

Social Services Annual Report 2018/19



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Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Social Services Annual Report 2018/19. Over the past few years the Department has been developing this annual report to highlight the key areas of improvements and challenges that have been faced.

This report has been developed in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document. The Act aims to provide the most radical change to the way in which Social Services is provided since 1948. It focuses on improving the well-being of people who come to Social Services for support. It is person centred and focuses on prevention and reducing the need for care and support. It recognises that responsibility lies not only within Social Services Departments, but also within the wider Local Authority and with partners (particularly Health and the Third Sector).

The Act shares similar principles with a number of key national/regional strategies that are being implemented throughout the Council, in particular the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Director of Social Services has a statutory requirement to publish an annual report in relation to the delivery of its functions, to evaluate its performance and also include lessons learned. A key aspect of the report is showing how the six Quality Standards have been implemented in relation to well-being outcomes.

This report provides a strategic overview of the work undertaken throughout 2018/19 and what plans are in place to move forward. Further supporting information can be found from page 23 of the report.

The report includes evidence of where Social Services have worked collaboratively with partners and where the views of service users have been captured in order to provide improved services that meet the needs of local people.

Experiences and learning from service users has been considered as part of the development of the report. Service users have been engaged through a number of forums such as the Carers Group, 50+ Forum and Young Carers Group. A questionnaire, required as part of the Act, has also been distributed to adults and carers. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) findings, Wales Audit Office (WAO) findings, case studies, complaints and compliments and quarterly reporting have all been considered as part of the development of this report and evidence from these has been used to inform future learning.

The annual report is used to demonstrate accountability to citizens and service users. As part of this process, the report will be presented to full Council for ratification before it is published on the Council's website and will then be sent to Welsh Ministers. The report will be available on line bilingually and will be shared with partner agencies in order to share good practice, learning and experiences.



Director's Summary of Performance

As the Corporate Director of Social Services in Blaenau Gwent, I am pleased to present the annual report for 2018/19 which is a requirement of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act).

Feedback from service users, carers, families and partner organisations together with complaints and compliments as well as the Act questionnaires are all important learning and development opportunities for the Directorate. This will continue to be a focus for the coming year both locally and regionally through the citizen's panel. We view complaints and compliments as a great opportunity for the Directorate to improve the services and the service user experience moving forward (See Chapter on How People are shaping our Service).

Under the Act we have continued to invest in the knowledge and learning of our Care Management staff through attendance at Outcomes Training and collaborative working with Social Care Wales to identify best practice and showcase examples where we have supported citizens to achieve their outcomes some examples can be viewed on Social Care Wales website.

The safeguarding of children, families and vulnerable adults remains a priority moving forward for the Directorate. Children's safeguarding was a theme of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection of Looked After Children at the end of the financial year of 2018/19. Therefore we have seen progress on a number of fronts; the CIW published its inspection report for Blaenau Gwent in June 2018. The Inspectors looked at the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children and their families. The overall performance of the Council was positive but there is an acknowledgment of the significant challenges facing the Council in delivering the service at a time of financial and resource pressures. The Directorate has completed an action plan and is working through the areas for development.

The three year Safe Reduction of Looked After Children (LAC) Strategy has been in place for 18 months and is supported by a clear action plan which is reviewed on a quarterly basis as part of the business planning process. The development of a Supporting Change Team was approved and went operational in January 2018. The Team will work with children and families on the 'edge of care' and there has been some evidence of green shoots emerging from the actions taken so far. We have seen a steady reduction in the numbers of LAC during the year and the Supporting Change Team has been able to make some savings and cost avoidance as a result of their interventions. The South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) has undertaken a number of recruitment campaigns throughout the year. However, it still does not meet demand and plans to continue with the recruitment campaigns will be undertaken throughout 2019/20 using work developed nationally. Performance overall of SEWAS continues to be very good.

On a regional basis the Directors of Social Services are committed to looking at collaborative opportunities across Social Services and Health, using the Transformation fund from 'A Healthier Wales', pacesetter funding and the Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Funding. There has also been work undertaken to continue to explore the development of a regional Fostering Service moving forward.

In Adult Services there has been a focus on trying to ensure the continuation of funding obtained through the Integrated Care Fund for existing schemes and, where possible, the development of further funding for new or existing schemes.

In late November 2018, Welsh Government agreed capital funding for a number of bids such as the Redesign of Augusta House Respite Service; some funding for digital and mobile assistive technology solutions; a mobile application for Home Care/Reablement Service; expanding the remit of the Enhanced Rapid Response Adaptation Programme (RRAP) scheme, (to enable more equipment support to keep people safe in their own homes (Blaenau Gwent & Caerphilly Care & Repair)); and an additional CARIAD bed at Saxon Court to increase the capacity of existing 'Step Up Step Down' service. In addition, Health have provided 'Pacesetters' funding for a Service Manager covering Early Intervention and Prevention across Health and Social Care and for an Information, Advice and Assistance Manager across Health and Social Care. These have all progressed throughout the latter part of the financial year.

The Directorate had identified and developed reviews of four service areas during 2018/19 e.g. Cwrt Mytton Residential Care Home, Augusta Respite Unit, Supported Living and Community Options for potential budget reductions. These reviews were presented to Council in October 2018 and agreed, which means the continuation of the vast majority of these in house services with some savings identified. The savings for 2019/20 have now been delivered for the start of the new financial year.

Blaenau Gwent Council, along with many other Local Authorities in Wales are facing serious financial problems and Social Services, like all Council Services, have had to make cuts to ensure the authority delivers a balanced budget for 2018/19. The sustained increase in the number of LAC has had a detrimental effect on the budget situation with Children's Services over spending by £765,000 in 2017/18. The Directorate received an additional £0.53 million added to the Children's Services base budget to cover this pressure within 2018/19 and, although considerable work has commenced with the implementation of the Safe Reduction of LAC strategy, the increases has resulted in an over spend in LAC budget which stood at £961K at the end of March 2019. However, Adult Services have managed to underspend resulting in an overall underspend for the Directorate of £220K.

The challenge for 2019/20 will be to continue to manage demand and to do more with less. We will undertake a number of reviews within some of the services we deliver internally. We will continue to look to explore further opportunities for collaboration where it will improve the well-being of the citizens of Blaenau Gwent and it is right to do so.

Hopefully, this report will help you to understand how we support and safeguard children, young people, citizens, carers and their families within Blaenau Gwent and how we will continue to strive to improve our services.

Damien McCann

Corporate Director of
Social Services



Cllr John Mason

Executive Member
Social Services



How People are shaping our Services

As part of the Act, people who use care and support services are invited to complete an annual survey in relation to the provision of care and support. This year, Adults and Carers were sent questionnaires. It was decided that, owing to the low response rate received in the past from children, that a survey not be undertaken this year. The low response rate from children is typical across Wales and has been recognised by Welsh Government as a driver for review. Therefore, the way in which Social Services engages with children and young people is to be reviewed in line with the Welsh Government's review of the Act. Consideration is being given to how best to encourage participation and to gather views in the most effective way.

Adult Responses

In respect of Adults Services, 644 questionnaires were sent out to adults aged 18 and over with 152 responses received; this is a reduction on last year when 249 responses were received. This equates to a 23.6% response rate, which is just under the required Welsh Government expected response rate of 25%.

Of the responses:

- 90.5% of respondents reported that they lived in a home that supported their well-being which is an increase from last year when the figure was 81%. 86% reported being happy with support from family, friends and neighbours which is an increase of 4% from last year.
- 52% of respondents felt they could do the things that were important to them and 33.7% reported this sometimes, a total of 86% reported yes or sometimes. In 2017/18, this figure was 84%.
- 62.8% feel part of the community which is an improvement from last year when the figure was only 41%.
- 84% feel safe both within and outside of the home and increase of 9% from last year.
- 82.7% know who to contact about their Social Care and support, down from last year by 5.3%. 81.7% had the right information when needed and had been involved in decisions about their care and support. This was similar to last year when the figure was 80%. 84.1% are happy with the care and support they have had which is a slight decrease from last year of 1.9%.
- 97.5% are able to communicate in their preferred language; similar to last year of 98% and 92.2% felt they were treated with dignity and respect, 94% last year.
- Of those living in a residential care home, 66% responded that they chose to live there. Last year, 74% responded in this way.
- The 18-24 year olds were asked if they had the advice, help and support needed to prepare them for adulthood, 90.6% responded yes and 9.3% responded no. This is an improvement on last year when 75% responded yes and 25% responded no.

Carers Responses

Questionnaires were sent to carers who had a joint care and support plan with the cared for person. 32 responses were received of 75 questionnaires sent. Last year, only 22 questionnaires were sent and 10 returned. 69% of carers felt that they had been involved in decisions about how the care and support of the person they care for was provided; last year this was 86%.

During 2018/19, Blaenau Gwent continued to implement the required cultural and operational changes that the Act requires in order to ensure that all social care services are individually shaped by the people that use them. This includes improving how the service effectively engages with service users, carers, families and partner organisations, whilst actively encouraging all to provide feedback which can be utilised to shape and improve services.

The Social Services Directorate is committed to providing high quality services to its citizens and multiple methods of engagement were implemented throughout the year in order to achieve this, some examples are detailed below.

Consultations

In January 2018 the Department undertook a consultation on the draft Assisted Transport Policy with citizens, parents, families and stakeholders. The consultation was undertaken in partnership with the Council's Policy, Partnership and Engagement Team and the Pan Gwent Peoples First Advocacy Service for citizens with a Learning Disability, who provided advice and support to citizens on the consultation process and questionnaire. Those who attend the Community Options Service and, where appropriate, their wider family, support networks and carers were consulted and a total of 35 responses were received.

- 57% felt the Council should provide better and more cost effective assisted transport, 11% did not accept and 31% were unsure.
- 50% agreed with the Council's aim of promoting the independence of those who currently use the assisted transport service, 18% disagree and 31% were unsure.
- 33% felt that the policy goes far enough to promote independence, however 12% did not agree and 55% were unsure.
- 33% agreed with the principles highlighted within the policy, 27% did not agree and 39% were unsure.

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) undertook a consultation with care leavers to gain views on the services they received from the 14 Plus Team. Recommendations were identified under two main categories: skills for independent living; and education, employment and training. Progress against the recommendations from this review is reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The 14 Plus Team have taken time to consult with care leavers on how to develop an outdoor space at Beaufort Road where the team is based and they also had a competition for the young people to name the garden.

The South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) has shared the outcome of research undertaken by Adoption UK. The research was based on adopter's views on the quality of service provision in the SEWAS region. An action plan has been put together as a result of the feedback to improve service provision.

Engagements

- Involvement with children and families occurs on a daily basis and is recorded as part of their care planning.
- The Head of Service and Service Manager met with all foster carers with the purpose of gaining feedback from them on the quality of service provided by the department.
- An audit tool has been developed to scrutinise case files to ensure evidence is present of how the voice of the child and families have been captured.
- All teams have now been trained in the outcomes approach. A mentoring scheme is planned for 2019 to ensure the outcomes based approach is embedded in practice.
- SEWAS consulted with all adopters following their attendance at training, adoption panel for approval and when they are matched with children.
- The Adoption Support Team in SEWAS facilitates a number of support groups including; birth parent support, adopter support, therapeutic parenting support, and grandparent/ family and friend of adopters. A quarterly newsletter is distributed to all adopters that provides advice on where to access support and training.

- During a recent Wales Audit Office (WAO) study, the strengths with regards to engagement were identified:
 - parent forums in community hubs act as listening posts and inform future work;
 - closed group on Facebook for parents;
 - Early Years Development Childcare Play Partnership (EYDCPP) is a strategic partnership of early years and prevention within councils and is a sharing network. There is, a 'before and after' evaluation with feedback shaping changes in service delivery; and
 - Independent evaluation by Worcester University on Families First programme: spoke to local users, and feedback on the Programme was very positive.
- Blaenau Gwent PSB organised a First 1,000 Days Systems Engagement event in July 2018. 13 partner organisations were represented with 91 delegates attending.
- The Carers Lead Officer has supported the Health Board on identifying Carers Champions amongst GP surgery staff to enable carers training to be rolled out during 2019/20. Promotion of this service was also undertaken at the Blaenau Gwent 50+ Celebration Event.
- A number of Blaenau Gwent surgeries have Care Navigation which signposts Carers to the Carers Engagement Service. This is very positive and ensures that the Carer is getting the right support at the right time rather than taking up GP's resource.
- The Carers Lead Officer and the GP Engagement Officers participated in the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) engagement review of Information/ Advice and Assistance (IAA) and Community Connector (Social Prescribing) services.

Complaints and Compliments

The Social Services Department is committed to providing high quality services to its users; however, despite best intentions, it is recognised that sometimes things can go wrong and the Social Services complaints procedure provides people with the opportunity to voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied with a service. The service uses learning from these complaints to improve services moving forward. The service also welcomes positive feedback and compliments and also uses this information to further improve services.

Examples of complaints received in Children's Services this year were regarding a lack of communication from the Department, changes in Social Workers and cancellations of meetings without notice. In Adult Services examples of complaints were disagreement with the outcome of the assessment, a lack of communication and a lack of action provided by a Social Worker.

In order to continue to improve services, the outcomes of complaint investigations and learning from them are undertaken to prevent the situation from occurring again. During 2018/19 examples of learning identified and actioned include:

- Managers to remind staff of the impact of cancelling meetings at short notice and to encourage staff to ensure that planned meetings go ahead; to ensure staff provide copies of assessments, minutes and reports in a timely manner; to reinforce to staff the need to ensure that key people are invited to meetings; policies and procedures within the service to be reviewed and monitored; ensure responses to correspondence is within a timely manner; and to review how referrals within a service are prioritised and allocated to ensure consistency of case management and clear communication.

Below are some examples of compliments received by the service:

- Thank you to staff for building up good relations with a looked after child; for the hard work of staff and their professionalism; for tips and ideas; for the support provided; for excellent work which has gone beyond anyone's reasonable expectations; for the hard work on Dementia Awareness week and Buddy Bach Project, for the support and awareness provided in terms of Mental Health; and praise to staff for the professional services of Reablement and Direct Assistance Support at Home (DASH).

Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

Priorities

In March 2018, Council approved the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2018/22. The Corporate Plan is the Council's roadmap setting out the vision, values and priorities of the Council. One key priority within the Plan is, 'Social Services'. The business plans within Social Services are aligned directly to the Corporate Plan to ensure that the priorities can be implemented over the next four years. The priorities are shown below and the Quality Standards demonstrate where improvement has been made, challenges have been addressed and where outcomes have been achieved. The Corporate Plan priorities have been written to cover the four year period 2018/22, therefore, the above mentioned priority areas are likely to remain in place until 2022, however, an annual review of the priorities and supporting action will be undertaken to ensure priorities remain fit for purpose.

Corporate Plan Social Services Priorities 2018/22 are:

- **To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing;**
- **To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them;**
- **To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;**
- **To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;**
- **To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities;**
- **To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm; and**
- **To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of Poverty.**

Children's Services Priorities 2018/19

- **Enhance screening and IAA provision (children and adults) –** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Support and encourage a cultural change across Children's services by ensuring that community members have a say in what matters to them –** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Preventative services target the most vulnerable families in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan –** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Implement the Safe Reduction of Looked After Children Strategy 2017-2020 -** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Improve outcomes for Looked After Children -** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements -** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded -** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Manage the Children's Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget –** At the end of this year the priority was red (significant issues identified that requires action).
- **Children's Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles -** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).

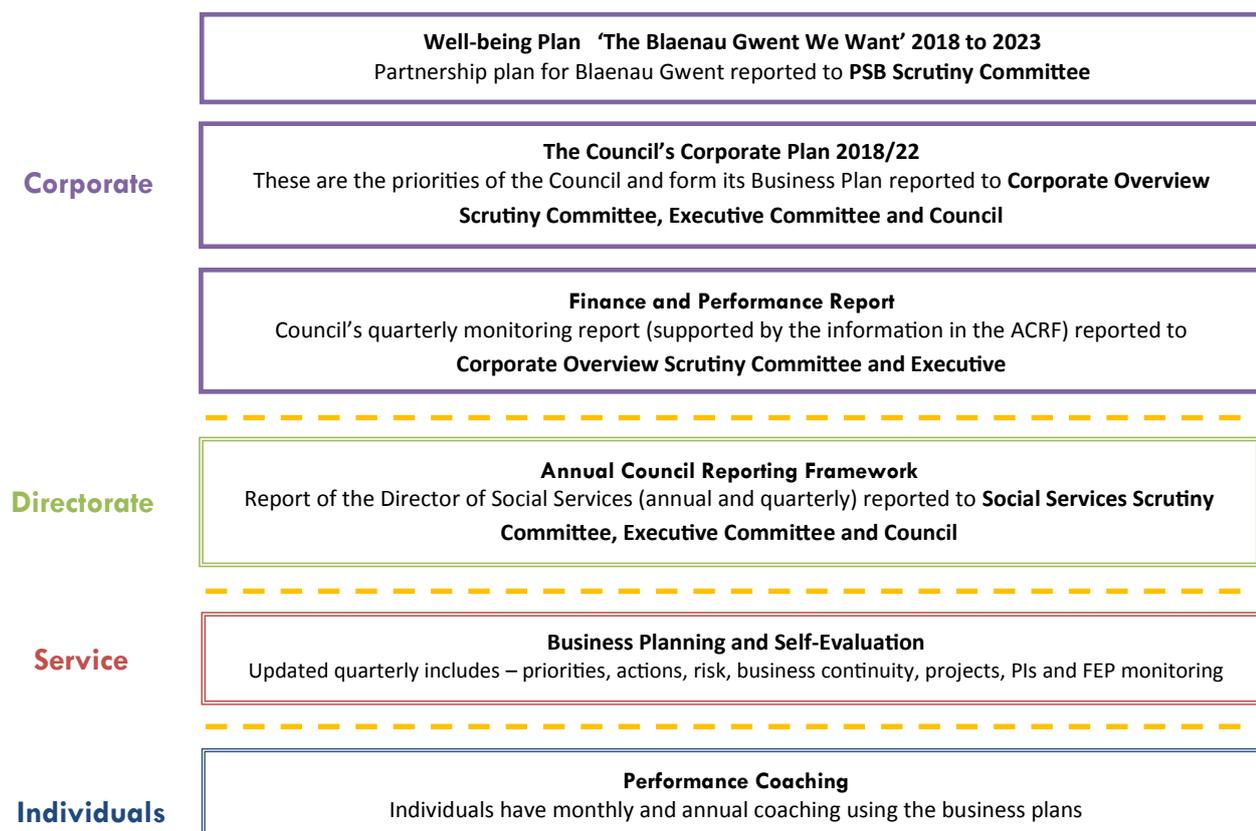
Adult Services Priorities 2018/19

- **Enhance screening and IAA Adult Services support at our front door -** At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).

- **Support and encourage a cultural change across Adults services by ensuring that citizens have a say in what matters to them** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Ensure that preventative support is available to citizens - promoting personal independence and reducing dependencies** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Ensure that we provide / commission modern, high quality care and support provision that meet both current and future well-being needs of our citizens** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **To develop alternative models of support that promotes independence and supports well-being outcomes** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Develop and maximise opportunities for partnership working across Welsh Government Flexibilities Grants and Welfare reform related programmes** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Manage the Adults Service core budget and grant programmes to ensure that expenditure comes within budget** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Adult Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).

The framework below shows how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create a 'golden thread'.

Planning Framework



Progress of the Quality Standards

During a comprehensive assessment of performance at the end of 2018/19, the following achievements and challenges were identified as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

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

Both Children and Adults Information, Advice and Assistance Teams (IAA) have continued to support people to actively manage their well-being and make informed decisions. The service continues to work with people as partners in order to prevent the need for longer term care and support and to arrange any services required in a way that prevents or delays people's need for care and support.

The percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for the care and support of children was 27.7% at year end, an improvement from last year when the figure was 43%. Children's IAA have had additional resources agreed to be included within the service as part of the early action together programme run by Gwent Police. A Police Sergeant and two Support Workers will be placed within Families First at the beginning of the new financial year. Barnardos have also provided two Support Workers to work with service users facing domestic abuse issues under the 'no wrong door programme'. Funding bids for 2019/20 have also been submitted to develop additional models of delivering the IAA service and making every contact with the department count. This has included the planned introduction of a new Social Media post, along with a number of capital and revenue projects. These include enhanced assistive technology support and a Dementia Reablement Team who will support citizens from the point of early diagnosis in their own homes.

Family meetings are taking place for those children who are entering the public law outline process. New grant money from Welsh Government will enable the use of family meetings to be extended. The recruitment of two dedicated posts to undertake family meetings is in progress. These will support families to find their own solutions to issues using their own support networks.

The results from the Act's citizen feedback questionnaires 2018/19, showed a positive response from adults to the question 'people reporting that they had the right information when needed and had been involved in decisions about their care and support', with 84.1% agreeing with the statement (up from 80% last year), *"My social worker has been very supportive and helpful regarding my care package etc."*.

Adult Services has successfully submitted a bid to the Integrated Care Capital Funding and the Transformation / Pacesetter Funding to progress with the next phase of the IAA and Preventative Services during 2019/20. This will include developing a single point of access for both Health and Social Care referrals. A workshop focussing on the review of Frailty and Community Resource Teams was undertaken in February 2019 and a number of key actions identified across Gwent. A regional action plan has been developed and Blaenau Gwent is leading on the development of a single point of access for Gwent. Other work streams include: a review of workforce and workforce planning; Review of Governance structures; and improving links with secondary care.

The percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for the care and support of adults was 64.2% at year end, an improvement from last year when the figure was 55.9%.

To better capture the voice of the citizen, Adult Services have reviewed their assessment pathways and assessment tools. The Complex Discharge Team and Home First (hospital discharge team) continue to promote choice and independence of patients in hospital.

In addition, information collated from our Act's citizen feedback questionnaires was positive in relation to the numbers of citizens that felt they lived within a home that supported their well-being. The response to this was very positive with 90.5% agreeing with the statement, up from 81% last year. One citizen commented, *"Modifications to the bungalow such as handrails on walls and walk-in shower have made living easier. The four carers per day are essential"*.

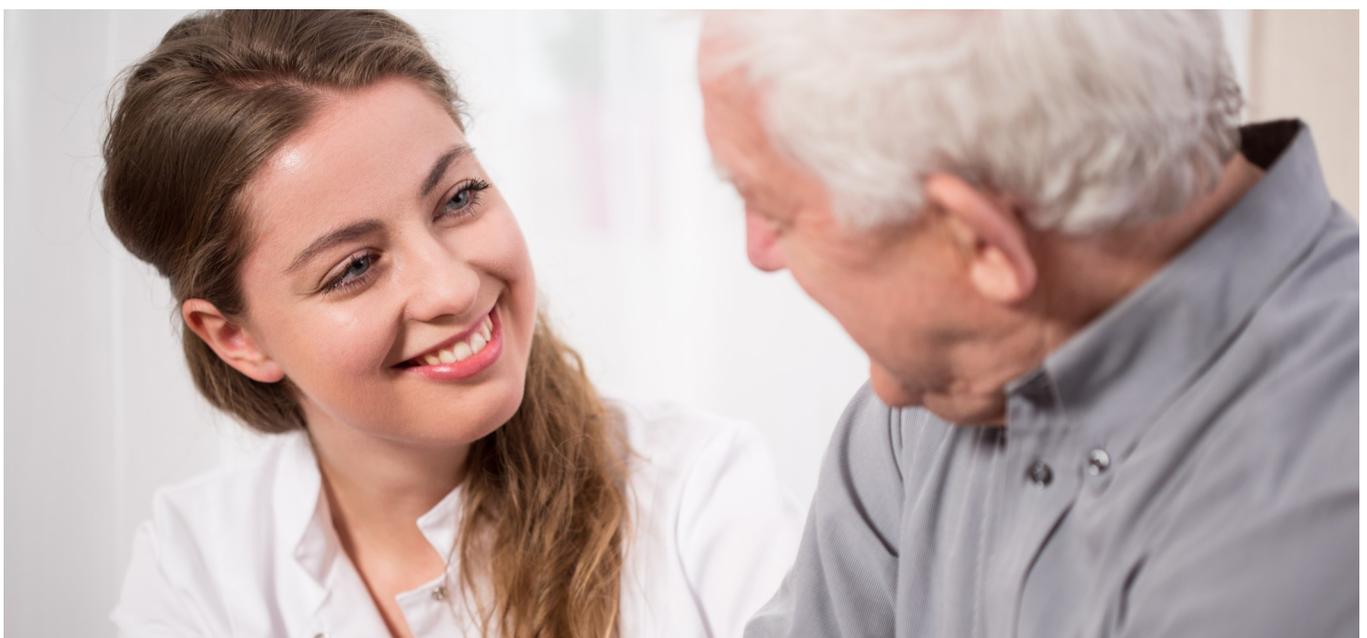
The Carers Engagement GP scheme has enabled all 11 GP surgeries across Blaenau Gwent to offer Carers support and advice at the GP surgeries. This has been developed in partnership with Carers Trust using Integrated Care Fund (ICF) funding. Support provided includes:

- Initial conversation regarding their current situation;
- Giving them information leaflets regarding various services available;
- Signposting them to relevant organisations/services, both in and out of borough;
- Providing initial and / or ongoing practical support;
- Providing initial and / or ongoing emotional support; and
- Making referrals to particular services on individual's behalf.

The percentage of carers who felt supported so that they can continue with their caring role was 67.9%, down from last year when the outturn was 80%. Some recent comments received from carers in relation to the support they received from the Carers Engagement Service:-

- *"I've had more support since bumping into you in the last 4 weeks than in the last 9 years";*
- *"I'm so glad I have spoken with you today. You have given me so much reassurance – just what I needed. You are very kind and have been so helpful"; and*
- *"Thank you so much for giving us so much useful information about what is available for us to access locally – it has been really helpful. I also can't believe we hadn't thought to check what support was offered by Parkinson's UK before! I'm so glad we met you in the Surgery".*

However, when using information from the carers cohort who completed the questionnaire 45% reported that they only sometimes are able to do the things that are important to them and 13% that they were unable to do the things important to them. When asked if they were involved in the decisions about their care and support, however, 83% reported 'yes'.



Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

The Safe Reduction of Looked After Children (LAC) Strategy has started to evidence how it is preventing problems escalating to a point which requires children to become looked after or their names going on the child protection register. Good evidence of this is the work undertaken by the Supporting Change Team. A full internal evaluation of the teams work has been undertaken and presented to the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and Executive Committee, and an external evaluation is in progress. A Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy has been finalised with four objectives identified with clear supporting actions.

New Integrated Care Fund Grant monies from Welsh Government are to be used to reduce the numbers of children entering care. The grant criteria included taking a regional approach to service delivery and as a result, across Gwent there is an agreement to develop the same services within each local authority. These comprise of: Family Group Conference / Meeting service; Support to Special Guardians; enhance each Local Authorities Edge of Care Team to include psychological support; and Young Person's Mediation Service.

A new risk assessment for self-harm has been developed using the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Safety Plan. The 14 Plus Team has used their knowledge from working with CAMHS to provide safety planning to the team which mirror with their service recommendations. The team hold regular strategy and risk management discussions to promote the safety and well-being of the young people they work with.

Cwrt Mytton has been invited to participate in three new pilot schemes; a Falls and Bones Strategy; vital signs and early detection of sepsis; and the effects of coloured Zimmer frames. The aim of the project is to support independence and minimise incidents of falls in a care home setting. The outcomes and findings of these initiatives will be evaluated and reported over the coming year.

A workshop focussing on the review of Frailty and Community Resource Teams was undertaken in February 2019 and a number of key actions identified across Gwent. A regional action plan has been developed and Blaenau Gwent is leading on the development of a single point of access for Gwent. Other work streams include: a review of workforce and workforce planning; Review of Governance structures; and improving links with secondary care.

The results from the Act's citizen feedback questionnaires, showed a positive response from adults to the question regarding feeling safe from abuse, harm or falling was positive with 80% feeling this way, up from 75% last year. One comments received was, *'recently felt unsafe...this has now been resolved due to admission to hospital and for assessment and treatment'*.

The Integrated (Health and Social Care) Community Resource Team (CRT) focusses on enabling citizens to access appropriate support including access to reablement provision that promote independence and reduce dependency on traditional models of care and support. The expansion of the reablement support provided during 18/19 has included:

- Increasing the numbers of intermediate care / assessment beds from 4 to 8 beds, using available flats in sheltered housing schemes and care homes to support early discharge from local hospitals. It has been estimated that a total of 1,928 potential hospital bed days have been saved by this new model of working.

- Increasing the numbers of Therapy Support Workers and Health and Well-being workers (two additional posts) to support people in their own homes with reablement programmes that promote independence.
- Development of an innovative 'In-Reach' pilot project has resulted in staff, including the Community Resource Team (CRT), Nurses, Social Workers and Therapists having a daily presence at both the Emergency Assessment Unit and Accident and Emergency Department at Nevill Hall hospital to identify suitable patients for discharge with CRT support during Winter pressures, thus preventing unnecessary admissions.
- Increasing work on falls prevention including the Falls Response Service, a joint Health and Social Care Service consisting of a Registered Paramedic and a member of the CRT. The team operate from a specialist vehicle, manage the patient's clinical needs, and provide specialist equipment to assist moving and handling patients safely whilst on the ground. This offers significant benefits in that patient's receive the most appropriate medical examination followed by an in depth social assessment and evaluation enabling services and equipment to be provided in order the patient remains safely at home. The initial pilot has seen 78% of patients across Gwent remain at home, where previous figures show that, on average, 33% of patients would have previously been conveyed to an accident and emergency unit.



Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

The number of Looked After Children (LAC) has stabilised and there has been a reduction in the numbers of children on the child protection register. The numbers of children looked after are now 222 compared to 233 in March 2018. For year end 2018/19 there was 56 children on the Child Protection Register compared to 89 last year. 100% of Child Protection Conferences were held within 15 days with 97.6% within the statutory timescale. The average length of time a child in Blaenau Gwent remained on the local authority child protection register was 277.27 days, an increase from last year when the figure was 256.61.

The Safe Reduction of LAC Strategy is expected to support a sustained decline in numbers and further decrease the numbers of LAC. In order to further support this, a task and finish group has been reformed using legal advice to reduce the numbers of children becoming looked after who are cared for by extended family members.

Reports on safeguarding have been provided during the year to the Joint Education and Social Services Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee. This has given Elected Members the opportunity to look in depth at the safeguarding activity across the Council and give appropriate challenge in order to make improvements to the service.

All local authorities and partner agencies continue to work together on safeguarding through the South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB) and the Gwent wide Adult Safeguarding Board (Gwasb). Both groups have developed a Quality Assurance Framework which will provide members of the Gwasb and SEWSCB with the assurance and effectiveness of inter-agency working arrangements in the safeguarding of children and adults. The Quality Assurance framework will drive practice and service improvement and ensure work stays focused on best outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and adults across the region.

The percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within the statutory timescale of seven working days was 93.3% during 2018/19. This has increased from last year when the figure was 90.5%.

Work within the Safeguarding Boards has been undertaken in the following areas:

- Protocols and procedures including creation of an adult's version of responding to professional allegations; a joint neglect guidance and toolkit; and a multi-agency pressure management flowchart to inform professionals of the process.
- Engagement and communication including development of a new website, Participation and Engagement Strategy, a task group has also been set up, and promotional materials agreed and used at safeguarding week in November 2018.
- Learning and development including piloting a new Quality Assurance and Evaluation process, delivery of multi-agency training, a task and finish group has been set up to agree the aims and objectives for Supporting Victims of Financial Abuse training, the group is also considering training for E-safety for adults, Modern Day Slavery, Falls and Skin Management, Advocacy and Risky Behaviours.

At the end of academic year 2017-2018, 153 children of statutory school age were looked after by Blaenau Gwent. During this period 100% of Personal Education Plans (PEPs) for newly accommodated children and those who changed school were updated within statutory timescales. This is an increase when compared with the previous academic year.

There has been a decrease in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) experiencing a change of school during the year. Consistency of schooling continues to be considered as part of the matching process when a looked after child moves placement to ensure stability of schooling. When a child does have to move school, processes are in place to ensure that delays in admissions are avoided wherever possible.

Latest educational data, 2017-2018, shows that outcomes for LAC at the end of key stage 2 were considerably lower when compared with the previous year. 12.5% (1 out of 8) achieved core subject indicators compared with 61% (11 out of 18) in the previous academic year. In the same period, at the end of key stage 3 assessments were higher when compared with the previous year. 67% (6 out of 9) achieved core subject indicators compared to 27% (4 out of 15) in 2016-2017.

No Blaenau Gwent looked after children were permanently excluded from school during 2017-2018; however there was an increase in both fixed term exclusions and the number of days lost to exclusions when compared with the previous academic year. The attendance of primary aged LAC was 95.6% in 2017/18 which is higher when compared to the previous year when the figure was 94.7%. The attendance of secondary aged LAC was 89.8% which is lower when compared to the previous year when the figure was 91.4%.

The Youth Service Early Identification Tool (EIT) continues to be used to support the tracking of LAC, in order to identify those most at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) and requiring additional support. A tracking system has been implemented to monitor children leaving school and their destinations each year up until the age of 25. This is reported to Corporate Parenting Board annually.

Work is being undertaken across the service alongside Transformation Team to support the services to review the Day Activities and Community Options Service that are provided by an in house provider. The work includes scoping the potential to develop provision with the Third Sector partners. In addition, we are developing further opportunities to work across the regional footprint.

The Authority has enhanced its model of Community Connector Service with the introduction, in September 2018, of additional capacity to support GP surgeries. The Connectors focus on a placed based working approach alongside the building of relationships and networking, as well as ensuring good working relationships with existing partners such as Health, the Third Sector, Housing, and Leisure etc. across the wider Blaenau Gwent footprint.

The rate of Delayed Transfers of Care for 2018/19 was 1.16 which is an improvement from 2017/18 when the outturn was 2.55.

Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

Increasing the number of foster carers in Blaenau Gwent is a real challenge, not least because we are a small authority with a small population. The service has tried to mitigate this over the last 12 months by introducing a professional foster carer scheme. This hasn't resulted in any new carers however it has enabled the service to attract independent foster carers resulting in one set of carers now fostering for Blaenau Gwent.

A significant amount of collaborative working has been undertaken over the last 12 months. The Children's Partnership Board has used ICF money to establish:

- A Joint MyST (My Support Team) between Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire;
- A continuation of the roll out of the attachment training for staff; and
- The skills for living programme for care leavers.

Recruitment to the MyST project has begun. A challenge in relation to the success of MyST will be the identification and recruitment of therapeutic foster carers.

The number of adoption approvals increased in the latter part of 2017/18 due to investment in marketing and recruitment, however, the number of children waiting for adoptive placements has increased. 2018/19 is looking much more positive in terms of recruitment and the gap is closing for the number of children waiting to be adopted. However, the pressure is likely to continue with no sign of any reduction in referrals to the service. This coupled with the growing trend of referrals for older children and sibling groups continues to be an area of pressure.

The pressure area for 2017/18 was a shortage of adopters per ratio of children referred to the service. There has been investment in recruitment and assessment and staffing resources in an attempt to bridge the gap. The national shortage of adopters is impacting on all the regions, this coupled with the increased complexities of children being referred is contributing to the pressure of placing children in a timely manner with the right adopters.

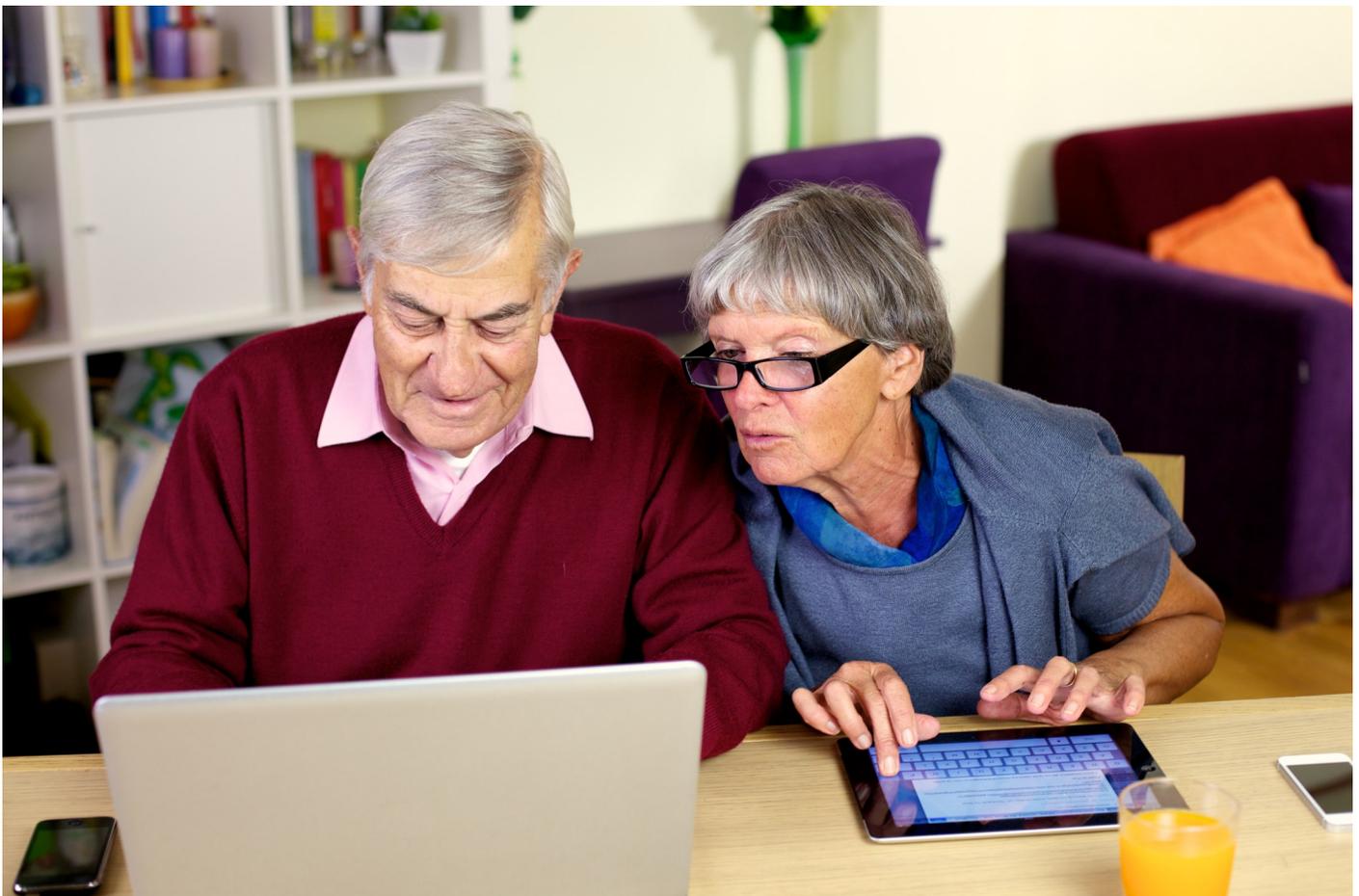
To improve performance in this area South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) will continue to invest in recruitment. A large majority of adopters come to SEWAS because of 'word of mouth'. To ensure adopters have a positive experience of the service the core offer includes:

- Direct work pre and post approval which prepares children and adopters for placement;
- Additional post approval adoption training before placement using therapeutic models;
- Work with panel;
- Assessment being completed in a timely manner; and
- Advertising the core offer including the psychology service.

SEWAS have the added benefit of psychology input 31 hours per week and is building on improving the experience for adopters by investing in additional training, pre and post approval adoption support and work with panel. Getting the experience right is essential in the competitive area of adoption recruitment and the challenge going forward is how we can maintain those service in the current financial climate.

Colleagues across Adult Services have prioritised the development of support for people living with mental health needs and living with cognitive impairments such as dementia. The department has been involved in the strategic planning and regional development of support for people who experience mental health problems through the development of enhanced crisis support. Adult Services continues to promote the Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy with its 8 strategic priorities of:

- **Priority 1 Long Term Care:** jointly with Health and other partners, make arrangements to meet the nursing, residential and dementia care needs of the older persons population;
- **Priority 2 Reablement/Enabling Services:** further develop this approach and recognise the contribution of other organisations, in progressing this service;
- **Priority 3 Day Opportunities/Community Options:** continuing development of everyday activities and opportunities to learn new skills or re-acquire skills through confidence building and tuition measures;
- **Priority 4 Assistive Technology:** promote and expand assistive technology supported by a rapid response service, capable of containing situations where no family carers are available;
- **Priority 5 Direct Payments:** promote and expand direct payments and empowering people to take responsibility for arranging their own care and support requirements;
- **Priority 6 Accommodation:** recognising the key role that appropriate housing plays on the well-being of older people. Work closely with partners to develop a range of suitable housing in Blaenau;
- **Priority 7 Carers:** providing accessible and timely support services responsive to individual need; and
- **Priority 8 Domiciliary Care:** Ensuring provision of appropriate, reliable, quality service.



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

A key priority identified as part of the Corporate Parenting Board is, 'our Looked After Children live in suitable accommodation' and as part of this a Accommodation Task and Finish Group has been set up, meeting monthly to take this area forward. The Group has an action plan which it works to and follows Barnardo's Model of 'the 5 steps of excellence' so that young people are in control of their housing:

- Know the accommodation issue for care leavers within Blaenau Gwent;
- Involve young people in planning their accommodation;
- Train young people on tenancies and the housing market and develop their confidence and skills;
- Reduce the Housing Crisis in Blaenau Gwent by having emergency options; and
- Develop a wide range of accommodation options.

On an annual basis, as SWOT analysis and mapping exercise of current accommodation options is undertaken in order to review progress and change in care leavers' accommodation opportunities as well as the gaps identified in order to plan for the forthcoming year.

The group has made significant progress throughout 2018 including:

- Development of an Accommodation Action Plan 2018/19.
- Updated the Annual Analysis of Accommodation for care leavers template.
- Undertaking a survey in relation to the Children's Commissioner for Wales report on care leavers 'Hidden Ambitions', completed by NYAS.
- A Youth and Temporary Accommodation Officer is in post, working with LAC and young people aged 16 and 17 to look at bespoke housing options.
- The Supporting People Team is funding the Housing First Support Model for young people.
- An accredited course "Housemate" delivered by Shelter Cymru's Education Service undertaken by 15 LAC aged 14-16. The course will run on an annual basis each year to start preparing the children for independent living.
- The Supporting People Team has commissioned two flats in Ty Parc specifically to support young people.
- A partnership has been established between Supporting People, Llamau and ETE subgroup and a support worker was appointed in the New Year to develop supported lodgings accommodation.
- The Housing Solutions Team has created a unique priority banding system for children leaving care.
- Work has started with Linc Cymru to consider the refurbishment of a housing complex within Blaenau Gwent with the needs of care leavers in mind.

A Section 33 Agreement for Care Home Accommodation Services for Older People has been finalised and each of the five Gwent Local Authorities, together with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) will be signing the agreement early in the new financial year of 2019. The consultation period on the Market Position Statement for Care Homes for Older People across Gwent has concluded and the final document is to be issued early in the new financial year.

The Housing Minister announced there will now be two grant funding streams - Housing Support Grant (encompassing Supporting People Programme Grant, Homelessness Prevention Grant and Rent Smart Wales) and Communities and Children's Grant instead of one EIPS grant. Welsh Government will be consulting with the relevant stakeholders over the coming months regarding the introduction of the Housing Support Grant from 1st April 2019.

A new project group is being established locally to consider the implications of a Housing Support Grant. The Supporting People Lead Officer and Head of Adult Services recently attended the Supporting People National Advisory Board Development Day to discuss the Housing Support Grant and its implications.

The service has met with Welsh Government to discuss both the new flexible Housing Support Grant and Community and Children's Grant and our plans to develop during 2019/20. Spending plans for the Supporting People Grant/Homeless Grant and Rent Smart Wales Grant have been submitted to Welsh Government as per grant conditions and agreed with colleagues from Housing and Supporting People teams. 2019/20 will be a transition year for the seven grants encompassed in the new Communities and Children's Grant. Work has commenced to avoid duplication and evaluate the existing spend of these grants.

The regional ICF bid for assistive technology doro units has been successful. These units have been ordered and usage can commence immediately and are being used to transfer our current arrangements from analogue to digital providers. Our telecare partner, Worcestershire Telecare, are working with our department and our partner Housing Associations to develop a facility that demonstrates assistive technologies that promote a person's independence in their own home.

The Authority continues to monitor the impact of Universal credit and regular partnership meetings are taking place with the Department of Work and Pensions (needs to be in full), Housing Providers and our Supporting People, Support Providers, relation to welfare reform.



How We Do What We Do

Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

The Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Workforce Development Service continue to evidence innovation, success and contribution. The Service has led, on behalf of Gwent, the management of the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Grant, worth over £2 million pounds. The Grant enables investment in training for those who work with the most vulnerable in society. The service also provides the chairing role to a number of network and committees, including the All Wales Training Network, the Social Work Degree Programme Management Committee, and the Consolidation of Practice Programme Management Committee.

A new qualification framework is being developed for the Health and Social Care Sector. The Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Workforce Development Service have played a leading role in supporting the design of qualifications and assessments to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The first set of new qualifications will be used from September 2019.

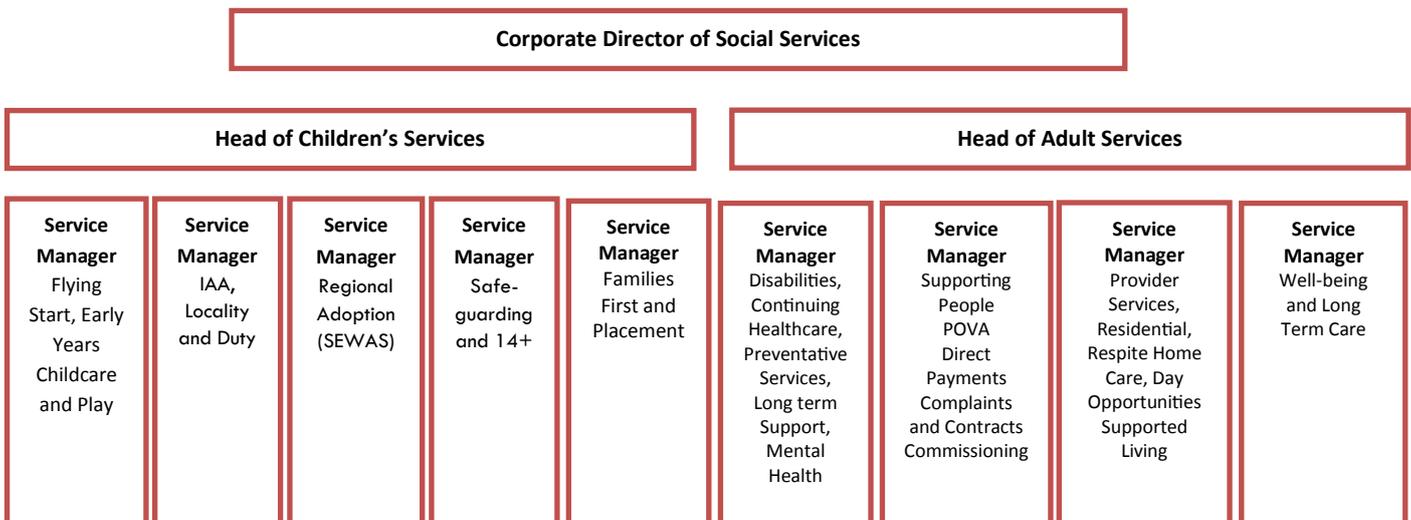
Management support for a Social Worker Strategy enabled the highest percentage investment for the Social Services Practitioner Award in Wales. As a direct consequence the authority has a fresh new modern approach to supporting employees to qualify as a social worker whilst maintaining their need for employment.

Blaenau Gwent hosted a performance of the theatre production ‘Belonging’ for the social care sector, an award winning opportunity to elevate the importance of supporting workers supporting those living with dementia.

To ensure that regional engagement arrangements mirror the Act implementation arrangements, Gwent Workforce Development has a robust alignment with the Greater Gwent Regional Partnership arrangements.

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

All Council Directorates have been required to undertake a review of their service with a view for service efficiency and cost savings. From April 2019, the Social Services review was completed and provides clear levels of management and accountability as shown below:



The Corporate Director of Social Services is a member of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, whereby all Council Directors meet on a weekly basis to consider and make strategic and operational decisions (although some decisions need to be considered by Scrutiny and then ratified by Executive or Council).

The Directorate has one Executive Member who has Portfolio responsibility for Social Services as a whole. The Directorate is scrutinised by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and safeguarding information is reported to the Joint Social Services and Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee. Regular liaison meetings are held with the Directorate, the Executive Member and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

As a whole, the Council has a clear governance and accountability framework and Performance Management Framework in place which all directorates are signed up to. These frameworks are complied with by Social Services who also have additional monitoring requirements as part of the Act.

The Social Services Directorate is subject to audit, inspection and review by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). On a quarterly basis Social Services Senior Managers meet with CIW for liaison meetings. CIW also undertake an annual review and evaluation of the Directorate's performance.

Audit and Inspection 2018/19

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Children's Services

In June 2018 CIW reported on their inspection undertaken on Children's Social Services in Blaenau Gwent earlier in the year. The inspection focused on the following areas and the report provides a summary of findings and areas for development under each heading:

- Leadership, management and governance;
- Access arrangements: Information, Advice and Assistance;
- Assessment;
- Care and support and pathway planning; and
- Safeguarding.

The overall report was very positive highlighting positive practice within the service area. The report also highlighted nine areas to improve service delivery. In response an action plan has been developed to address the areas identified for improvement and this is updated on a monthly basis.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Fostering Services

In June 2018 CIW reported in their inspection of the Fostering Service in Blaenau Gwent. The inspection focused on three quality areas:

- Well-being;
- Care and Support; and
- Leadership and Management.

The overall findings from this inspection were: *'Children in stable placements are cared for by foster carers who provide children with good experiences and opportunities and are committed to supporting them achieve positive outcomes. Foster carers generally reported receiving a good level of support from their supervising social workers. We found a very positive and enthusiastic culture within the fostering service; this included the foster carers, staff within the fostering team, manager and senior managers. We received very positive comments from children about their carers'.*

Despite the overall summary being positive the CIW made four main recommendations for improvement which will be monitored as part of the corporate business planning process:

- Quality assurance arrangements – the establishment and maintenance of a system to monitor and improve the quality of the service (Regulation 42 (1)) and consultation with the full range of stakeholders and resulting analysis and full analysis and action in relation to placement endings (Regulation 42 (2)).
- Training for foster carers: (Regulation 17 (1)).
- The fostering panel must consider and take into account all of the information passed to it to ensure that children are safeguarded. (Regulation 21 (1A) (a)).
- The fostering service should establish a procedure for monitoring the school attendance, progress and educational attainment of children placed with foster carers. (Regulation 16 (2) (a)).

Council have also recommended that appropriate support arrangements be established for the looked after children, carers and families known to social services in all aspects of a child's educational needs.

In response an action plan has been developed to address the areas identified for improvement and this is updated on a monthly basis.

Collaboration

Blaenau Gwent Council supports partnership and collaborative working and the Social Services Department continues to work with a wide range of partners where partnership opportunities provide better outcomes for local residents than the Council could achieve if working on its own. Social Services work in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including staff, residents and businesses. In addition, Social Services fully participates in the sharing of knowledge, good practice and information, which can result in improved services.

Some examples of effective collaborative working include:

- Adult Services working with the Third Sector to commission additional housing related support provision and preventative support in Long Term Teams.
- Developing commissioning arrangements with ABUHB partners on a Gwent wide footprint to ensure that the Care Home market is sustainable and consistent in its quality and delivery to residents across Gwent.
- Scoping a hospital discharge service (Home First) across five Local Authorities and funded by the Heath Board.
- Integrated mental health service between Blaenau Gwent, ABUHB and Gwent Police has been introduced to ensure that people who experience mental health problems are appropriately supported by the Police.
- Community First Legacy Funding has been accessed to develop Social Prescribing within the GP surgeries in Blaenau Gwent to enhance the preventative approach to wellbeing and reduce demand and to address sustainability concerns faced by primary care.
- The Children's Partnership Board has secured ICF funding to develop a Gwent wide approach to meeting the need of children with the most complex needs which is called MyST between Blaenau Gwent and Monmouthshire, and the continuation of attachment training for staff and the skills for living programme for care leavers.
- Families First are exploring a project with Police in Blaenau Gwent to reduce the number of inappropriate referrals to statutory Social Services and increase referrals into preventative services. This will take the form of Social Workers working alongside the Police.

The Act sets out a statutory requirement for the development of Regional Partnership Boards. The Boards have been established on current local health board footprints. The Gwent Board includes ABUHB and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen local authorities. The Executive member in each local authority, with responsibility for health and social care, sits on the Regional Partnership Board. It is an advisory body which provides oversight and direction for areas of integrated working across health and social care. The two main priorities of the Board for 2018/19 has been the Transformational Offer, supporting a 'seamless system' of care, support and well-being in Gwent, and the Integrated Care Capital Fund.

'Mwy na geiriau/ More than just words

As a department we continue to monitor compliance with our responsibilities within More Than Just Words and the Active Offer. We continue to ensure that when citizens contact both our Adult and Children Services Departments, that they are offered the opportunity to communicate in the language of their choice. Our assessment tools within our Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) system specifically asks the question "Do you require this conversation / assessment to be carried out in Welsh?" The form is then attached to the person's referral.

Our commissioned providers work in partnership with us to promote the Welsh Language and this is reflected in our contracts and service level agreements.

Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

The total budget allocation for Social Services for 2018/19 was £44.14m. This is an increase from last year by £2.23m. At the end of 2018/19 Children's Services had an overspend of £960,655 and this is due to the numbers of children remaining at 18 in residential care. However, overall Social Services expenditure at year end was £43.9m, resulting in an underspend of £222,594.

The provision of regular financial forecasting reports in line with the budget monitoring and reporting framework has enabled the Social Services Senior Management Team to make informed decisions on service delivery.

In setting the 2019/20 budget, Council agreed a number of savings proposals totalling £2.68m. For 2018/19 the department achieved £320,000 of savings which was short of by £255,517 as three Financial Efficiency Projects did not meet their savings target.

The allocated budget and outturn for 2018/19 is provided in the table below:

Service Area	Budget	Outturn	Variance (Adverse)/ Favourable
Children's Services	£12,606,045	£13,566,700	(960,655)
Adult Services	£25,464,275	£24,457,667	1,006,608
Business Management / Staff Support	£6,101,385	£5,899,674	201,711
Procurement Savings	-£25,070	0	(25,070)
Total	£41,146,63	£43,924,041	(222,594)

The budget for 2019/20 is provided in the table below and includes a grant of £0.172m that was transferred into the Revenue Support Grant, additional funding awarded for the cost pressures identified of £0.109m, and Financial Efficiency Project savings of £0.591m.

Social Services Budget 2018/19		£
1	Commissioning & Social Work	3,572,740
2	Children Looked After	7,102,630
3	Family Support Services	205,200
4	Youth Justice	247,430
5	Other Children's and Family Services	2,390,145
6	Older People Aged 65 and Over	5,760,185

Social Services Budget 2019/20		£
7	Adults under 65 with Physical Disabilities	43,490
8	Adults under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,661,745
9	Adults under 65 with Mental Health Needs	655,225
10	Other Adult Services	371,860
11	Community Care	16,100,275
12	Support Service & Management Costs	1,251,570
13	Corporate Recharges	5,018,470
Grand Total		46,380,470

Conclusion

Throughout 2018/19 there has been substantial progress in the implementation of the Social Services priorities but it is recognised that there is still further work to do to fully implement the aims and objectives.

The Social Services function remains high on the Council agenda, with a strategic priority for Social Services identified within the Corporate Plan. The Council is looking to address the areas that will have a long term benefit, ensuring that the needs of people of all ages and future generations are at the centre of service design and delivery.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was a response to the Welsh Government review of Social Services in 2010 (Sustainable Social Services) which recognised that without radical change to the way we worked, services would become unaffordable in the near future as a result of demographic pressures and the changing expectations of the public at a time of financial austerity.

The Act looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and other key partners, where possible, in helping to shape and influence future design of services. This is supported by the Directorate who look to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention.

It is recognised that in the current financial climate there is a need to work smarter and in partnership and the report provides examples of where this is working effectively.

This Annual Report of the Director of Social Services provides a snapshot of service activity undertaken throughout 2018/19. Further supporting information can be found below:

Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Useful Documents

Social Services and Well-being Regional Area Plan - http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/images/att7919.pdf

Reports to Social Services Scrutiny Committee - http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=SSS

Council Corporate Plan - http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/images/att8386.pdf

Blaenau Gwent Council Budget Monitoring - http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=JBM

Social Services Website - <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/>

Workforce Development - <http://socialservicesblaenau-gwent.caerphilly.gov.uk/>

Useful Websites

Social Care Wales - <https://socialcare.wales>

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) - <https://careinspectorate.wales/>

Data Unit Wales - www.dataunitwales.gov.uk

Dewis Wales - <https://www.dewis.wales>

Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board - www.gwasb.org.uk

Population Needs Assessment - <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/social-services-well-being-act/population-needs-assessment/>

Public Service Board - <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/council/partnerships/partnership-working/>

South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board - www.sewsc.org.uk

Welsh Government Childcare Offer - <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/childcare/talk-childcare/pilot-areas/?lang=en>

Providing Feedback

Social Services welcomes feedback on the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services. Your views are important to us. Please contact us if you would like to give feedback on the plan or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc.

Fersiwn Gymraeg

Yn unol â Chynllun Iaith Gymraeg y Cyngor, bydd fersiwn Gymraeg o Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol ar gael ar wefan y Cyngor.

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The Social Services Directorate is satisfied that the information given in this annual report is accurate based on the information available at the time of publication.

This annual report has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening.