SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE

Director of Social Services Annual Report

2021/22

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

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Directors Introduction

How Well We Have Performed

This is my second annual report as Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing in Bridgend, having commenced working in the County Borough in October 2020. At the end of 2020/2021 there was a degree of optimism that despite the huge challenges presented by the pandemic that the worst challenges were over. This optimism was reflected in a Quality Assurance Check undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in April 2021 which, whilst identifying areas for improvement particularly in children's social care, was on the whole positive about the quality and effectiveness of leadership and partnership through the first year of the global pandemic.

I must start this annual report by paying a huge tribute to the frontline social care and wellbeing workforce who despite many challenges have continued to deliver wellbeing, prevention, social work and social care services to the most vulnerable people within our communities.I would also like to thank the early help workforce in the Council, third sector partners in Bridgend and our commissioned providers, as well as our partners in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. Together we have worked to keep adults and children well, connected and supported. There are many examples of innovation which have reduced the need for statutory interventions. Through all the pandemic challenges many people have been well supported due to the fantastic work of our workforce and partners.

2021/22 has been a challenging year, and we have seen some reductions in the very high level of performance achieved in 2019/20, which was a unique year due to the level of covid-19 lockdowns. Whilst performance indicators are important, they only tell part of the story of how well social services and wellbeing and preventative services have performed. Whilst much of this report will focus on areas for improvement, it is important that we celebrate the things we do well.

Directors Introduction

Many strengths to build on.

We have clear purpose and vision for our adults and children's social care.

Our vision is:

Seamless – services and information which are less complex and better co-ordinated for the individual; close professional integration, joint working, and information sharing between services and providers to avoid transitions between services which create uncertainty for the individual.' (from A Healthier Wales)

So we are focused on:

- Seamless locality based well-being, primary and community health and social care for all population groups.
- Organising all our services – commissioned and provided in extended primary and community service clusters.
- Prevention, supporting people to manage their own health and wellbeing
- Enabling people to live independently, well and connected.
- Supported by technologies and integrated teams co-located teams – single package of support even where there are several professionals involved in assessing need.
- Wrapped around the needs and preferences of the person, based on 'what matters' so that it makes no difference who is providing individual services.
- Transfer from county wide services to locality and community based approaches.

Directors Introduction

In addition, in children's social care we are:

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

In our children's services in the last year we have created the care experienced children's team and this is impacting on improving outcomes for children and families. There has been a sustainable reduction in the number of care experienced children in Bridgend. Over the past year our reunification workers have promoted permanance and stability for care experienced children including supporting 10 children to return to live with family members.

- There has been vision and capital investment in developing inhouse care homes.It is important to acknowledge there have been significant difficulties in consistently sustaining quality in the delivery of children's care homes. There are areas we need to improve. We are focussed on ensuring we have the right operating models, workforce skill mic, management and leadership and governance. We are focussed on getting things right before the opening of new services in early 2023/24.

- A new corporate parenting and participation officer post has been developed and there is now a real focus and vision on refreshing and invigorating how the Council and partners effectively parent our children and support them to achieve the best outcomes.

Directors Introduction

In addition, in adult social care

- Bridgend adult social care has been high performing and leading practice in the integration of health and social care in Wales for a number of years. This strength in all parts of adult services in Bridgend was recognised by CIW in their April 2021 quality assurance check. There is an experienced professional workforce and there is an opportunity through this report to pay tribute to the excellent practice in areas which do not often receive attention.

- The Council's community occupational therapy team has recently been subject to an internal audit report which gave a high assurance judgement on the way the service works to meet people's needs in a timely way. This service has worked throughout the pandemic to keep people as independent as possible in their own homes and has drastically reduced waiting times. The service has an effective relationship with Care and Repair for the timely provision of minor adaptations.

- Another area of practice which is highly effective is adult safeguarding. The Adult Safeguarding and Secure Estates Manager has succeeded in significantly reducing waiting times for deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLs), which are critical to the safety and protection of people who do not have the capacity to make important decisions regarding their own lives.This performance contrasts with that in other areas of Wales where DoLs waiting lists remain a significant challenge.

Directors Introduction

- Learning disability services are highly effective in hearing the voice of people with care and support needs, and ensuring that people, who are experts in their own lives, drive the development of services. The recommissioning of supported living services in Bridgend was delivered through partnership with Bridgend People First, which provides peer advocacy and support for people with learning disabilities. There is a service development plan for people with learning disabilities which has been led by People First; the chair of People First Bridgend described the co-productive way in which the plan had been developed as exceptional.

- Our prevention and well-being services are leading edge in Wales in their approach to enabling people to be healthy, well and connected. Examples include the superagers programme which is a Bevan Exemplar, active you people programme and local community co-coordination. We have established partnerships for leisure and culture with Halo and Awen and there are specific programmes for the most vulnerable through our partners such as dementia friendly swimming, the national exercise referral programme and supported employment schemes with Awen through which trainees achieve fantastic outcomes on the pathway to employment.

Directors Introduction

In summary, Bridgend has many strengths – there are good relationships with partners locally and regionally – the NHS, South Wales Police, probation, providers. There is a strong history of integrated services for older people – the team around Mrs. Jones. There are a good range of mental health and learning disability services and a clear strategic plan for improving children's social care. The social services commissioning team has good relationships with social care providers which have kept us strong as we have worked through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is also well evidenced co-production of people taking a lead in designing their services, e.g. learning disabilities, BING carers network and increasingly care experienced children through the work of the new Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer.

Directors Introduction

A Significant Improvement Agenda

It is also important to acknowledge that 2021/22 has been a very difficult year for Social Services and Wellbeing in Bridgend. Whilst this has been the case for many other local authority social services directorates in Wales and beyond, there have been unique and tragic circumstances in Bridgend which have heightened the challenges, scrutiny and recovery and renewal work required

Colleagues in the Council, commissioned providers and partners have worked together tirelessly to address systematically the considerable challenge which the last year has presented us with. I would like to express my personal thanks to them for the unwavering commitment to ensuring we learn, reflect and continuously improve.

Bridgend, as the rest of Wales, worked through a year of dealing with the impact of the pandemic lockdowns. The impacts have been recognised as national challenges for social care. The First Minister of Wales has noted that social workers are “having to make up for a backlog of work that they weren't able to discharge in the normal way’’.

In addition to the challenges across Wales and beyond, the people, communities and workforce in Bridgend have been coming to terms with and responding to harrowing tragedy. The death of Logan Mwangi is an unspeakable tragedy for his family and friends.

Directors Introduction

The Council is committed with our partners to ensuring we learn and improve from all the lessons that will be evidenced through the Child Practice Review to be published in the autumn of 2022. The Council and multi-agency partners have been impacted by this tragedy. People choose to work in child protection and safeguarding in order to protect and safeguard children from harm. When this does not happen all members of our safeguarding workforce feel this deeply and need immediate and longer term skilled support to reflect and continue in these critically important roles. As a Council, and with our partners, we have committed to everything we can to support and develop our workforce and work with partners more effectively than ever before.

CIW undertook a performance evaluation inspection of children's services in May 2022 and noted 'The local authority has taken action to instigate immediate learning following recent critical incidents'. Amongst the significant improvements to children's social care CIW identified, was the need to address the variability in practice, the quality of our assurance and management oversight and how well we hear the voice of children and families. This need to improve management oversight so we can address issues in a timely way is a vital area of focus. Improving performance management and quality assurance systems and processes is key. An Improving Outcomes for Children Board has been established, chaired by the Chief Executive and supported by an independent advisor. This enhanced governance is important oversight to delivery of the improvement plan in children's social care.

Directors Introduction

It is important to note that the Performance Evaluation Inspection found that 93% of our workforce in children's services felt supported to do their jobs. Given the unprecedent experience in the last year this is a positive position to sustain and build upon.

The Council took decisive action to instigate a critical incident when quality and performance in the Council's information, advice and assistance service deteriorated at the start of 2022. The risks regarding safeguarding and workforce had already been identified on the Council's corporate risk register. At this time children's services had been under significant pressure, caseloads were too high and management oversight and quality assurance systems were not as good as they should have been. The critical incident reflected a whole Council approach to delivering improvements in quality, performance and outcomes for children and families. A number of colleagues from adult services, other parts of children's services, family support services and the regional adoption service answered the call to provide immediate support to the service and their support was critical. Investment in additional workforce capacity through a managed team means caseloads are now at best practice levels, quality assurance and performance managements systems have developed and the workforce feel better supported. It is however important to acknowledge in this overview that for a period the service fell short of the standards that should be achieved and this impacted on outcomes for children and families in accessing the timely assessment and support they needed.

Directors Introduction

There has been an increase in the numbers of people contacting our services compared to the previous year in both adults and children's social care. Whilst the level of contacts are similar to pre-pandemic years the complexity of people's needs has increased following the periods of lockdown. In adult services, we have seen a delay in some people seeking support from health and care services due to the pandemic lockdowns, and the more limited services available at times during the pandemic. Lockdowns and factors such as delays in NHS treatments have contributed to deterioration in some people's well-being, physical and emotional health. In children's services some difficult family situations have been exacerbated. The cumulative impact of combinations of factors have increased the challenges people experience in their lives and the complexity of the work we do in all aspects of prevention, wellbeing and social care.

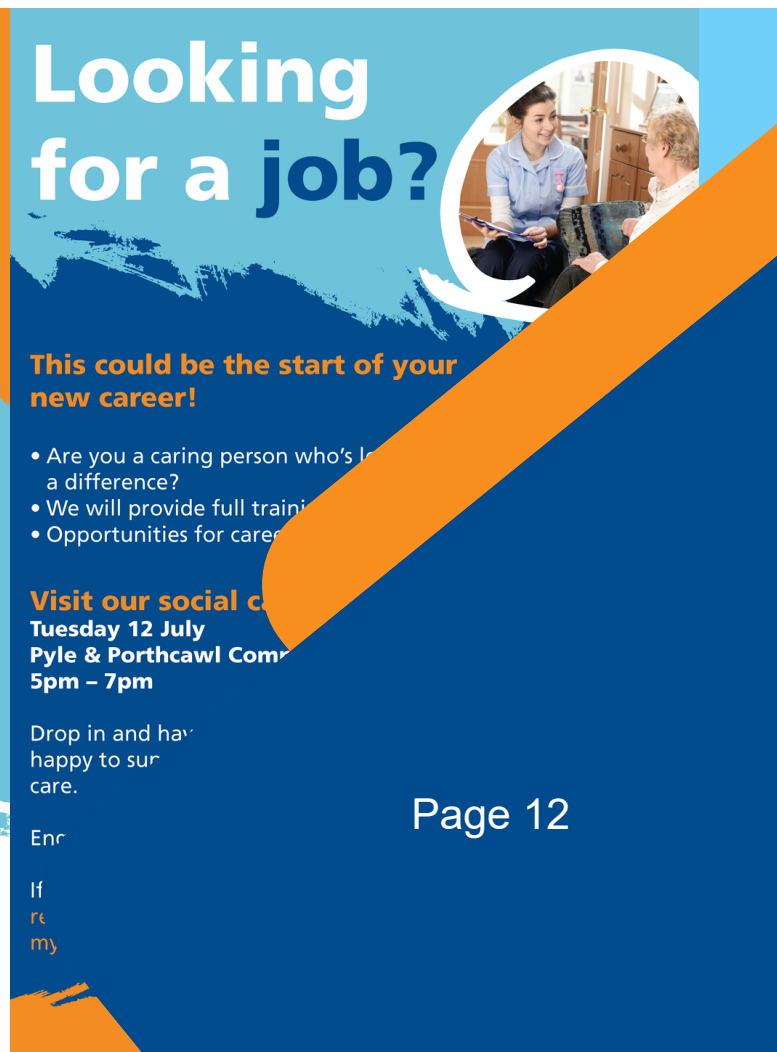
In adult services, there has been significant challenge in this last year in meeting people's care and support needs in a timely way. The greatest difficulties have been in care and support at home services, often called domiciliary care. This in turn is one of the most significant pressure areas affecting how well the whole health and social care system works, particularly when people need to be discharged from hospital to their own homes with care and support. In human terms, people who are delayed in hospital lose their independent living skills and confidence and this can impact severely on their emotional health and wellbeing.

The difficulties in this service area have been exacerbated by the high levels of staff absence in in-house services and the independent sector is delivering less hours of care than before.

Directors Introduction

The Council is working closely with the NHS to take all possible actions to address these challenges. Care and Support services have been recommissioned and there is additional resource for the sector to support their workforce. All domiciliary staff have been provided the opportunity to increase their contracted hours and a number have done so. These new contracted hours are also being offered for new employees recruited to internal domiciliary services. Community based recruitment events are taking place and marketing campaigns have taken place to promote a change in career into the care sector. Options for employing staff who walk between calls are being developed and recruitment events are planned in key areas for non-driving individuals.

Options are also being explored for the use of pooled, electric vehicles. As we move forward, similar to the work to address challenges in children's social care, interim capacity is being sought to address the 'backlog' in work. More investment is being made in the independent sector to support providers to support their staff in view of increased fuel costs and similar options are being explored for the Council's own staff. There is a review of current working patterns to make roles more attractive.



Directors Introduction

There is a common theme in the key challenge social services in the Council is facing, namely insufficient numbers of people within our social care and social work workforce. Focussed actions are being progressed to improve our workforce planning and development, with very close working with corporate human resources colleagues. Whilst in the short term the only option is to secure additional workforce capacity via interim routes, in the medium term and longer term we are investing in recruiting internationally and ‘growing our own' social care workforce of the future through training and developing our people. As an example we have appointed 16 people to either be secondees or trainee social workers over the last 2 years.

Our very highest priority is supporting and retaining the workforce we have and we are co-producing charters with our workforce to set out the commitment to the BCBC social care workforce. We are setting out, and holding ourselves to account on, how we can promote an environment where social care can thrive. This enables our workforce to hold one another and management accountable and ensure that our culture, policies, procedures, and actions support us to improve outcomes and transform lives.

Directors Introduction

Stronger in Partnership

As indicated above, partnerships in Bridgend have always been an area of strength and have never been so tested or important as the last year. The importance of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board in discharging effective safeguarding leadership while focussing on staff support has been crucial. The Board created an executive steering group overseeing effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Locally, engagement with partners as part of the response to the critical incident in the information, assistant and advice service has been key with a Joint Operational Group providing high challenge but strong relationships and commitment to improve multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

South Wales Police and key partners have worked with the local authority to manage the community impact of the tragic events in the county borough with a purpose to ensure trust and confidence in safeguarding arrangements during the high profile criminal trial.

Across the Council relationships have been effective – with HR, marketing and Employability to address the workforce challenges; with colleagues in legal services education and family support and housing as we work together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable people through a one Council approach.

Relationships with social care providers have remained strong and effective in the last year. The Council has commissioned supported living and care and support at home services for adults and has provided significant support, financial and otherwise to providers of social care as they recover from the pandemic impact.

Directors Introduction

What next?

It is clear from the areas where there is strong and effective performance that the key success factors are: a clear vision, strong and effective leadership and management at every level, a well-supported, well-motivated workforce, strong partnership working, high standards of performance management and quality assurance and acting upon the voice and experience of people we are here to serve.

To progress in those areas where improvements are needed – most critically children's social care and care and support in adult services, it is important to build on what we know will work.

Our thematic priorities for improvement can therefore be summarised as:

- Securing and retaining a stable, well-supported, motivated permanent workforce.
- Strength-based, social work practice which supports improved outcomes for adults and children and families to stay together (wherever possible) and safeguards people form harm.
- Sufficient supply of high quality evidence-based services and interventions.
- Seamless and effective partnership working at an operational and strategic level.
- Listening to and acting on the voice of people.

Directors Introduction

Delivering these priorities requires a culture that is open and transparent in respect of the challenges we face, supports improvement and prioritises what is important. There will be difficult times inevitably in the year ahead but the genuine commitment of the people, communities, partners and the Council in Bridgend to come together in the most challenging of times to support our vulnerable people and the workforce dedicated to supporting them is heartening. This provides the basis for focused improvement and improving outcomes in the coming year.

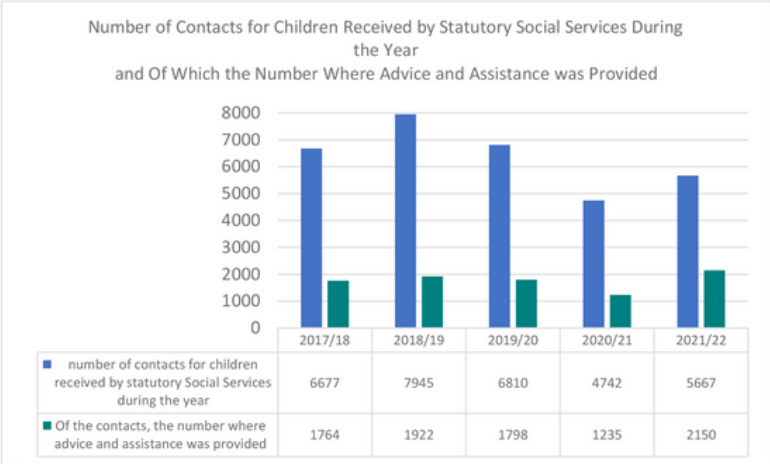
Claire Marchant
Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing
July 2022

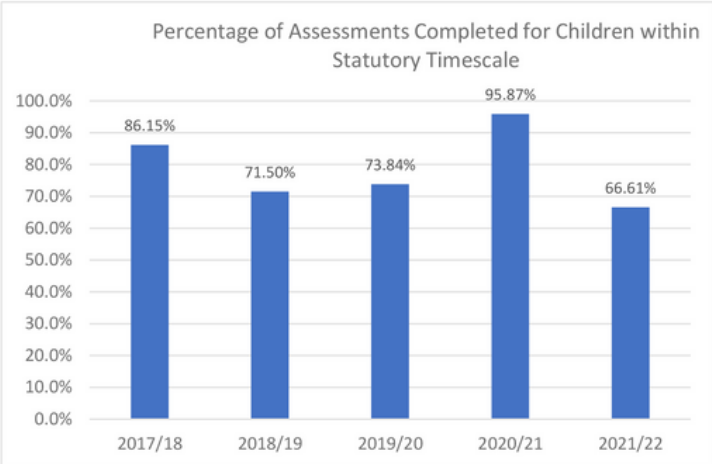
High Level Summary of Performance

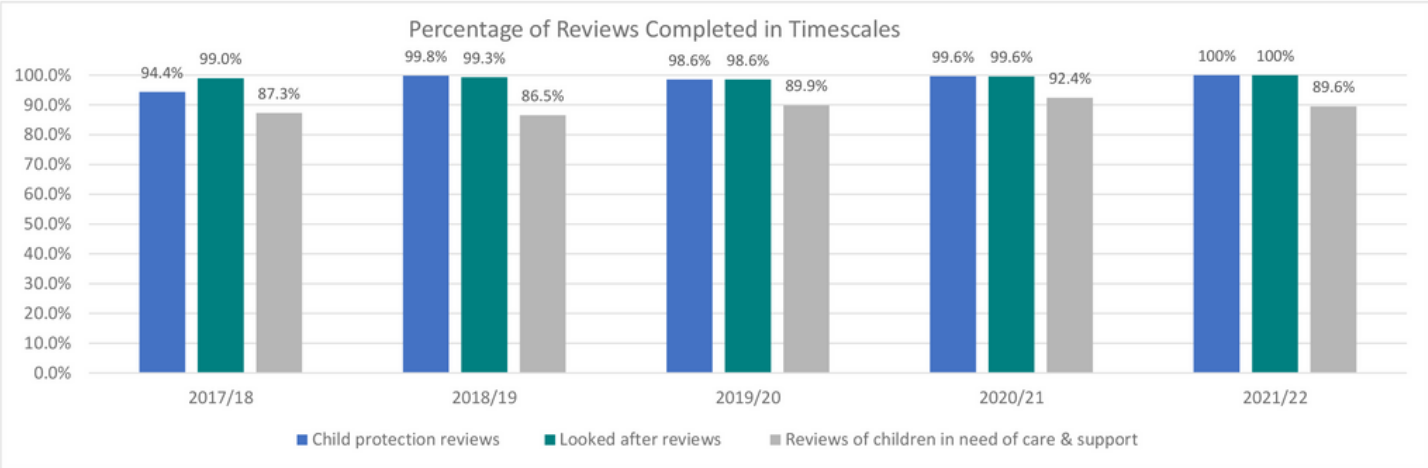
Children's Social Care

Children's Performance Dashboard

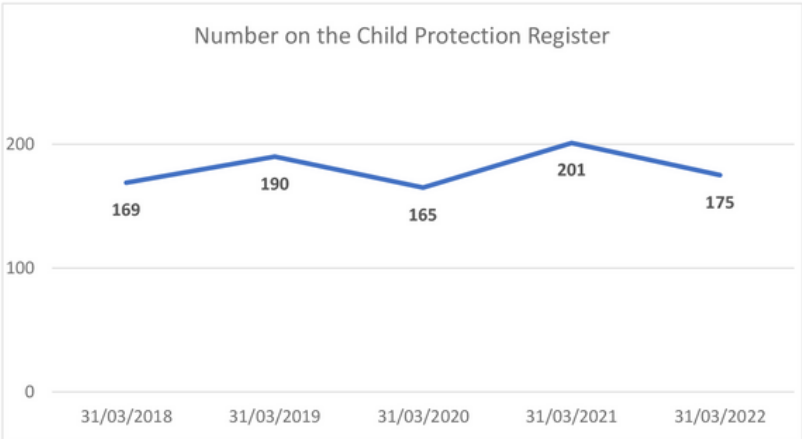
Contacts, Assessments & Reviews

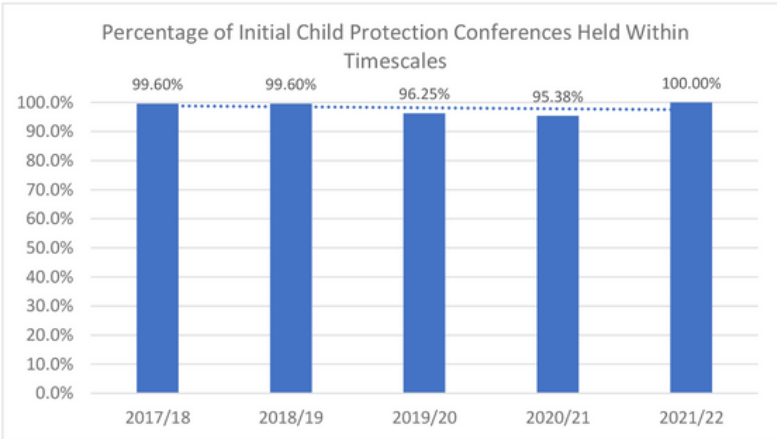


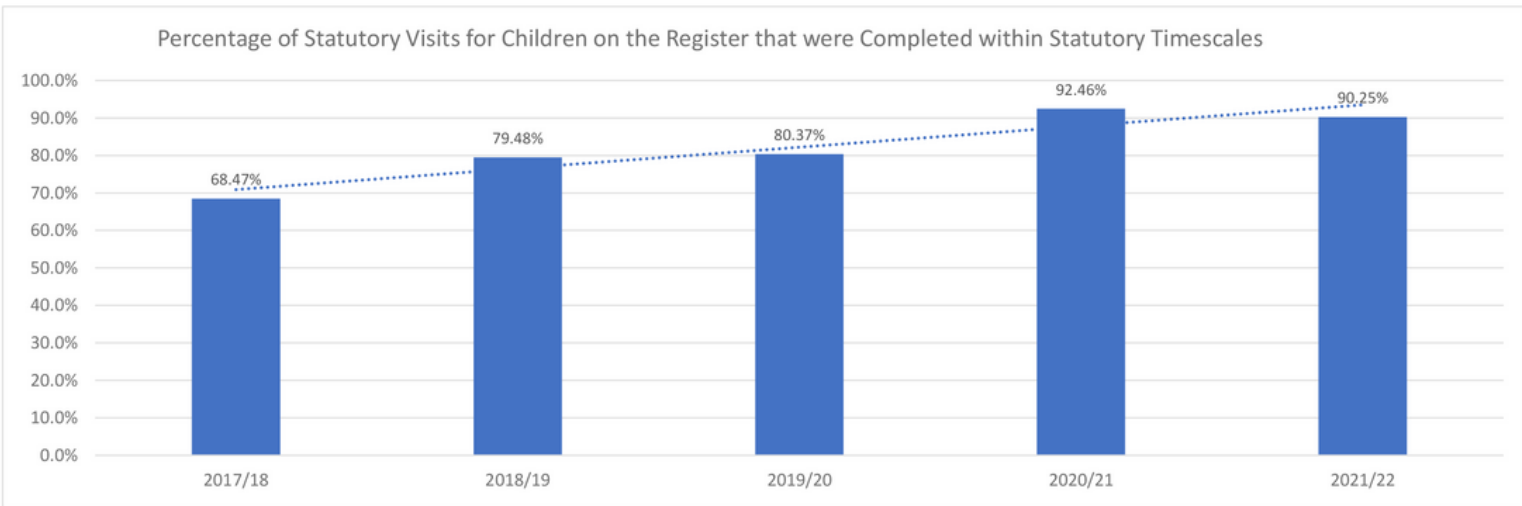




Child Protection

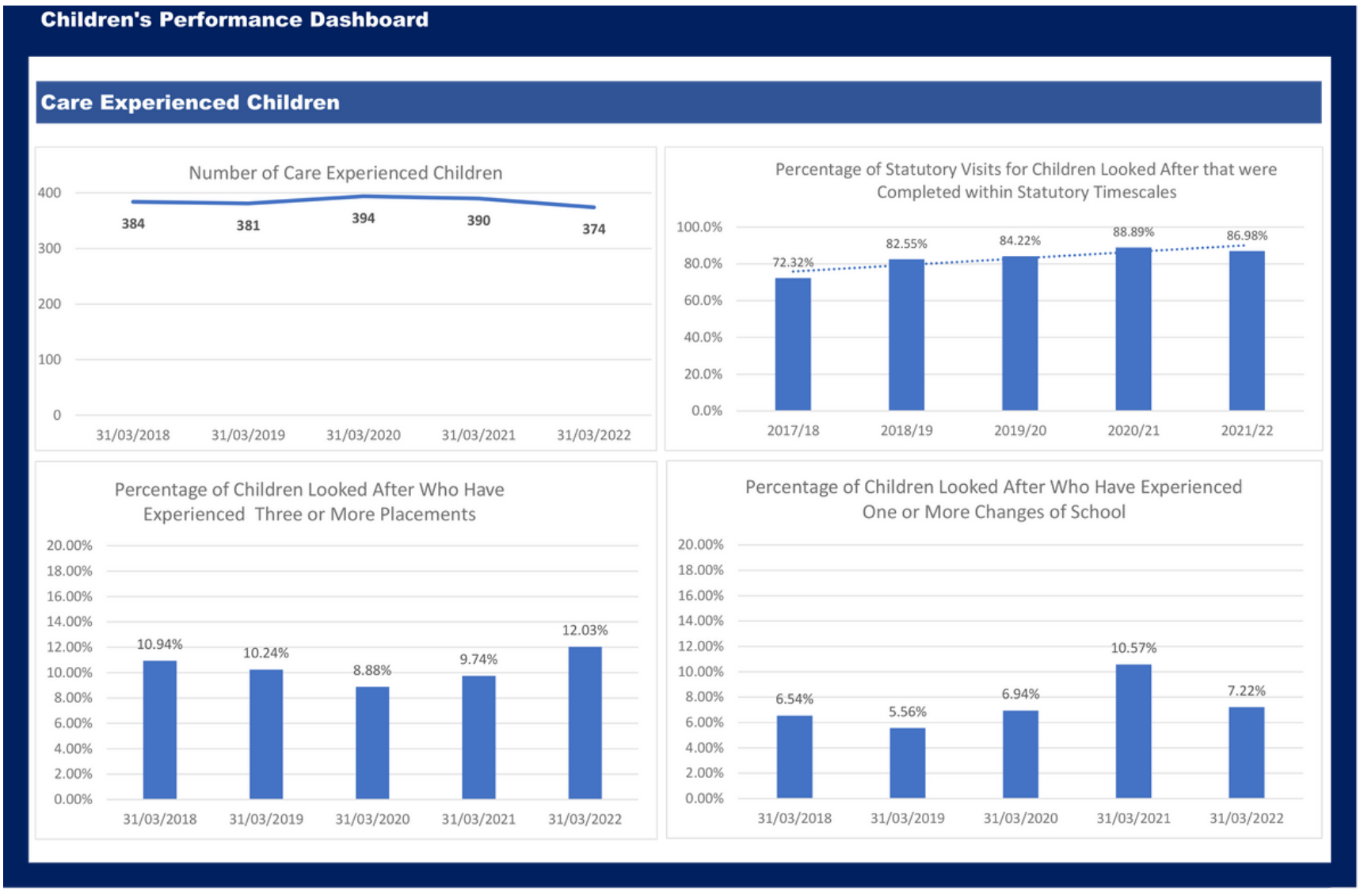






High Level Summary of Performance

Children's Social Care



An analysis of the Children's Social Care data notes:

- Between 2020/21 and 2021/22 there has been a 19.5% increase in the number of contacts received and a rise of 11.9% in those progressing to an assessment (advice or assistance).
- Over the last 2 years there has been a significant increase in the number of assessments completed rising from 1042 in 2020/21 to 1644 in 2021/22, which is an increase of 57.8%.
- The reviews of children and young people on the child protection register or looked after has improved with all being completed within timescale during the year. Although the number of reviews of children in need has decreased by slightly by 2.8% the number of reviews required in the year has increased by approximately 36%.

High Level Summary of Performance

Children's Social Care

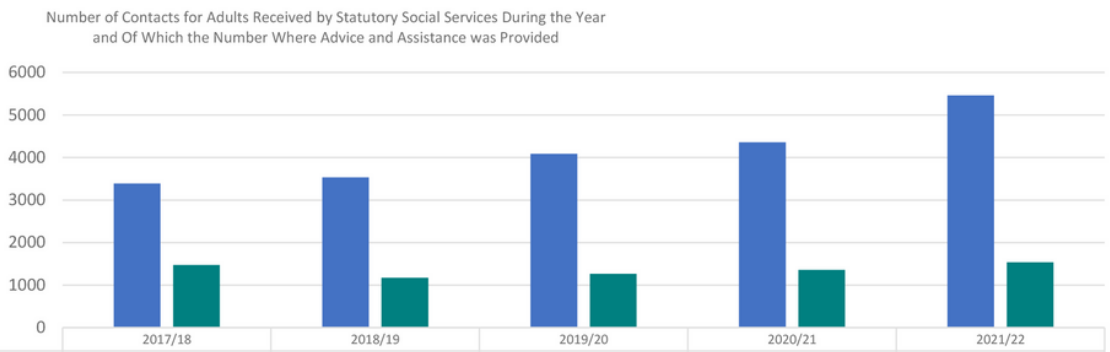
- The number of children registered on the child protection register as of 31st March has decreased over the last year with 100% of initial child protection conferences being held within timescale. This has been achieved by improving our processes for identifying when the decision is made to proceed to an ICPC.
- There is a slight dip with the number of statutory visits for children on the child protection register being completed within timescales.
- The number of care experienced children has decreased by 16 (4.1%) between 31/03/2022 and 31/03/2021. The end of year outturn for 2021/22 is 0.8% off the target of 371.
- To ensure improvements in performance for 2022/23 the Directorate has increased staffing and resources within the IAA service to respond to the increase in referrals and subsequent increase in assessments with weekly performance review meetings are in place to monitor reviews and statutory visits.

High Level Summary of Performance

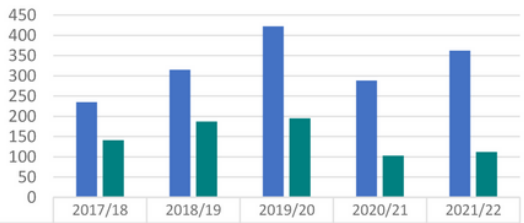
Adults Social Care

Adult Performance Dashboard

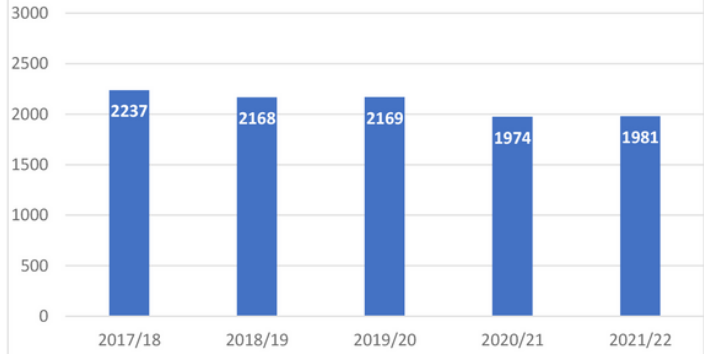
Contacts



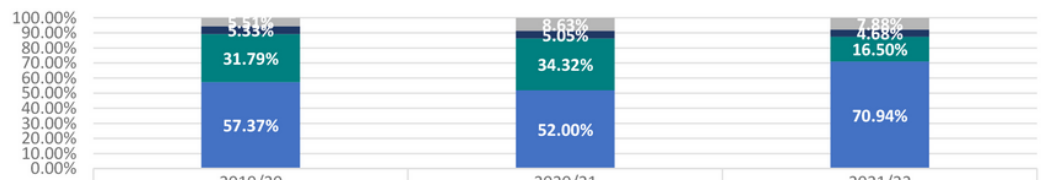
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year	3390	3536	4086	4361	5459
Of the contacts, the number where advice and assistance was provided	1476	1175	1267	1357	1538



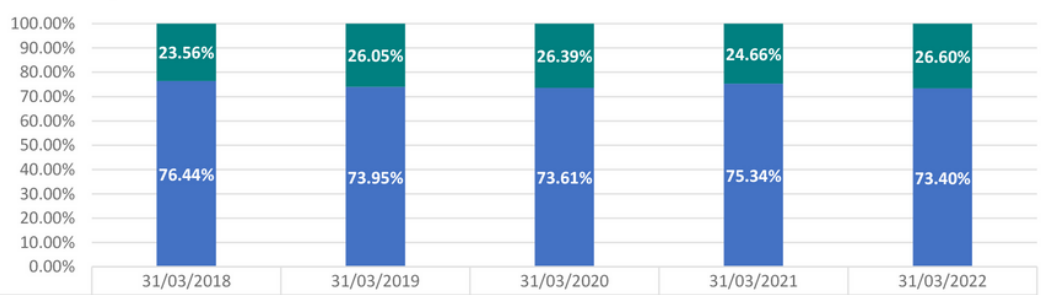
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of contacts for Carers received by statutory Social Services during the year	235	315	422	288	362
Of the contacts, the number where advice and assistance was provided	141	187	195	103	112



Reablement & Services



	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
% of Reablement packages that neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support	5.51%	8.63%	7.88%
% of Reablement packages that Maintained the need for the same level of support	5.33%	5.05%	4.68%
% of Reablement Packages that Reduced the need for support	31.79%	34.32%	16.50%
% of Reablement Packages that Mitigated the need for support	57.37%	52.00%	70.94%



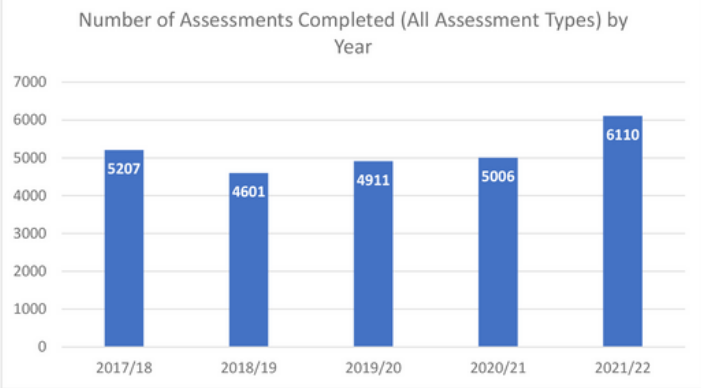
	31/03/2018	31/03/2019	31/03/2020	31/03/2021	31/03/2022
Proportion (%) of individuals in managed care supported in a care home setting (snapshot)	23.56%	26.05%	26.39%	24.66%	26.60%
Proportion (%) of individuals in managed care supported in the community (snapshot)	76.44%	73.95%	73.61%	75.34%	73.40%

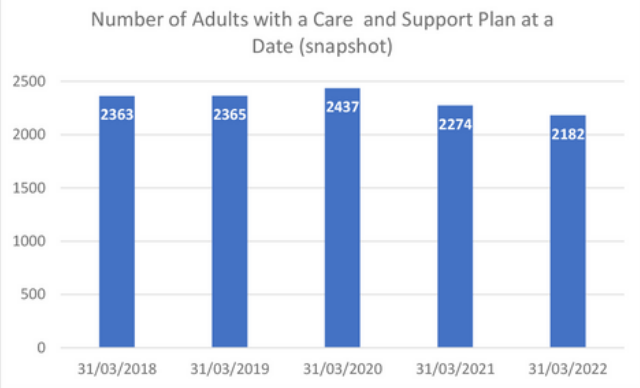
High Level Summary of Performance

Adults Social Care

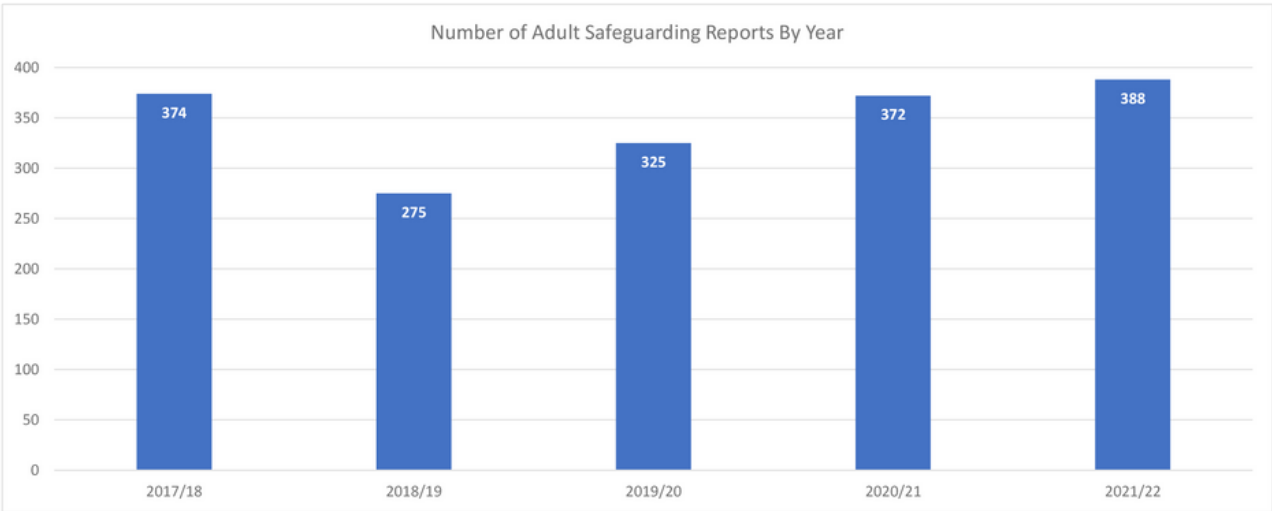
Adult Performance Dashboard

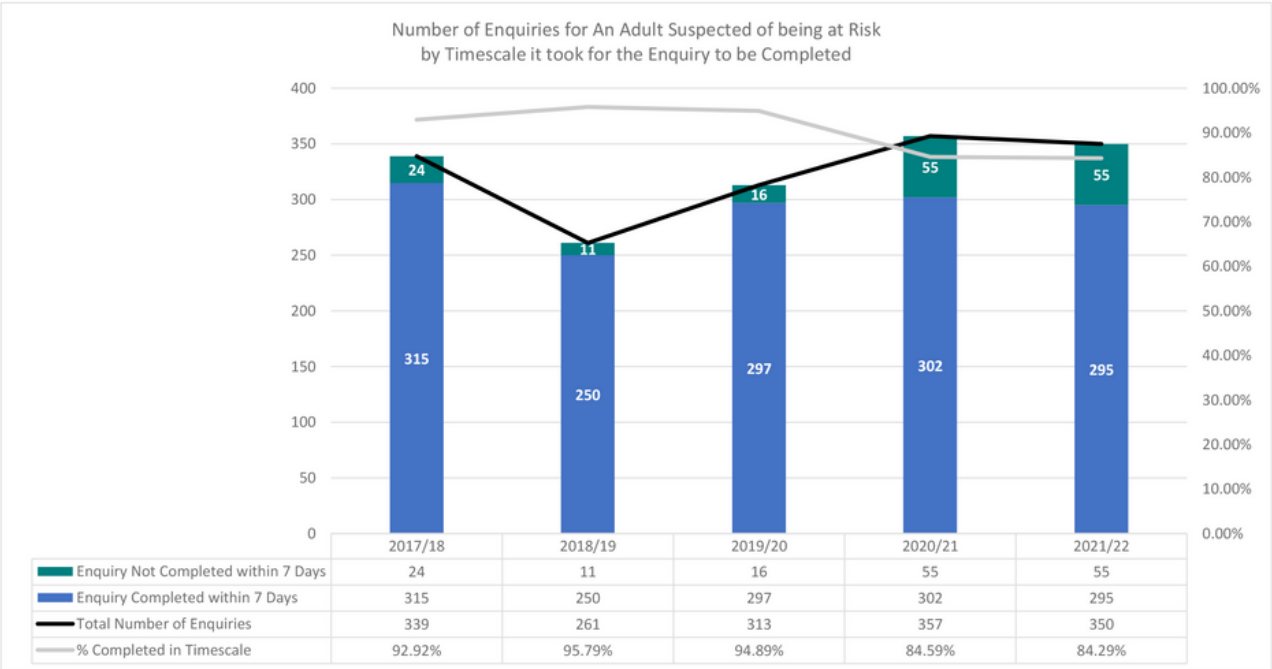
Assessments, Support Plans & Reviews





Safeguarding





	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Enquiry Not Completed within 7 Days	24	11	16	55	55
Enquiry Completed within 7 Days	315	250	297	302	295
Total Number of Enquiries	339	261	313	357	350
% Completed in Timescale	92.92%	95.79%	94.89%	84.59%	84.29%

High Level Summary of Performance

Adults Social Care

An analysis of the Adult's Social Care data notes:

- Between 2020/21 and 2021/22 there has been a 25.2% increase in the number of contacts received and a decrease of 2.9% in those progressing to an assessment (advice or assistance).
- Over the last 2 years there has been a 25.7% increase in contacts for carers with an 8.7% increase in those progressing to an assessment.
- Contacts to our Community Reablement Team has experienced an 8.6% decrease since 2020/21 and a 15.7% decrease over the 5 year period.
- The number of reablement packages that mitigated the need for care and support has increased significantly during the year rising from 52% in 2020/21 to 70.04% in 21/22.
- Over the last 2 years there has been an increase of 22.1% in the number of assessments completed rising from 5006 in 2020/21 to 6110 in 2021/22.
- The number of reviews completed in the year has decreased by 8.6%.
- The number of reablement packages that mitigated the need for care and support has increased significantly during the year rising from 52% in 2020/21 to 70.04% in 21/22.

High Level Summary of Performance

Adults Social Care

- There has been a 4.3% increase in the number of safeguarding reports in the year with maintained performance on the number of enquiries for adults at risk being completed within 7 days.
- The overall performance of keeping people home with plans of care and support has been significantly impacted upon by the pandemic. The care market is in a period of reset, and recovery but there is still significant pressure in this area and a lot of people have entered care settings prematurely. This is also affecting flow both out of and into our short-term services. Individuals have been unable to exit our short-term services into long-term packages of care. Individuals requiring therapy but no care component have been transitioning through our services as normal.
- The challenge for 22/23 will be too re balance the market, and increase capacity in reablement services, to ensure that people are prevented and delayed from entering hospital and long term care for as long as possible.

Recovery, Reset & Renewal - Social Care Recovery Plan

Over the last year we worked with people and partners to recover from the impact of the pandemic on people's wellbeing and need for care and support. We received £2.7 million investment in recovery from Welsh Government to progress our recovery plans. We focused strongly on the wellbeing of our workforce and on prevention, wellbeing and children and adult social care recovery.

During 2021/22 we secured funding from the Welsh Government Recovery fund which has:

- enabled our partners in Wales Co-op and Halo and Awen Trusts to supply digital devices for both carers and people with care and support needs;
- supported Halo Leisure to deliver wellbeing programmes with and for carers;
- secured a range of equipment and resource improvements for our day opportunities, including an adult outdoor wheelchair swing, which is one of a very few that is accessible to adults in Wales.
- constructed a dementia friendly sensory garden in Bridgend Resource Centre. The garden has been designed with partners including students at Pencoed College and co-produced by Age Connect, The Alzheimer's Society, and people who access the Specialist Dementia facility at the Resource Centre.

Recovery, Reset & Renewal - Social Care Recovery Plan

- provided significant support to commissioned care home, homecare and supported living providers in order to assist with recruitment and retention so they were able to pay staff at Real Living Wage.
- purchased log cabins within the gardens of our residential care homes for children to provide gyms, storage for bikes and other sporting equipment .
- Made a £500 payment to all our BCBC foster carers and adult family placement carers within Bridgend to recognise how phenomenally they had supported children and adults during the pandemic .
- Supported our workforce through funding additional capacity to allow the time to begin to reflect and plan for the future ‘post lockdown world of social care.
- We have also invested in trauma informed specialist support, in addition to the Council’s corporate wellbeing resources, for those staff who have needed it.

Recovery and reset work takes time but the opportunity to pause, reflect and plan, has been important in the last year and needs to continue in 2022/23.We have engaged an improvement partner to support this work.

Recovery, Reset & Renewal - Social Care Recovery Plan

"The staff have been amazing. All through Covid we had phone calls checking in with us, which meant a lot..' A' and 'B' are our rock and they go above and beyond. We would be lost without the support"

We developed a 3 year strategic plan to set out the vision and actions we need for sustainable, safe services. The implementation of the strategic plan is overseen by the Improving Outcomes for Children Board, chaired by the Chief Executive and advised by an independent advisor to ensure that the right actions are being progressed whilst recognising the need to focus on workforce as the highest priority as the right people in the right roles are key.

We have also focused strategic actions in our adult services to meet the need for care and support in our communities. It is a priority for the coming year to have an aligned plan for adult social care to set out our priority actions for workforce, practice, provision, partnerships and people.

As in 2020/21, during the year the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to impact our services with particular impact on our staffing levels within key frontline services. This is most evident on capacity within care workers and children's social work. There is a national issue around recruitment and retention within these areas and to address this issue we have implemented project groups that not only closely monitoring demand but also exploring new and innovative solutions to recruit staff and deliver services.

Recovery, Reset & Renewal - Social Care Recovery Plan

How well our regulator has said we have performed

As noted in last year's annual report in April 2021 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) carried out an assurance check of how well we had ensured the safety and well-being of people who use or may need to use services, the safety of services they access and the safety and well-being of people who work in services.

During 2021/22 we have been progressing the key actions identified via this assurance check. Key examples include the establishment of workforce development groups to support recruitment and retention across key services, the provision of specialist behavioural support to the parents and carers of disabled children and reducing the waiting lists for occupational therapy assessments.

In May 2022 CIW carried out a performance evaluation inspection of Children's Social Care. The purpose of the inspection was to reviewour performance in exercising our social services duties and functions in line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. These principles are Voice and Control, Prevention, Wellbeing and Partnership and Integration.

Recovery, Reset & Renewal - Social Care Recovery Plan

The inspection highlighted a number of key strengths and also areas requiring significant improvement within all 4 principles. CIW have formally advised the Council that given the scale of improvements they have 'serious concerns' in respect of Bridgend Children's Services.

Some examples of strengths identified include; our recognition of the importance of ensuring children's voices are heard, the development of our in-house residential services, our positive working relationships with the regional safeguarding board and neighbouring local authorities and the implementation of practice development plans.

Areas for improvement include; the timeliness of the distribution of assessment / key meeting documentation, availability of in-house foster care placements, consistency of practice and timeliness of assessments.

We have developed an action plan in relation to the areas highlighted for improvement and will be regularly reporting to CIW on the progress of these actions and they will be closely monitoring our performance.

A copy of the inspection report can be found here.

Recovery, Reset & Renewal - Social Care Recovery Plan

The Most Significant Risks We Face Going Forward

At present the social Services and Wellbeing Directorate' is managing a number of inter-related risks across both Children's and Adults Social Care:

Trust and confidence in Bridgend safeguarding arrangements

An effective, highly skilled response from a multi-agency safeguarding partnership with leadership from local authorities is required to ensure and assure trust and confidence in Bridgend safeguarding arrangements. There is a risk that without adequate budgets and the decline of a sufficient experienced workforce that the Council's safeguarding arrangements will not be effective.

The Council works with key partners in Bridgend and within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board to safeguard children and adults at risk. The Board has established an executive steering group which is meeting monthly to oversee the effectiveness of child protection and safeguarding arrangements across the region. Following an escalation of issues and risks in the Council's IAA service in children's social care, an internal critical incident has been declared which is chaired by the Chief Executive, which is overseeing deployment of additional resources, including the engagement of a managed team, and a focussed improvement plan. A new Corporate Safeguarding Officer is being appointed and will start in post to enhance the support to corporate safeguarding arrangements.

Sufficient quality and quantity of social care and social work workforce to consistently meet statutory duties / Challenges in the recruitment and retention of staff

It is important that the Department is able to attract, develop and retain a suitable workforce to ensure it has the relevant capacity and expertise to continue to deliver our services. If we are able to recruit and retain a suitably qualified workforce then this not only puts service areas at risk but also affects the morale of remaining staff.

Within Social Services and Wellbeing we are implementing approaches to "growing our own" via a considerably enhanced secondment scheme and social work to train staff to become Qualified Social Workers. We have also established dedicated projects to focus specifically on recruitment and retention in domiciliary care and children's social work.

Dependency on our electronic social care records system (WCCIS)

All of our social care records and services are held on the WCCIS system which is used by a number of local authorities across Wales. If the system fails to work well, social work practitioners are unable to check records of individuals known to the service, including key documentation such as referrals, assessments, care and support plans which could cause safeguarding issues but also impact the delivery of front line services.

To minimise this risk the system is closely monitored and supported by our Corporate ICT Team as well as its external provider. The Department has established a user group to look at how we can improve our use of the system and is working with regional partners on the future development of the system.

Looking to the Future
Key Priorities for 2022/23

Section 3 of this report outlines key priorities for 2022/23 against each of the 6 quality standards.

However, looking holistically across our services the 10 key priorities for Social Services and Wellbeing in Bridgend in 2021/22 are:-

1. Embed the learning from child and adult practice reviews, and regulatory inspections, to ensure the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding in Bridgend is improved, and ensure there is trust and confidence of people, communities and partners in multi-agency safeguarding practice in the county borough.
2. Recognising the Council is a significant provider of social care, strengthen the quality and effectiveness of leadership, governance and care delivery in regulated direct services whilst delivering significant new services to improve outcomes for people.
3. Deliver clear the short, medium and long term priorities in our workforce plans for the social care and social work workforce to ensure a motivated, supported workforce in sufficient numbers to effectively meet need.
4. Implement the first year of 'Signs of Safety' for children's social care and the remodelling of adult social work as the next step in strengthening and improving strength based practice in Bridgend.
5. Develop service planning groups for key population areas, with a view to ensuring sufficiency of quality and quantity of accommodation, care and support services for people with care and support needs in Bridgend.

Looking to the Future
Key Priorities for 2022/23

6. Building on the success of prevention and wellbeing in Bridgend continue to develop sustainable, user led approaches and services which keep people well, connected and reduce the need for statutory interventions.
7.Develop business cases to develop sustainable, resourced operating models for information advice and assistance and safeguarding localities in children's social care and care and support at home in adult services to ensure the Council can meet statutory duties in a timely way to a quality standard.
8.Implement a new performance and quality assurance framework to ensure effective management oversight, performance and improvement and continuous improvements through a focus on getting the core business right and addressing quickly, and at any early stage emerging risks and issues.
9.Improve the way we engage and consult across all parts of our service, building on success in areas such as learning disabilities and care experienced children
10. Continue to progress opportunities for integrated working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board and key partners where this evidently improves outcomes for people.

How are people shaping our services

We are committed to practice, service development and delivery being driven by people whose lives they impact on.
The rights of children and adults should be evident in all we do.

In 2021/22 we have continued to ensure we involve children people in shaping our key service developments. Here are just a few examples of how we have engaged and consulted with people this year:

- The regular use of surveys within the Support at Home service to engage with people who use services and their families.
- Members of the Community Learning Disability team worked with People First to produce a series of easy read documents and an information leaflet about the learning disability team.
- The Learning Disability service held a joint away day with key partners and members of People First to co-produce the service development plan. 4 priorities were agreed: transport, social/ leisure activities, tech to talk and joint working. Following this successful event it was agreed that a person with a learning disability chair a joint working group.
- Appointed a Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer in March 2022 who will support and develop the governance and activity of Corporate Parenting by strengthening the voice of care experienced children and the involvement of the whole Council and partners as good parents for our children. The post will also focus on establishing care experienced forums to provide our children and young people with a collective voice.

How are people shaping our services

"Our Social Worker has been amazing with our family over the last few months and I would like to acknowledge her hard work. She's amazing."

- In May 22 there was a 'Health Inspectorate Wales' review of discharges from adult mental health wards into the community. This involved interviews with social workers and a file audit. The report has not yet been received and we will progress any recommendations in due course.
- 4500 secondary school children engaged in survey work to set wellbeing baselines for the Council's review of play sufficiency. This survey work is driving the priorities and reflected the impact of the pandemic on the emotional health and wellbeing of teenagers in the County Borough.
- 280 older adults evaluated using healthy and active fund tools and surveys.
- 20 carers engaged in evaluating wellbeing improvements

During this year's Carers Week we attended a carer's coffee morning hosted by the Care Collective to engage with Carers of both adults and children. Members of the directorate asked carers to complete a questionnaire and were on hand to offer any advice or assistance.

An analysis of completed questionnaires noted:

- 67% of carers felt that they had the right information and advice when needed.
- 39% reported being offered an assessment in their own right. Of the those took up the offer 83% noting they were satisfied with the assessment.
- 47% reported being actively involved in decision making.
- 80% reported that they were happy with some or all of the services received.
- 60% felt that were actively informed with some or all of the services received.

"We are currently having an assessment on my daughter and have been happy with the support provided."

"Was Offered an assessment but no-one got back to me."

How are people shaping our services

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing held 2 focus groups to gain an insight into how people felt about the services they received over the last year.

Care Leavers Focus Group:

- All knew who to contact when they required help or support,
- All felt that Social Services had been there for them.
- All felt that they had been treated with dignity and respect.
- Advocacy was not consistently provided.More information is required around the complaints process

Areas identified for improvement were :

- Communication.
- More support when requesting advice.
- Having the right support at the right time

"Provided with a Housing form but would have been helpful for someone to sit down and go through it with me."

How are people shaping our services

People First Focus Group:

- The majority of people new how to contact Social Services or where to get help to assist in this and felt that they had the right information at the right time.
- All felt listened too and that their views are important. All felt that the away day with the Learning Disability team planning the future was a success and would welcome more joint events to progress priorities.
- Members enjoyed participating in voluntary activities within their communities.
- Everyone was aware of the advocacy services available to them.
- All were very satisfied with the social care services they received.

Areas identified for improvement were:

- Availability of easy to read documents.
- Use of audio messages rather than texts or emails.
- More use of assistive technology at home.

"I went in with a degree of interpretation and came out beaming."

Audio messages would support lip reading.

How are people shaping our services

During the year the Directorate received 74 complaints and 170 compliments. Complaints and compliments are an important aspect of how we use information from people to shape our services.

An analysis of complaints received during the year highlighted 3 key themes: lack of support, staff conduct and communication.

An example of some of the compliments received during the year include:

“Mr “X's Son would like to thank you all for the care provided by yourselves during the Bridgeway assessment period, he said it was much appreciated”

“Just a little note to say thank you to you and your team for looking after our Dad so well. The carers are brilliant, they clearly have huge patience in persuading him to wash and shower. He always looks so well cared for. It’s made a big difference for my brothers and sisters and me too, giving us confidence that he is having such good care every day, and knowing that you’ll be in touch if you have any concerns.”

“Our family wish to thank you and all your excellent and dedicated staff for the care you gave to “X”on her recent stay with you when we took a holiday. It has meant so much when “X" has obviously enjoyed her stay and all of the care you gave her, and it has given us the opportunity to take a break and return to see “X” in such a happy mood.
Please convey our heartfelt thanks to all concerned and “X” is already looking forward to her next opportunity to stay with you.”

How are people shaping our services

“We're so delighted to have had such a positive conversation with you about “X's” first visit to her prospective Shared Lives host. We're amazed that in your words she was so mature and ready for this next stage in her life. We've been stressed this morning worrying that it might not have gone well. You've prepared “X” for this type of move over a long period so perhaps we should have had more faith. We've told you often and we want to tell you again that so much of this is down to you and your amazing relationship with “X”. You've known us for about three years now, the support and services that “X” has needed has come during that time. That can't be coincidence. You've seen us at our lowest & and most broken and seen “X” at her most stressed & out of control. We say so often where would we be without you: we think “X” would have escalated the violence, would be on more medication and moved to emergency accommodation. We would either be very depressed and on medication or have a broken relationship. Having a social worker is great and we have nothing but praise for the Social Worker but because you are more hands-on you have witnessed how we live and the problems we have had. You have created solutions and made us feel that we are doing our best. “X” trusts you, you have a great relationship with her. We trust you too, the lives of the three of us are better because of the work you do with us. THANK YOU.”

This information will be further analysed during 2022/23 to highlight areas of good practice as well as areas for training or development.

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

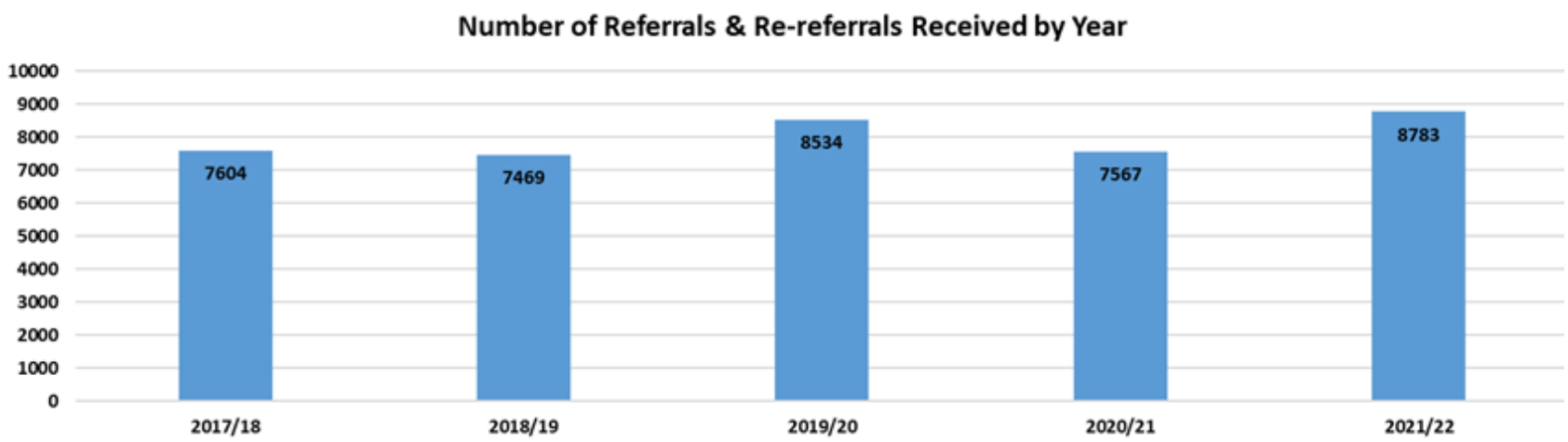
Adult Social Care

Quality Standard 1: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional

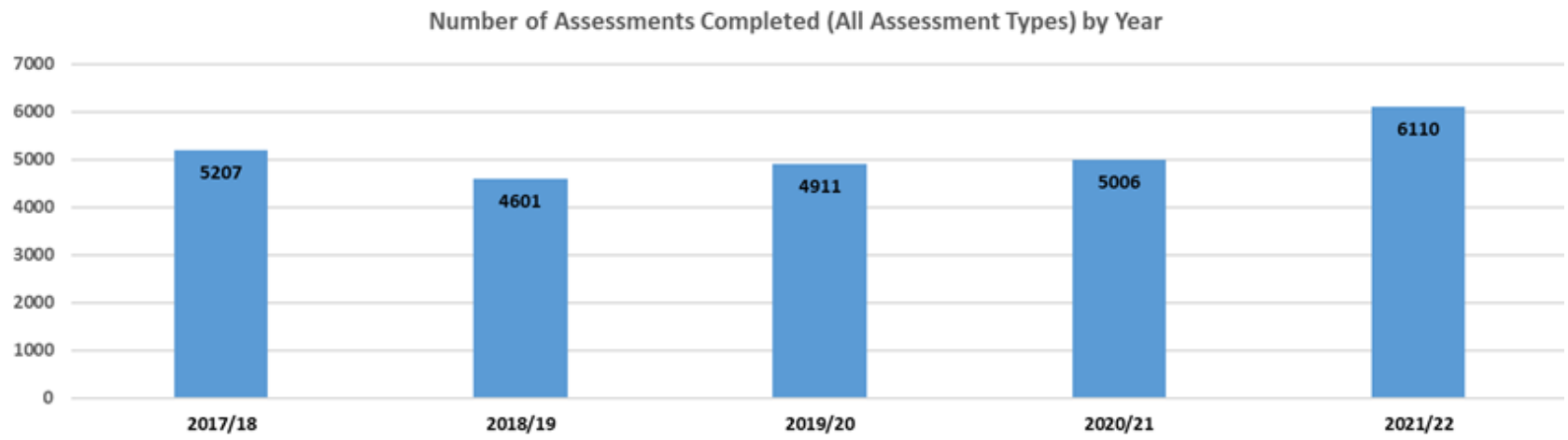
What we did:

- Continued progress in developing relationships with the 3 community clusters which form the geographical footprint for integrated primary and community services.
- Recommissioned the regulated care at home services in a more outcome focussed way with a strong emphasis on voice and control.
- Worked in partnership with People First and people with a learning disability to co-produce a set of local priorities for future developments in learning disability services.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next

- Further develop integrated community services, providing more community services closer to home.
- Improve the way we understand people's experiences of our services, using mechanisms in addition to surveys to obtain feedback from people and families on how we can improve services.
- Undertake an independent review involving close consultation with people accessing day services to co-produce a plan for the next 5 years.

Mr "X" just wanted to express his gratitude for the support received in identifying services and support for "Y". He recognised how difficult things have been with Covid and was grateful that the team has persevered and sought appropriate services to meet "Y's" need.

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

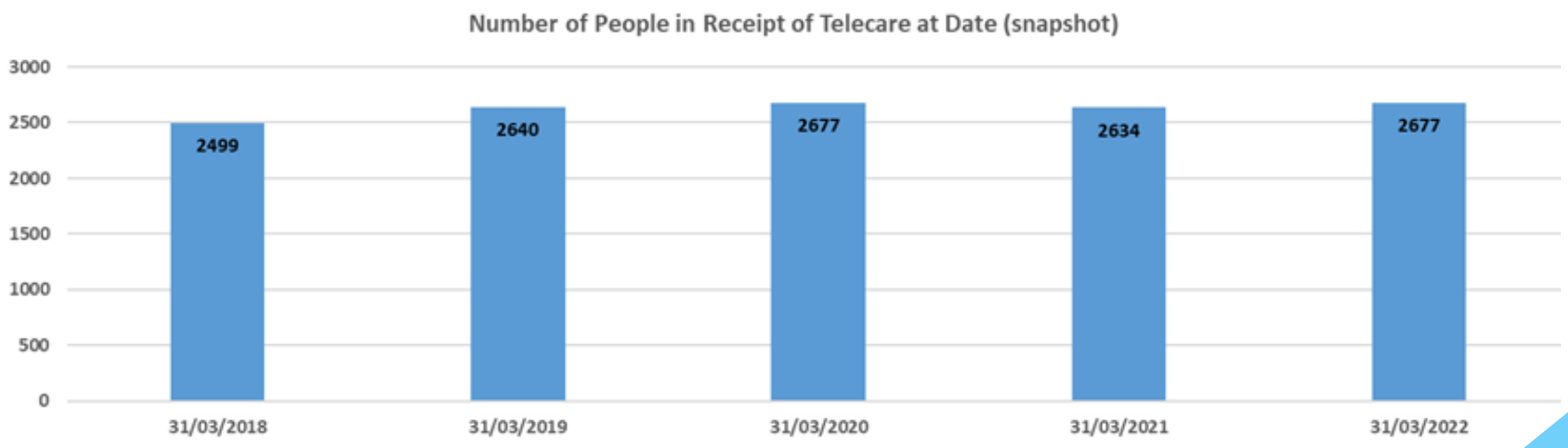
Adult Social Care

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

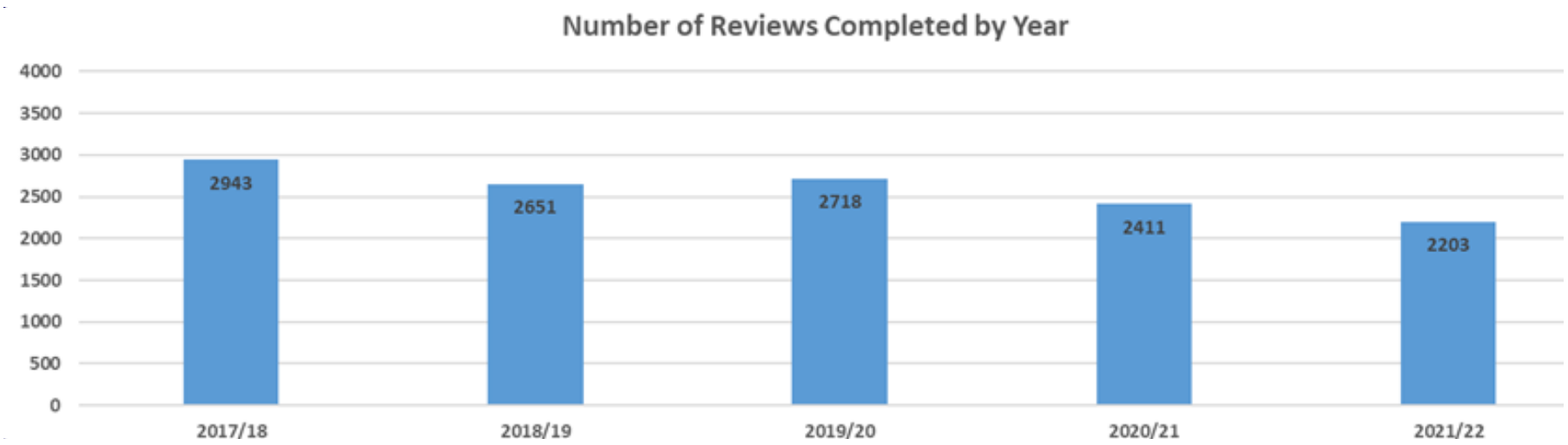
What we did:

- Worked in partnership the regional substance misuse team and a person with lived experience to recommission preventative substance services to provide consistent provision across the region.
- Completed a review of Telecare Services in line with the national digital changeover requirements and secured funding for the process, sourcing the digital equipment and developing the tender for the installation and ongoing maintenance.
- Worked in partnership with Mental Health Matters and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to support the ongoing operation of the "Wellbeing Retreat" for people experiencing a mental health crisis.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next

- Local (BCBC-focused) Adult's Mental Health Strategy to be finalised and implemented.
- Complete the analogue to digital switchover of our Telecare Services and use the new technology to increase the number of people who benefit from telecare.
- Deliver the next phase of strength based social work in Bridgend, ensuring that we continue to understand 'what matters' and our practice supports the achievement of people's own wellbeing outcomes.

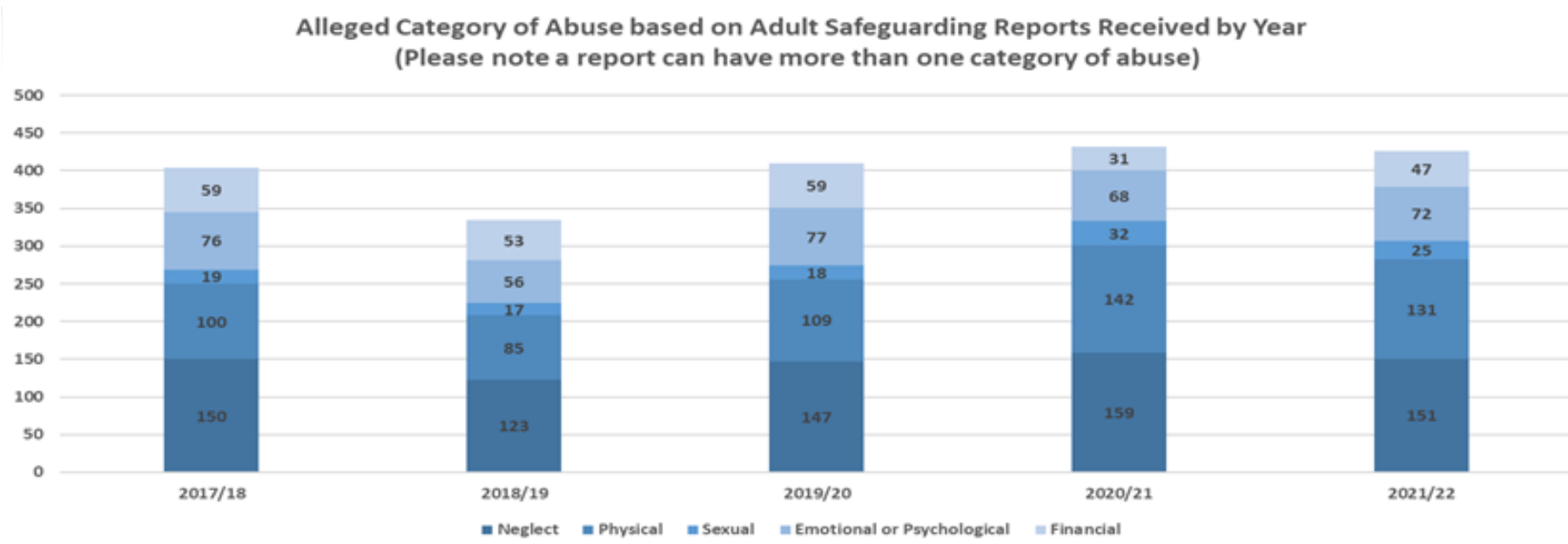
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

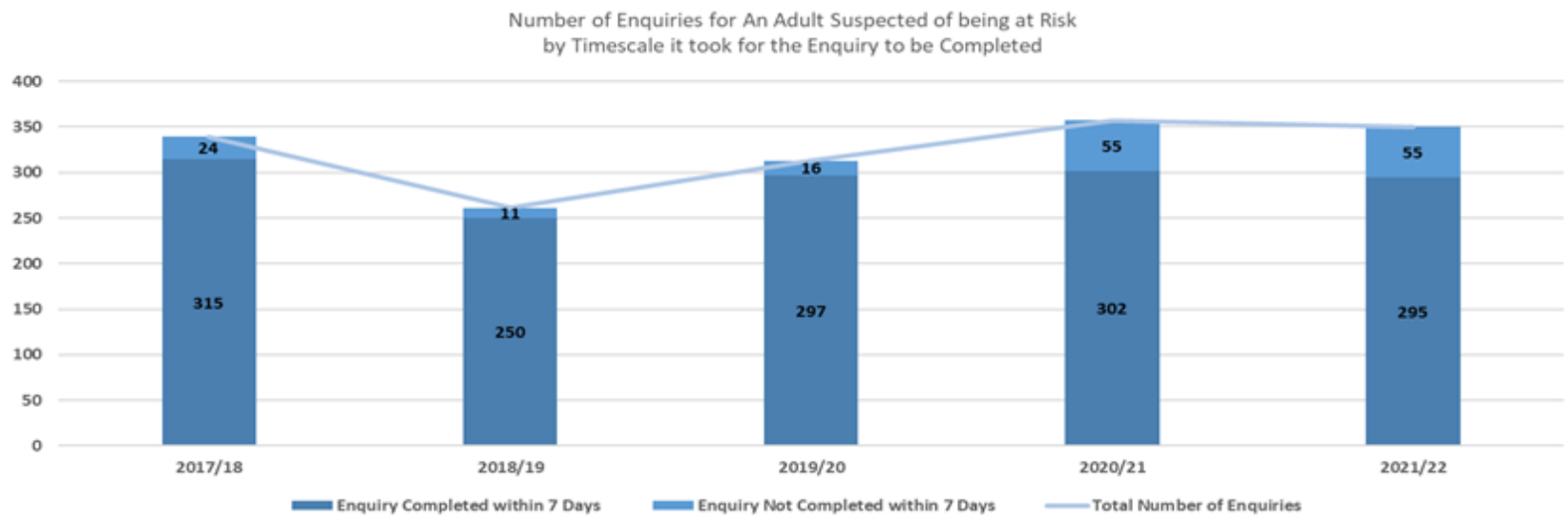
What we did:

- Increased capacity within the Safeguarding & Secure Estates Team by the appointment of an Assistant Team Manager.
- Specialist training for Trauma Informed social work undertaken by the Safeguarding & Secure Estates Team.
- Completed an impact assessment and established a project group in readiness for the legislation to Liberty Protection Safeguards in 2023.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next:

- Implement the Wales Safeguarding Procedures for adults at risk, improving our paperwork to support practice
- Work with partners to ensure that were there are concerns with the quality of care this is sustainably improved through updated Escalating Concerns protocols.
- Work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board regional steering group for Liberty Protection Safeguard to ensure people are not unlawfully detained in regulated and community settings and their rights are safeguarded.

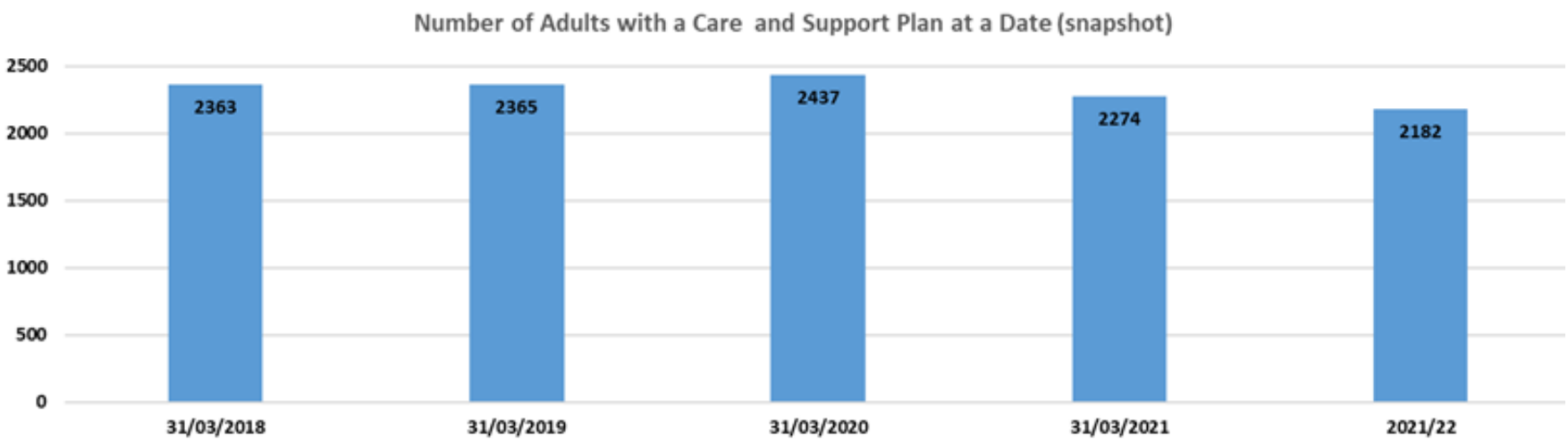
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

What we did:

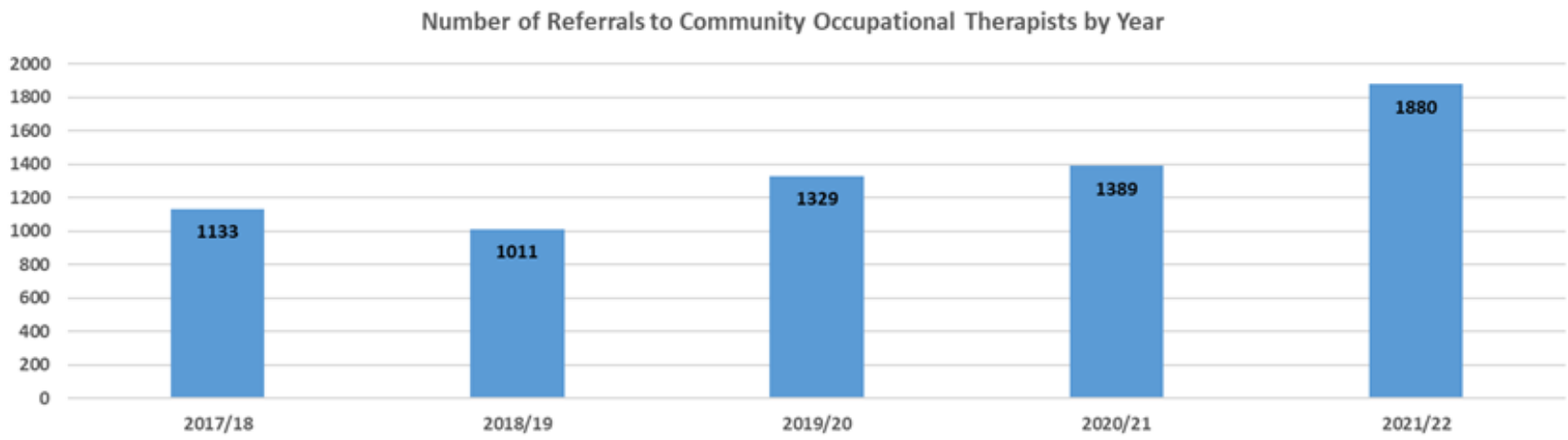
- Continued to operate Day Opportunity Services at different levels during the pandemic ensuring those in greatest need continued to receive support and engage in activities. Day services staff took services to ‘people in their own homes
- Developed a framework in relation to “closer to home” accommodation, care and support schemes for people with learning disabilities enabling the commissioning of individual contracts based on “what matters” conversations.
- Dementia and wellbeing support workers continued to work in partnership with the multi professional team and clusters to support people to connect with their communities.
- ·Following an engagement event with parents and carers in November 2021, the Directorate established a project group to review our its Direct Payments Policy.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

How well did we do?:



What are we doing next:

- The Day Service will implement a Quality Assurance Tool to measure how well the service delivered.
- Complete a review of the social work arrangements for transition services for young people agreed between 14 and 25
- Continue to work in partnership with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board on consolidating current arrangements to develop seamless services in line with the dementia standards for Wales.
- Launch and implement our revised Direct Payments policy.

"We were so impressed and truly grateful that our mother feels a worthy member of society once again."

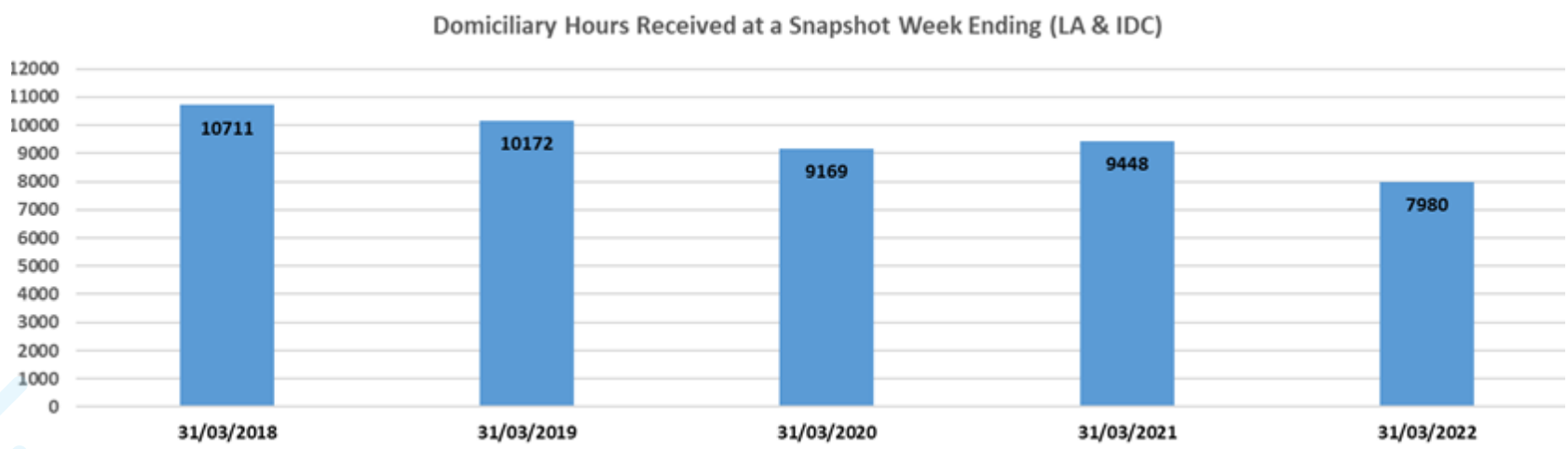
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

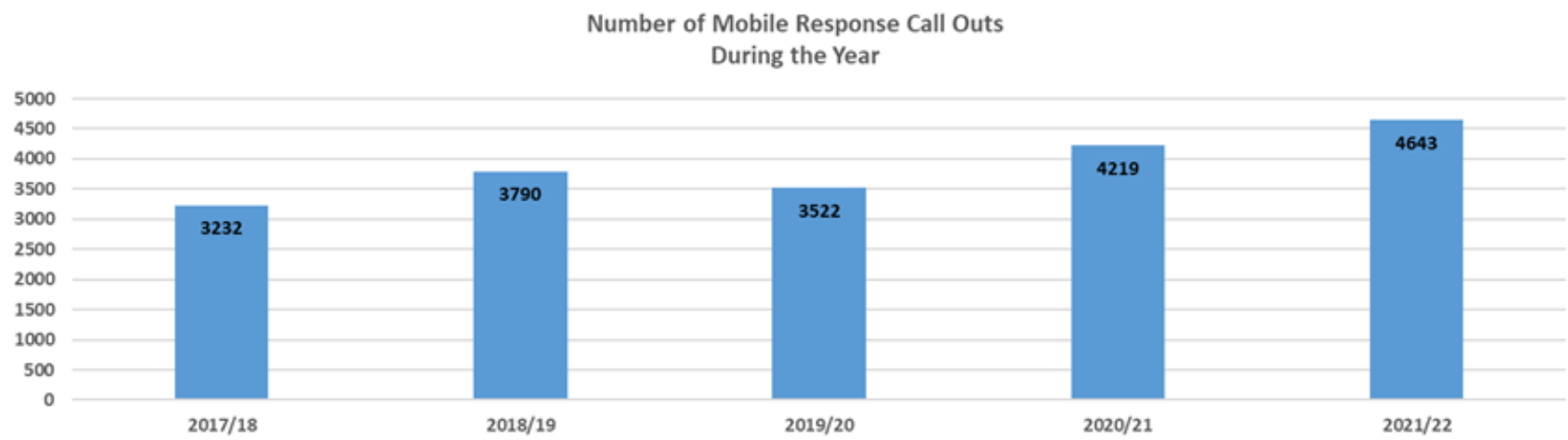
What we did:

- The Integrated Network Cluster Service Teams have provided more timely support for adults presenting with dementia both pre and post diagnosis. As part of this work, they have recruited six support workers who work with adults, and those who support them, in developing better social opportunities for people living with dementia.
- Completed a review of existing contracts for in-house care and support at home staff to ensure contracts are flexible and meet the needs of the carer and the service.
- Community care inform is supporting our workforce to understand research and evidence it in their practice.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next:

- Deliver on our ambitions for our complex dementia community and day service
- Address the recommendations of our Market Stability Report to ensure sufficient supply and sustainability of social care services, particularly the gaps in care and support at home and specialist care home provision.
- Implement the 'Code of practice on the Delivery of Autism Services.'

Fantastic! Thank you for supporting "X" to have positive relationships. You are a great team!

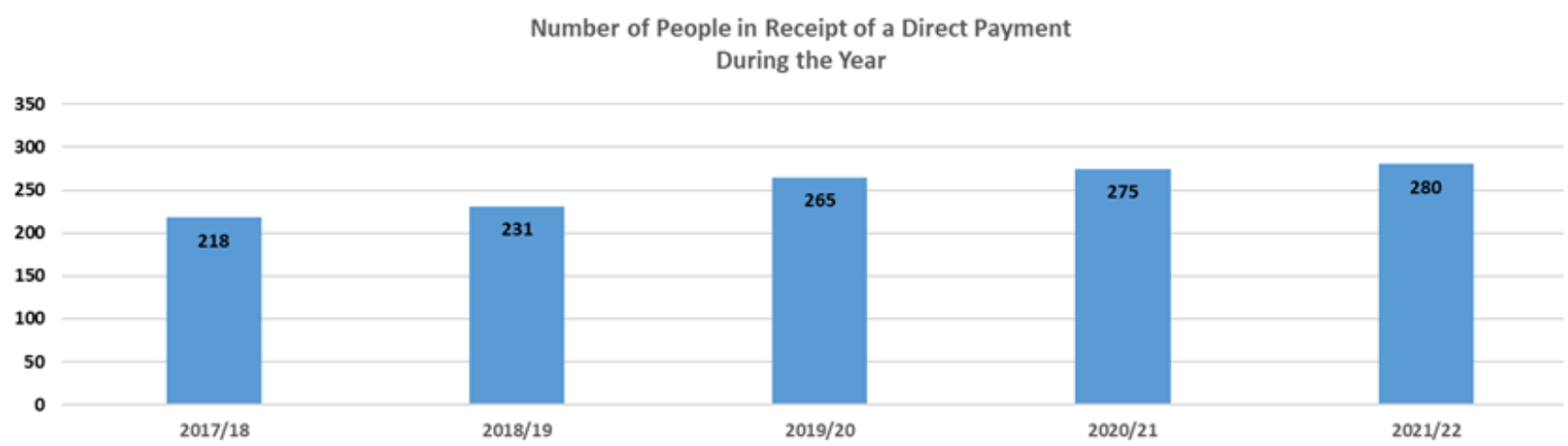
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

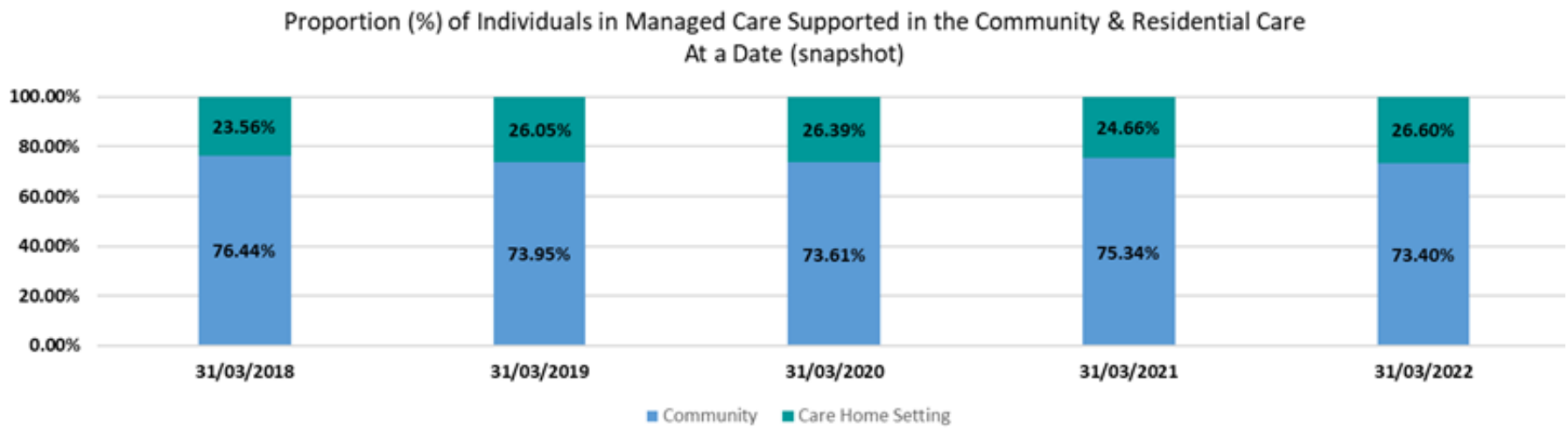
What we did:

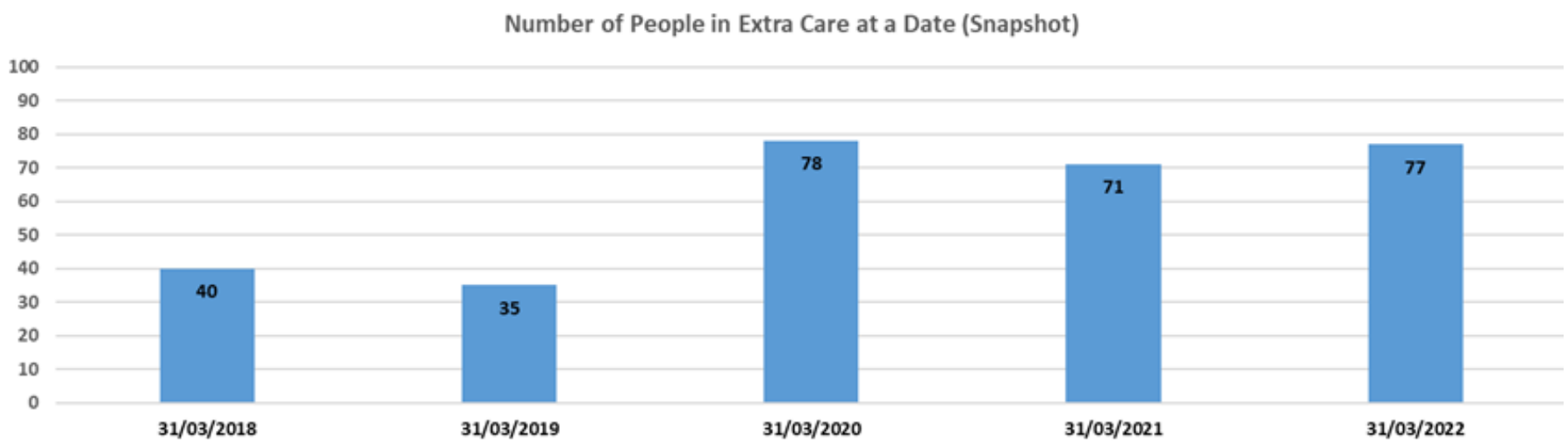
- Retendered our Minor Adaptations service, which incorporated clear performance indicators to measure the responsiveness of the service.
- Commissioned an independent partner to support the development of an Older Person's Accommodation Strategy.
- Established a care and support at home project group to ensure there is sufficient workforce to meet the pressures and demands of recruitment and retention.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.





What are we doing next:

- Develop service planning groups for to developing commissioning plans based on identified population needs and priority areas.
- Develop joint commissioning strategies between Housing and Social Care for key population groups including care experienced children and older people.
- Within our Support at Home service we are undertaking focused activity to develop innovative recruitment methods such as recruiting walkers to work in their local communities and securing electric vehicles.

We would like to thank you all for your help, care and compassion that you all showed our mam. Without your help, we could not have coped. We thank you all from the bottom of our hearts."

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

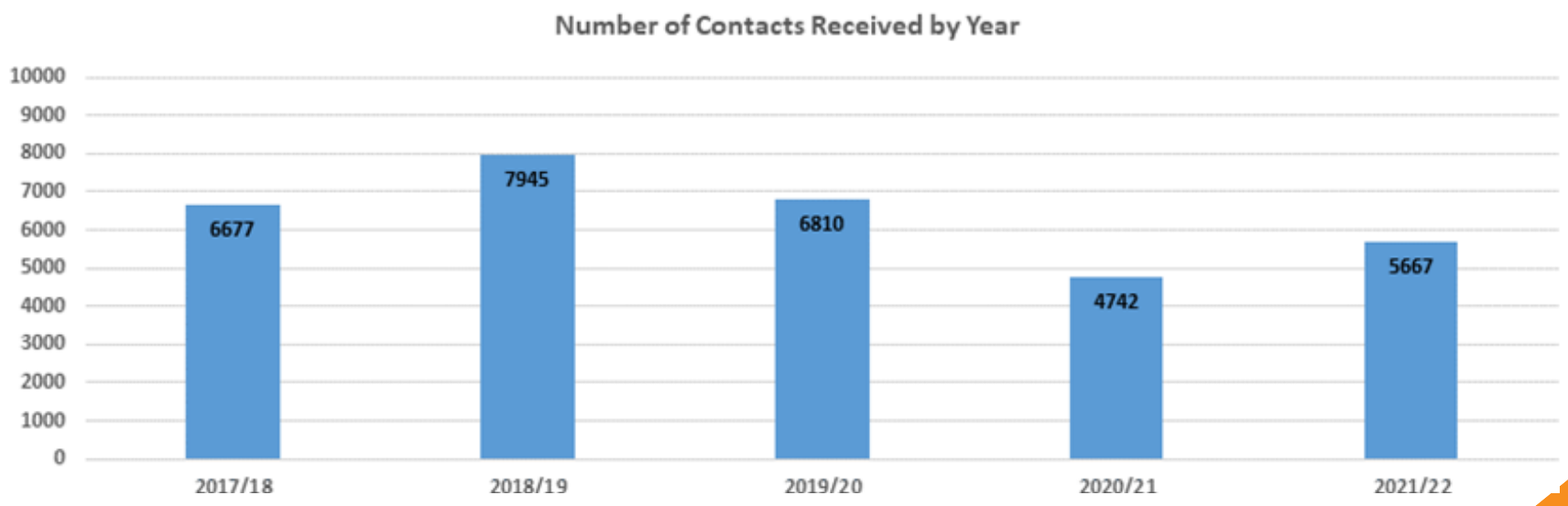
Children's Social Care

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

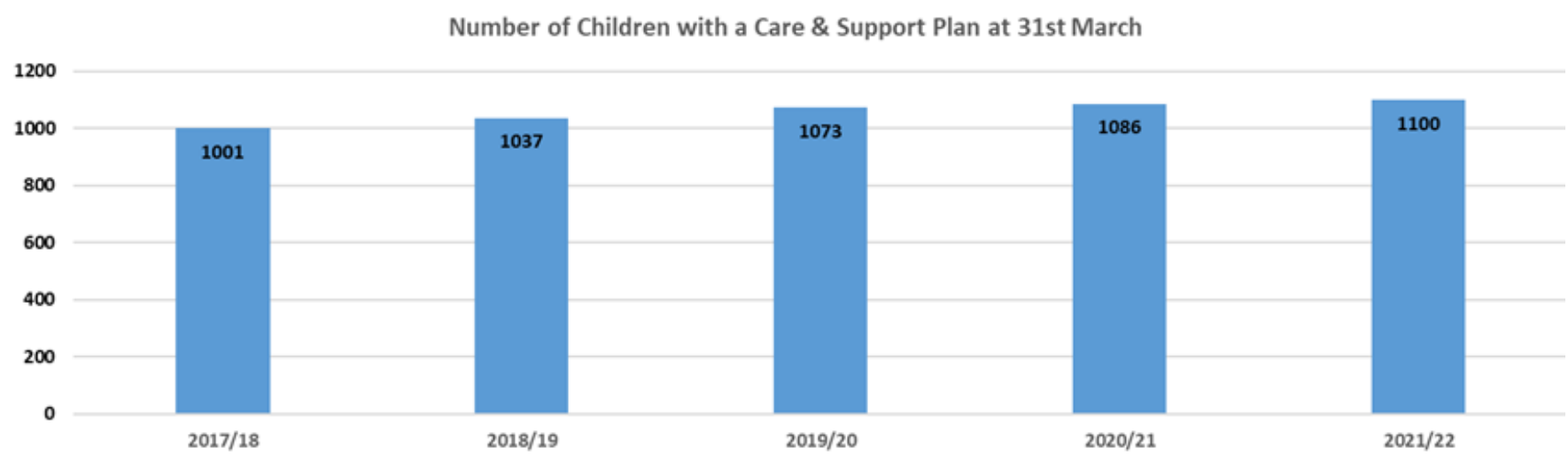
What we did:

- Reviewed our model of strength based practice to ensure it supports our workforce to provide the highest standards of social work for children and families.
- Commissioned a comprehensive range of independent quality assurance to understand in depth the quality of practice Comprehensive QA programme and commitment to understand in depth the quality and outcomes from practice and to improve where we need to.
- Appointed a Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer in March 2022 to improve engagement with care experienced children and care leavers.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next:

- Develop and implement practice development plans for each area of the service.
- Continue to embed quality assurance by the development of a refreshed framework which supports the embedding of learning from practice reviews and audit work.
- The Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer will engage with key staff, multi-agency partners, council members, care experienced children and care leavers on the development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy.

"I have to say thank you for your excellent conference report, you made a complicated situation very easy to follow."

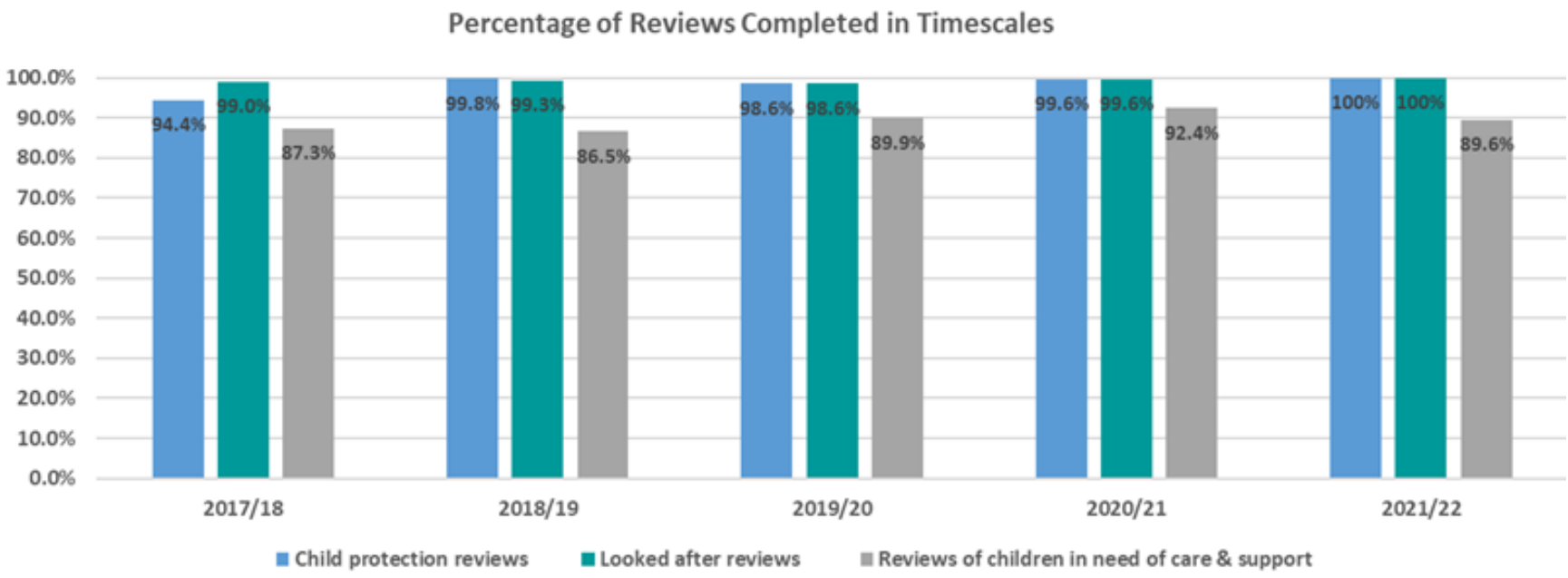
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

What we did:

- Commissioned a regional MAPSS (Multi Agency Placement Support Service) to deliver therapeutic interventions to care experienced children and those placed for adoption
- A new CAMHS In-Reach service has been created with 40 pilot schools across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, being identified as likely to benefit from emotional wellbeing support in schools from September.
- Continued working with Tros Gynnal Plant to support issue-based advocacy at a robust level despite covid restrictions.

How well did we do?:



Issue based Advocacy activity increased during 21-22. We received referrals for 155 children and young people, who presented with 204 issues, compared to 135 children and young people and 193 issues in 20-21.

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

What are we doing next:

- Complete a review of the social work arrangements for transition services for young people agreed between 14 and 25.
- Strengthen our working relationship with the CAMHs service to ensure children we work with benefit from timely assessments and services to meet their needs
- Working to identify new approaches to continue to increase the “Active Offer” and update of advocacy services.

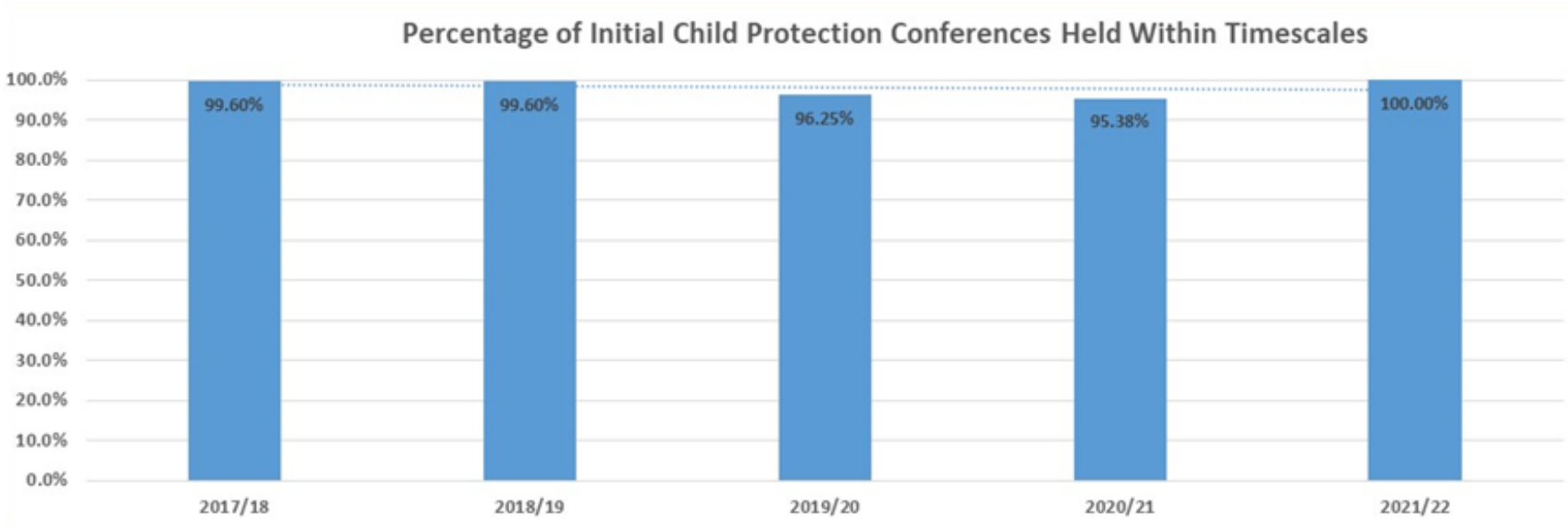
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

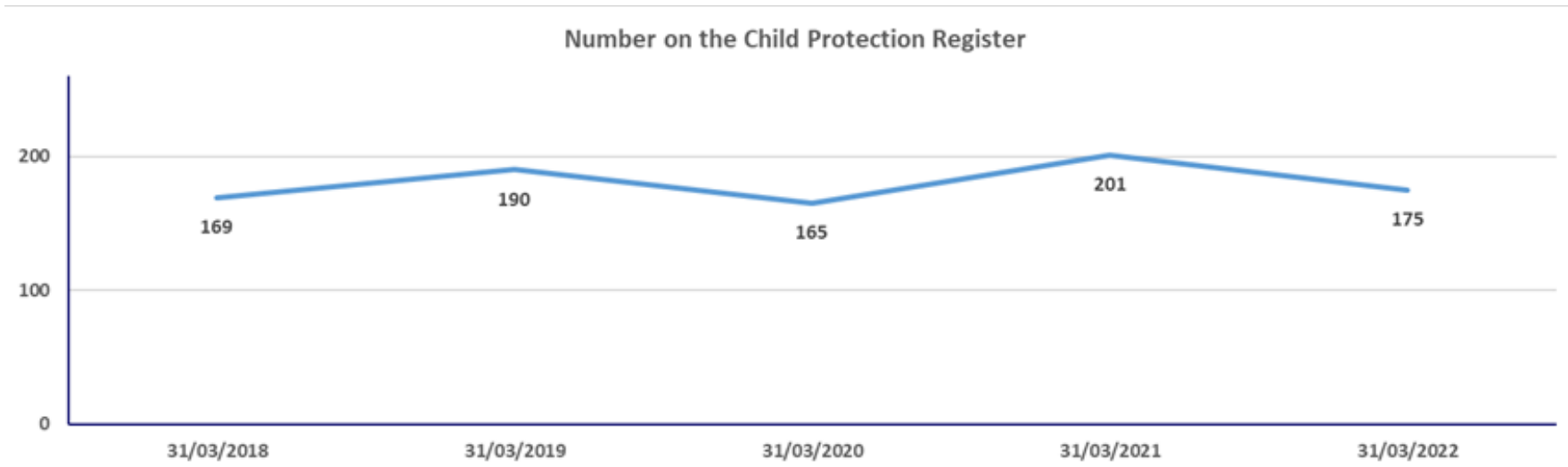
What we did:

- Established a working group to implement the recommendations of the Public Law Outcome legal framework to achieve best practice in child protection and family justice systems.
- Undertook learning and reviews to understand immediately the changes we needed to make following critical incidents in Bridgend
- Established a managed care team to build additional capacity into our front door IAA service and strengthen our working with partners following challenges in meeting the level of need within our workforce resources.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next:

- Ensure that all the local short and medium-term recommendations from the Public Law Working Group reforms are implemented.
- Ensure the learning from multi-agency child practice reviews is understood and embedded within our workforce
- Finalise and implement a review of the operating model of IAA services for Children and Families.

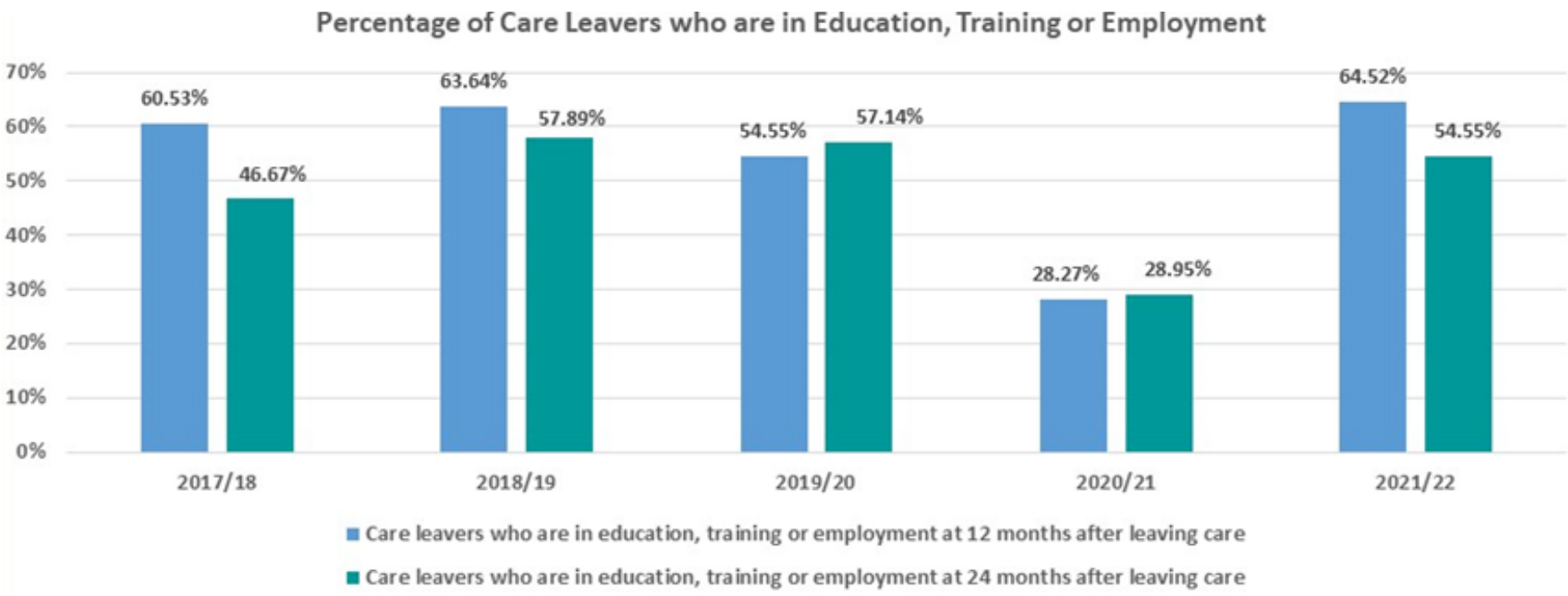
Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

What we did:

- Following an engagement event with parents and carers in November 2021, the Directorate established a project group to review its Direct Payments Policy.
- Provided a summer scheme for vulnerable care experienced children and children in receipt of care and support services.
- Provided free access to leisure facilities and programmes for children and young people with disabilities, young carers and care experienced children.

How well did we do?:



Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

What are we doing next:

- Launch and implement our revised Direct Payments policy.
- Co-design a strategy for disabled children and their parents/carers.
- Implement the Basic Income Pilot to support Care Leavers turning 18 between 01/07/22 and 30/06/23.

"I have never known a Social Worker make the time and effort to come in and do an activity with a young person. I think this will have a number of positive benefits for both of you going forward. This is a great way of working and Thank you."

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

What we did:

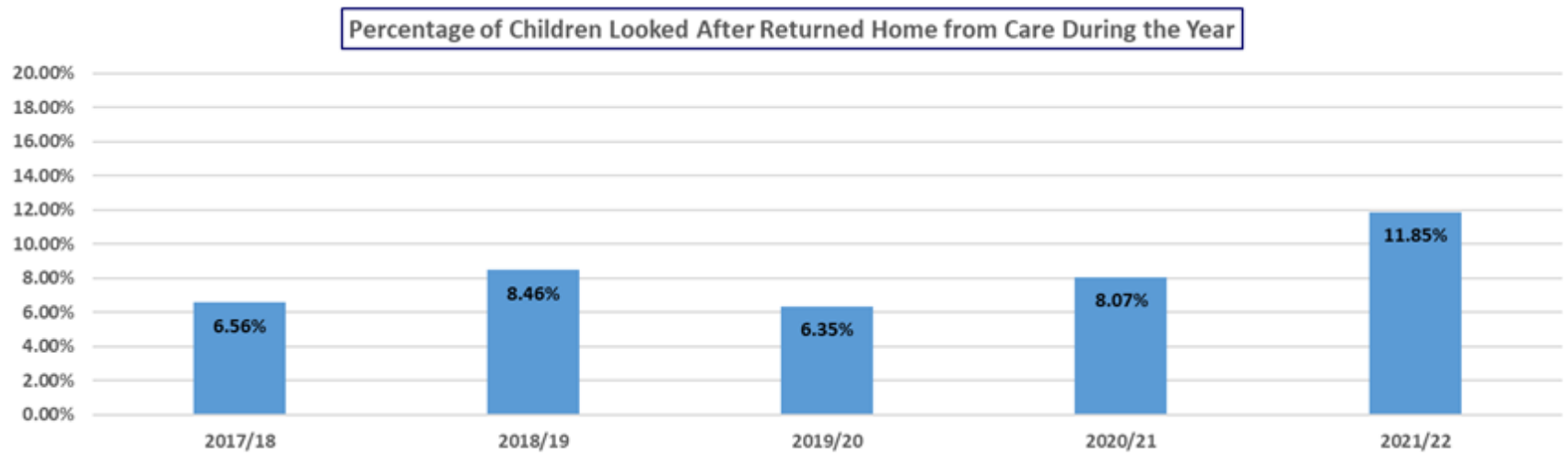
- Continued reduction in the safe number of care experienced children, supporting them, where possible, to live with their families and where this is not possible achieve permanence at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The new Care Experienced Children team became operational in September 2021 ensuring care experienced children are supported to maintain positive personal relationships in permanent arrangements
- Due to unforeseen circumstances. the development of the Brynmenyn Placement Hub was delayed. However during the year a further tender exercise was completed and work on the site commenced.

How well did we do?:

Numbers of Care Experienced Children

	30/03/2018	30/03/2019	31/03/2020	31/03/2021	31/03/2022
Total LAC Population	384	381	394	390	374
Number of Relative/Friend Placements	59	63	87	89	99
Number of PWP Placements	48	57	67	80	72
Number of UASC	2	2	2	0	2
LAC Population minus PWP, Relative/Friend, UASC	277	261	238	221	201

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next:

- Develop specialist support for foster carers who care for older care experienced children.
- Increase in the number of children who are supported to live with their family under a Special Guardianship Order.
- Completion and operational opening of the new Brynmenyn Placements Hub including a review of the operating model to ensure the service is fit for purpose to meet the needs of the children who will be supported.

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.

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

What we did:

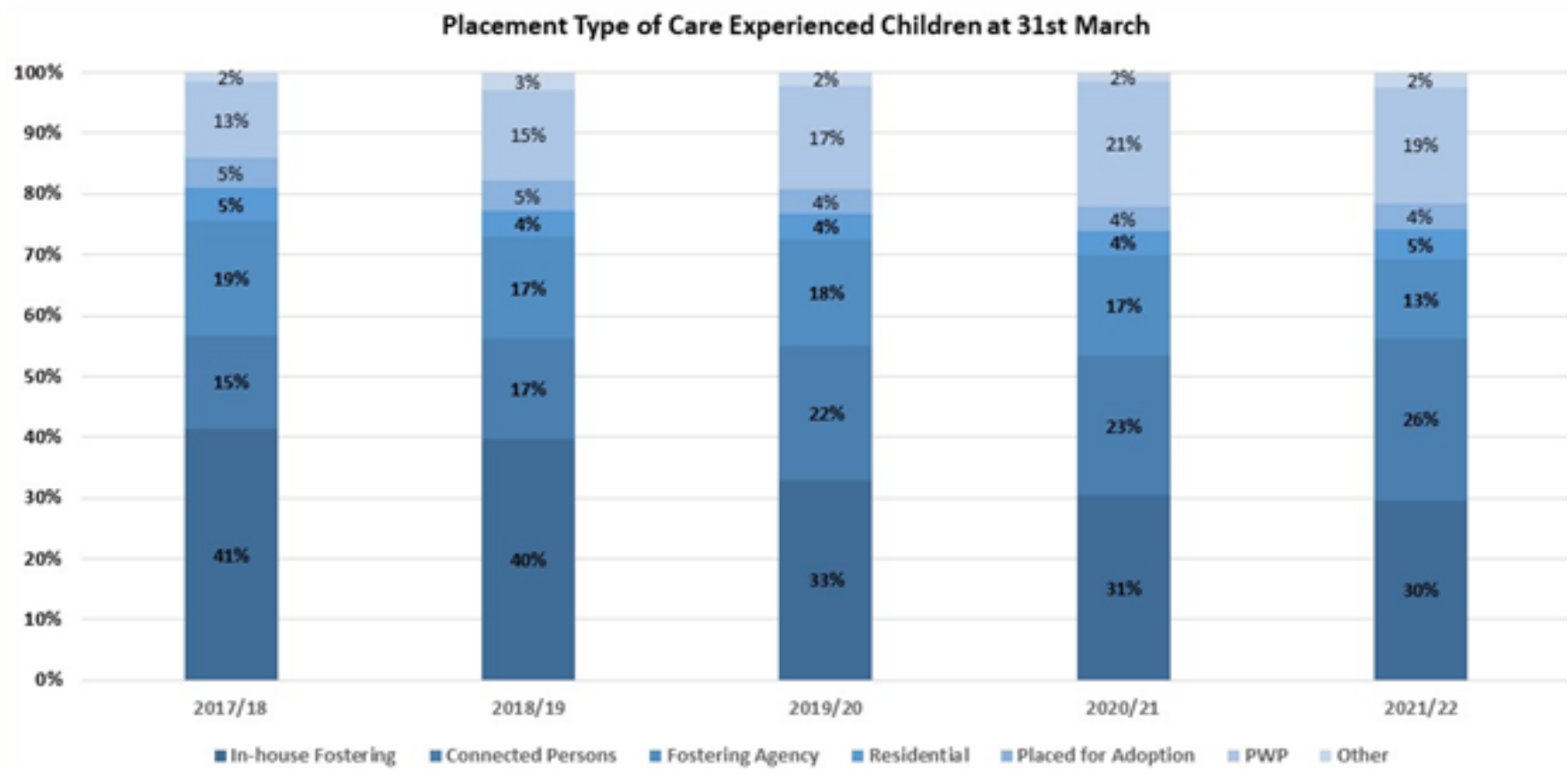
- The regional front door for prospective foster carers went live April 2021. This ensures that there is a timely response to all Foster Carer Enquiries received.
- Concluded the re-structure of the Fostering Service in December 2021 to support children to continue to live with in the most appropriate permanence arrangement to meet their needs.
- Worked with V2C to develop the new solo residential provision for children and young adults.

How well did we do?:

General Foster Carers

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of initial enquiries to foster received	142	104	96
Number of initial home visits/initial assessments conducted	49	43	25
Number of fostering assessments commenced	14	27	17
Number of new General Foster Carers approved	8	16	4

Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help.



What are we doing next:

- Introduce a Foster Carer Charter which will set out roles and expectations of the Corporate Parent, Fostering Service and our Foster Carers.
- In recognition of the important and critical role Foster Carers play as part of Children's Social Care, and current increased cost of living that is being experienced a review of Foster Carer Allowances will be completed.
- Registration and opening of the new solo residential provision for children and young adults.

"All family members have recognised the excellence of "X's" foster carers and how he is integrated into his placement as a family member, which has supported his continuing positive emotional development."

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

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

What we did:

- Local Community Co-ordination and Community Navigator support worked with vulnerable people to identify what a good life meant to them, connecting them to communities.
- We worked with Young Carers to better understand their wellbeing needs and created respite opportunities.
- The Feel Good for Life programme supported people living with Dementia and their Carers to remain connected to maintain wellbeing.

How well did we do?:

• Community Navigators supported 990 vulnerable individuals during the year and Local Community Co-ordinators circa 150 people monthly. 99% of people reported being happy with the support received with 94% feeling it made a difference to their lives.

• Over 200 Young Carers engaged in developing a new identity scheme, advocacy resources to highlight their support needs and development of 'You Are Valued' activities. Young Carers network established.

Prevention & Wellbeing Services

• Feel Good for Life supported 200 people living with Dementia and Carers and set up a customer panel to co-produce opportunities. The Social Value award was achieved for engaging customers and digital support.

What are we doing next:

- Co-produce wellbeing opportunities with Carers and Young Carers and engage more partners in developing supportive opportunities.
- Review the Building Resilient Communities approach to cross sector working and identify more sustainable investment. Focus on evidencing impact and cost effectiveness.
- Expand the range of dementia supportive opportunities and increase the range of partners involved.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

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

What we did:

- We worked with BAVO to develop a Carer Wellbeing Network and Carer respite opportunities.
- The National Exercise Referral Scheme offered a digital and face to face support programme linked to GP Practices.
- Community based opportunities were delivered for children and young people with additional needs and parent carers.

How well did we do?:

- Community partners collaborated to develop carers respite opportunities and create a Carer Wellbeing Network with BAVO.
- The National Exercise Scheme developed new pathways including 'long Covid' recovery, joint care and community wellness opportunities with the Health Board.
- Discovery Days and after school disability opportunities were rebuilt. Bridgend Inclusive Network group (BING) built capacity in third sector groups.Autism friendly activities developed by Halo.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

What are we doing next:

- Support BAVO and Third Sector to continue to develop more collaborative opportunities, linked to lived experience. Identify how direct payments policy can support innovation.
- Rebuild exercise referral pathways and review public accountability measure performance.
- Map the availability of opportunities for children and young people with additional needs and identify gaps to be addressed.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

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

What we did:

- We engaged with the Older Persons Commissioner, Welsh Government and the Age Friendly Communities programme aiming to bring communities together.
- We supported a cross sector ‘falls prevention’ network to collaborate on improving postural stability, build confidence and help reduce the rates of falls.
- We worked with BAVO, the Alzheimer’s Society and community partners to take forward Dementia Friendly Communities and other support.

How well did we do?:

- Cabinet approval to take forward Age Friendly Communities.Lead staff member engaged in ‘Infuse’ regional development focused on engaging effectively with older adults. Supporting the rebuilding of the older persons forum commenced.
- Falls Prevention workshops held and ‘mobile falls’ approaches supported by recovery funding.
- 100% of people sampled via the Alzheimer’s support identified it had made a positive contribution to their lives. 120 people had ongoing support and 1200 were provided with information.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

What are we doing next:

- Increase the resource available to progress to Age Friendly Communities as a ‘One Council’ approach in partnership with Welsh Government.
- Embed Otago and Postural Stability support in the community, physical activity opportunities including workforce development aspects.
- Review the type of support that people living with Dementia or cognitive impairment and carers say they need and refocus resources and partnerships.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

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

What we did:

- We completed the third year of our leadership of the regional Super Agers programme supported by Healthy and Active Funding.
- We supported people to access services via the Awen Books on Wheels and Bridgend Community Transport services.
- We worked with Awen to develop a range of social prescribing and social care recovery programmes.

How well did we do?:

- Over 150 people benefitted locally from Super Agers with a range of community partnerships established . 89% expressed improved wellbeing and 75% felt less isolated.
- Books on Wheels supported 449 people at home with library resources and 13,832 issues. Digital access to resources has also shown growth.Bridgend Community transport supported 200 day services visits per week and the Town Rider scheme to connect people to communities.
- Awen supported a specific development post and social prescribing activities including carers broadcasts, reminiscence activities and mental health interventions.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

What are we doing next:

- Super Agers is a manifesto commitment. Secure ongoing investment and develop sustainable community led approaches.
- Identify the impact of lack of transportation on vulnerable groups being able to connect to communities and maintain their wellbeing.
- Further develop social prescribing approaches linked to CTM Health Board and Regional Investment Funding.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

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

What we did:

- We further developed our vulnerable hub support programmes for vulnerable young people.
- Our Carer Wellbeing Service supported people to maintain wellbeing and connect to a range of support.
- Our Family Active Zone programme supported families to improve use of home space and time to live well.

How well did we do?:

- The hub extended to additional school holiday periods and progressions to connecting vulnerable young people into community opportunities that meet needs. A focus on supporting safeguarding concerns.
- The Carer Wellbeing Service supported 2003 individuals.There were 307 ‘What Matters’ conversations and 411 receiving IAA and signposting.
- Over 500 households supported with FAZ resources and guidance on active and healthy living

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

What are we doing next:

- Ensure a skilled and confident workforce is in place between Children's services and prevention to further develop hub programmes and trauma support.
- Review the Carers Wellbeing Service in conjunction with Carers and stakeholders. Develop an updated and co-produced specification.
- Ensure family based and whole household support activities are further developed, linked to early years strategy.

Prevention & Wellbeing Service

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

What we did:

- We supported a range of low cost community opportunities for children, young people and families including diverse needs.
- We used technology to support people to remain connected and to manage their wellbeing.

How well did we do?:

- Free Swimming supported 3490 people including over 60’s.The Summer of Fun supported low cost community opportunities and the Winter of Wellbeing programmes supported 10160 beneficiaries.
- The Wales Co-operative Centre supported digital skills amongst unpaid carers, 3 Community Centres were supported to ‘stream’ activities, virtual reality resources developed with Care Homes and 43 people supported digitally linked to hospital to home.

What are we doing next:

- Continue to target and utilise external investments to support delivery, community development and Third Sector opportunity.
- Deliver next phases of digital development with Wales Co-op, Awen, Halo, Community Centres and BAVO.

Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

We supported social care staff to develop their skills by:

- Providing a programme of Dementia care training, aligned to the Good Work Framework, accessed by managers, direct care staff, social workers and occupational therapists.
- Delivering Active Support Training in Supported Living settings. This was to ensure that those assessing, care and support planning, and reviewing, are able to reflect person centred care in care and support plans.
- Offering Collaborative Conversations training in integrated adults' assessment and care and support teams, which considered the impact of the pandemic on people's priorities.
- Providing a tiered approach to raising awareness around the impact of trauma when working with children and young people.
- Providing an enhanced range of e-learning available to Foster Carers and Children's Residential staff via The Training Hub.
- Commencing a mandatory safeguarding training programme 'Back to Basics - Strengthening Social Work Practice' training designed to create a solid foundation and consistency of practice across Children's Social Care, Early years and Family Support

We supported qualifying pathways to careers in social care and social work by:

- Significantly enhancing our social work secondee scheme and implementing a social work trainee scheme to increase the number of people we are supporting to become social work qualified in Bridgend.

How we do what we do

- Introducing an Adult social care worker apprenticeship programme.
- Seconding a member of staff to undertake a Foundation Degree in Rehabilitation Work (Visual Impairment).
- Working in collaboration with Social Care Wales, 12 Local Authorities and 3 Further Education Colleges on the development of a Vocational level 4 Social Services Practitioner (SSP) Qualification. The first students enrolled in January 2022.

We supported Post qualifying programmes for social work by:

- Supporting newly qualified social workers via our First year in practice programme.
- Providing mentoring and assessment for social workers undertaking the Consolidation Programme.

How well did we do?:

- Provided very specialist and general individual and team based support following critical incidents in Bridgend to ensure our workforce could readily access support when they need it in a timely way.
- 3838 learning activities were undertaken by staff.
- 56 social care staff achieved a health and social qualification at Level 2, 3, 4 or 5. 8 staff enrolled on the first cohort of the new Social Services Practitioner Level 4 qualification.
- 7 staff achieved the Training, Assessment and Quality Assurance Award (TAQA).
- We provided 30 practice learning opportunities for social work students.
- 10 social workers completed the Consolidation Programme.
- Bridgend commenced support for 9 social workers to undertake a practice educator award
- 2 social work team managers commenced the Team Manager Development Programme
- A senior manager successfully completed the Middle Manager Programme

How we do what we do

What are we doing next:

- Supporting qualifying pathways to careers in social care and social work.
- Internationally recruiting social workers and establishing a comprehensive support programme to support qualified social workers working for the first time in Wales.
- We will offer a Social Services Practitioner apprenticeship, working across Children's Social Care.
- Growing our own social workers' by offering social work traineeship opportunities and supporting staff to undertake the Social Services Practitioner Award, which equates to the first year of the degree

Post qualifying social work programmes

- We will be reviewing our first year in practice programme for newly qualified social workers to ensure sufficiency, the best use of resources and to promote confidence and competence across the newly qualified workforce. This will produce a revised first year in practice programme for the Newly Qualified Social Workers joining the Local Authority during the autumn of 2022.

Social Care Worker registration with Social Care Wales

- We will be working with adult residential care home managers and staff in preparation for the mandatory registration, from October 2022, of adult care home workers.
- We will able supporting domiciliary staff to ensure that they
- have the applicable training and qualifications for their first re-registration.

How we do what we do

What are we doing next:

Liberty Protection Safeguards:
Supporting the workforce in social care and other relevant Local Authority staff by way of preparation for the implementation. We will be developing and delivering a training plan which will be aligned to Welsh Government National Workforce and Training Plan.

Supporting our current workforce

- We will be broadening our core 'back to basics programme' programme. Training courses for 2022-23 will be mapped against the following thematic headings: Values; Skills; Practice Standards; Well-being; Trauma and Safeguarding. Promoting consistency of practice in line with legislation, policy and procedures on a local and national level.
- Implementing a Social Work and Social Care Charter to be clear on the offer to the Bridgend workforce.
- Supporting workforce wellbeing as a priority, ensuring that we get the basics right at all time, including supervision , appraisal and were needed targeted specialist as well as general wellbeing support.

Strength based practice
We will be supporting social workers and social care staff in the application of strength-based practice. A strength-based practice approach underpins the programme of Collaborative Conversations training for Adult Social Care staff. Emphasising a collaborative process which allows people to work together to determine outcomes that draw on the person's strengths and assets.

As already noted, across Children's Social Care we will be adopting the Signs of Safety practice framework, strength based, solution focused approach to practice.

How we do what we do

Building a digitally ready workforce

We will be providing training for staff to support delivery of effective virtual learning. In order to widen access to e and virtual learning we will ensure that we maintain currency of software ICT licences and continue to build up our stock of tablets and laptop computers for loan.
Alongside this to improve digital inclusion, ability and confidence for staff and foster carers we will facilitate access to digital skills workshops.

How we do what we do

Our Financial Resources And How We Plan For The Future

The net budget for the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate for 2021-22 was £75.239 million and the actual outturn was £69.848 million which following a drawdown of £48,000 from earmarked reserves (EMRs), resulted in an under spend of £5.391 million.

The outturn budget has benefited from significant short term grant investment:

- the Welsh government Social care Pressures Grant which helped us address social care pressures from overspends and winter pressure;
- and the Social Care Recovery Grant which enabled us to implement key priorities and actions in line with the Social care Recovery Framework which supports planning to enable our services and communities to move forward following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst these investments are helpful, the medium and long term sustainability of the social work and social care sector remains a pressure. Work undertaken during 2021/22 by ADSS Cymru demonstrates there is a gap of £250m across Wales which would equate to around £5-6 million in Bridgend to achieve a sustainable workforce in these areas to address the increasing need and demand for services.

How we do what we do

As part of the 2023/24 Budget Setting process, the Directorate has identified a significant amount of budget pressures totalling £12.8m. The major budget pressures include:

- worforce
- the National Living Wage
- demographic changes such as an aging population
- children's specialist placements
- Learning Disabilities Supported Living
- Care and Support at Home

The Directorate has had a selection of EMRs set up at the end of the 2021/22 financial year, funded from the under spend position. These additional earmarked reserves totalled £5.563m. These have been put in place to support some of the pressure areas identified above. Key areas supported by the EMRs include the Managed Team costs, the Grow Your Own Social Worker initiative, the Telecare Analogue to Digital migration and Social Work Capacity in the network teams.

The end of year annual Social Services and Wellbeing financial summary can be found here in the Council Report outlining the revenue budget outturn for 2021/22:
Revenue Budget Outturn 2021-22

It is clear that there are considerable underlying budget pressures in social services and wellbeing in Bridgend to sustainably and safely deliver statutory services and wellbeing and prevention priorities.
Short term funding in 2021/22 meant there were considerable underspends against budgets.

How we do what we do

Our Partnership Working, Political And Corporate Leadership, Governance And Accountability

Partnership and multi-agency working is key to the delivery of our services. Key partners regional partners include Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board. The Directorate also has a number of teams that are co-located with key agencies to ensure these include the Bridgend Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team and the Integrated Cluster Network Teams. We also work with key third sector partners, AWEN and HALO in the delivery of our leisure, cultural and wellbeing services. Working in this way enables us to share information, knowledge and resources.

The Directorate has its own Cabinet Member who is the Deputy Leader of the Council reflecting the importance of the portfolio who along with the other Cabinet Members are responsible for making major decisions and policies for Bridgend. The Cabinet has a Corporate Parenting Committee that meet quarterly. The Corporate Parenting Committee makes important policy decisions on service provision for care experienced children and care leavers. There are also a number of Overview and Scrutiny committees who also consider policies and developments across Social Services and Wellbeing making recommendations on future service delivery.

Links to all of the 2021/22 Cabinet, Council, Corporate Parenting and Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports and minutes that relate to social care can be accessed here.

How we do what we do

The Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing is a member of the Council's Cabinet Corporate Management Board who meet weekly and the Cabinet and Corporate Management Board who meet fortnightly. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure oversight of council business by agreeing key strategic and operational priorities in line with the "One Council Approach".

The Directorate's performance is measured at a directorate, local, regional and national level. Performance is measured on a regular basis across all 3 service areas with core operational data being monitored on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis and is scrutinised on a quarterly basis via the Council's Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) Meeting. The CPA monitor's our performance against the Council's Wellbeing Objectives as set out in its Corporate Plan.

Key performance data is shared on a regional basis with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board and on a national level we have a statutory duty to report performance adapt to Welsh Government on a quarterly and annual basis.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has established a new legislative framework to measure local government performance. The Act will require BCBC, along with all Local Authorities in Wales. to undertake and publish a self-assessment of its performance requirements in relation to exercising its functions, effective and efficient use of resources and governance arrangements. Bridgend's report, reflecting 2021-22, will be published later this year following consultation and engagement with communities, staff and scrutiny.