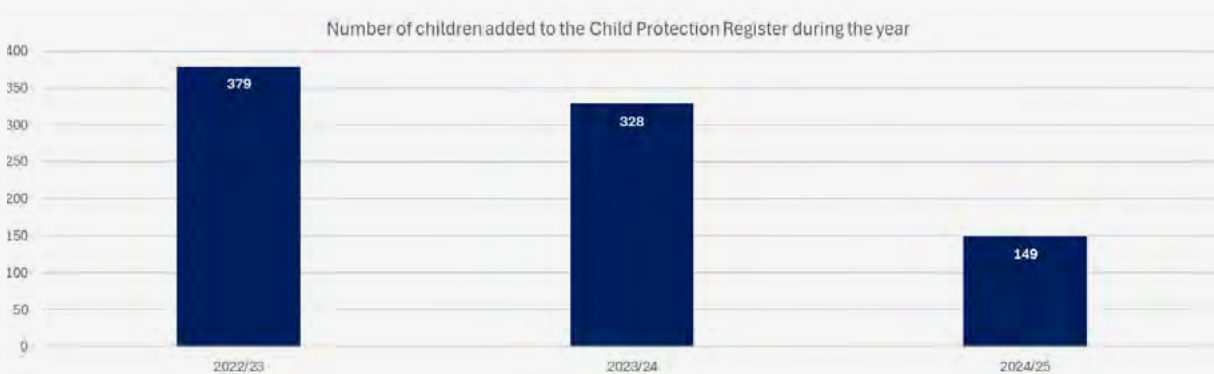
We continue to undertake work with partner agencies to support their understanding of our model of practice and have invited partners to

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

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

Child Protection Registrations

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



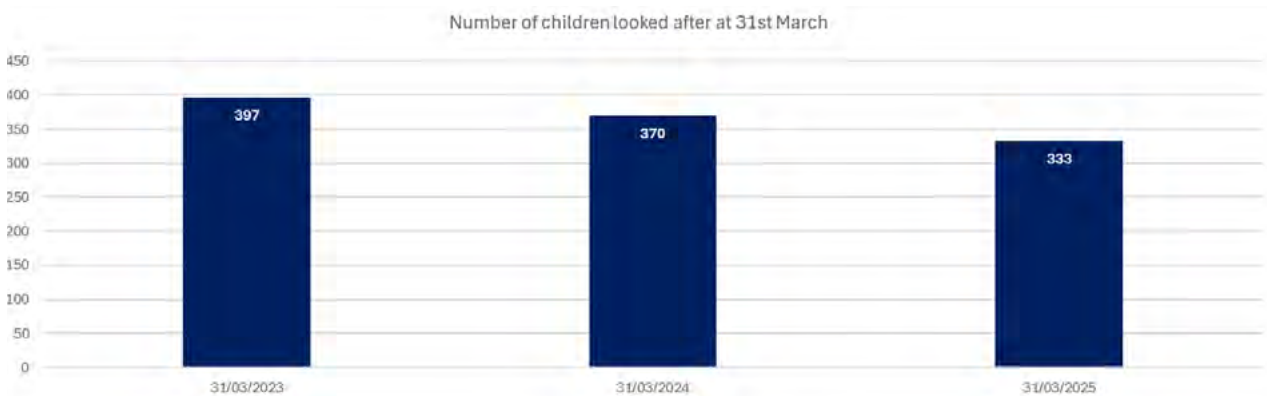
This trend reflects a continued reduction from the high number on the register in March 2023 and is a result of more proportionate decision-making regarding children's safety in addition to improved working with early help services. The number of children on the child protection register has decreased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

March 2025.

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

Care Experienced Children

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



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

Supporting People to Manage their Wellbeing

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

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

ANALYSIS OF EARLY HELP: JANUARY TO MARCH 2025

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

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

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

REPORTED OUTCOMES

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

94% of families noted improved family resilience

91% of individuals noted better emotional wellbeing and family relationships

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

87% of individuals noted improved personal resilience

Adult Social Care

People are Protected and Safeguarded

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

Complex Case Partnership Panel

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

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

Self-Neglect Panel

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

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

Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Group

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

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

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

Parc Prison

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

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

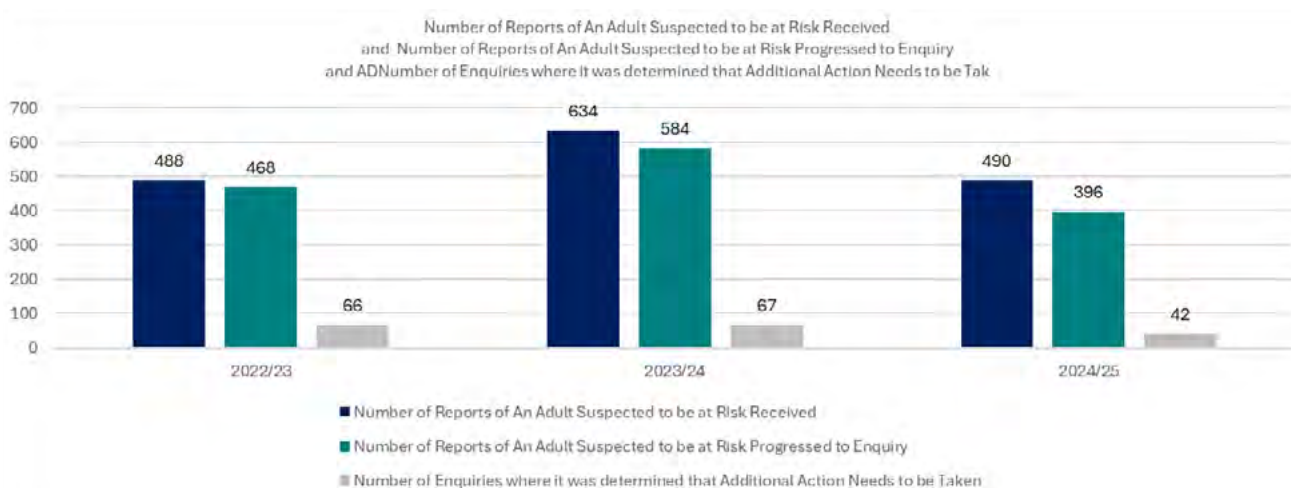
Following an increase in deaths within Parc, a range of plans have been introduced, including a forum to consider the needs of those who have made a significant attempt of suicide. This has highlighted that there are positive mechanisms in place within the prison to safeguard and support prisoners.

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

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

Adult Safeguarding Enquiries

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



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

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

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

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

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

Supporting People to Manage their Wellbeing

Integrated Dementia Support Service

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

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

The Safeguarding Team

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

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

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

Well-being: 2025-26 Key Priorities

ACROSS SOCIAL SERVICES

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

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

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

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

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

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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

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

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

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

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

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

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OTHER INFORMATION

Inspections and Reviews

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

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

Children and Family Services

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

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

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

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

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

The key areas for improvement included:

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

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

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

Adult Social Care

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

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

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

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

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

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

A full [report](#) on the scope and findings of these inspections was presented to Cabinet on 8th April 2024.

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

Complaints and Representations

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Adult
Social Care**

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

The Citizen Voice Body

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

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

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

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

Other Sources of Information

BRIDGEND COUNCIL

Delivering Together Our Corporate Plan 2023-28

Council Constitution

Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

Bridgend Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Corporate Self-Assessment

Audit Wales Reports

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

Awen Cultural Trust

Halo Leisure

BAVO Bridgend

People First Bridgend

Care Inspectorate Wales

Social Care Wales

TuVida Bridgend: Carer's Wellbeing Service

Bridgend Carers Centre

Llais Wales

BRIDGEND COUNCIL

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014

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

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Glossary

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

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

Care Experienced Children

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

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

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

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

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

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

Care and Support Plan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

