



GWASANAETHAU CYMDEITHASOL



VALE of GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

DIRECTOR of SOCIAL SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

2017-2018

1. Introduction

As the Director of Social Services for the Vale of Glamorgan I am delighted to be able to outline how we have delivered improvements in the well-being of those who access our services throughout 2017/18. This work clearly takes place in close partnership with the people we serve and other agencies. The Social Services Directorate, working with the rest of the Council, provides a range of services to people who need our help, in a way that allows us together to focus on promoting and improving the well-being of people we are supporting.

The format of this report is determined through regulations as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales). It utilises relatively new well-being measures to allow us to account for how we contribute to the well-being of people who are in receipt of care and support services.

The Council's Corporate Plan for 2016-20 has incorporated the views of residents, partners and staff to inform our key priorities going forward based on 4 Well-being Outcomes:

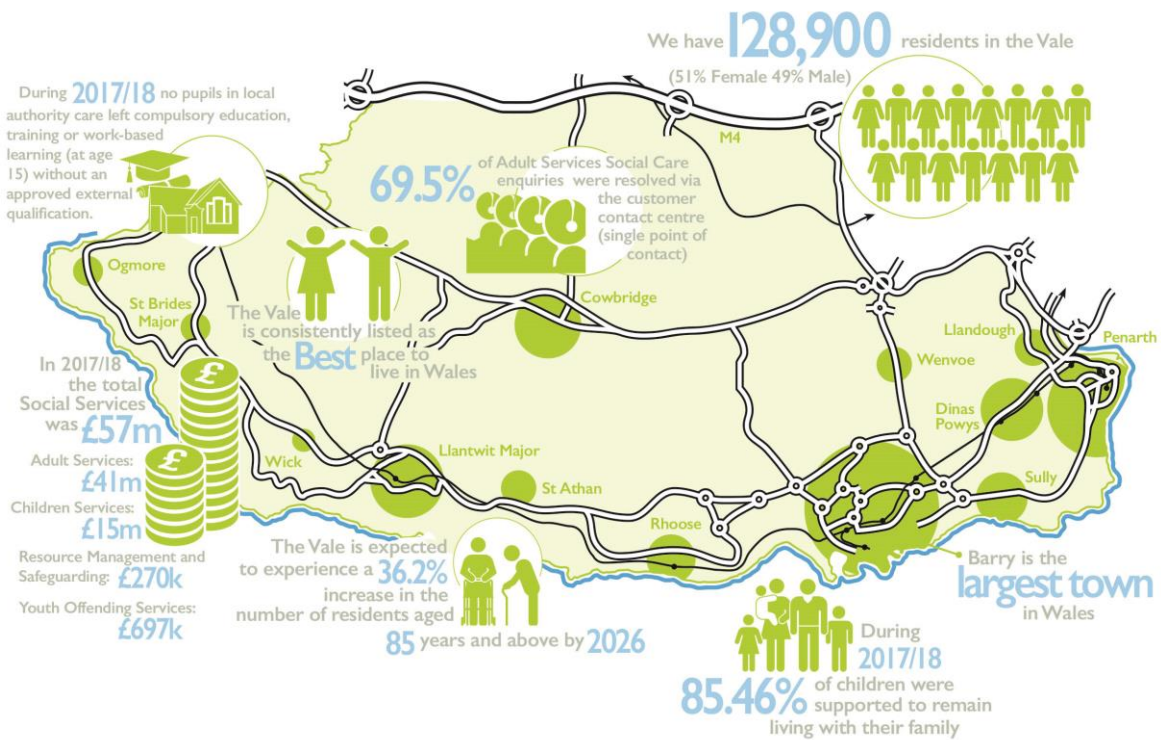
- Well-being Outcome 1: An Inclusive and Safe Vale, where citizens have a good quality of life and feel part of the local community;
- Well-being Outcome 2: An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale, with a strong and sustainable economy, and a local environment safeguarded for present and future generations;
- Well-being Outcome 3: An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale where citizens have opportunities to achieve their full potential;
- Well-being Outcome 4: An Active and Healthy Vale, where citizens lead healthy lives and vulnerable people are protected and supported.

These outcomes are linked to a range of well-being measures that allow us to demonstrate how we are performing in delivering a range of services, in an integrated way. This new integrated model of working has been introduced to look at all aspects of our corporate governance and planning arrangements to ensure that they are inter-related, complementary, consistent and no longer undertaken in isolation. The well-being standards in this Social Services report are linked to the overall well-being outcomes that we want to achieve as a Council. The overlap between this report and relevant sections of the Council's Corporate Plan is significant and priority areas have been aligned as far as practicable.

This report is our way of accounting for progress in delivering what we said we would do over the past 12 months and in doing so help people to understand how the Social Services Directorate is developing and reforming services over the longer term. For example, during 2017/18, two areas of excellent performance were recognised externally across the United Kingdom. These related to our work in developing a seamless and integrated locality-based model for health and social care, where we were shortlisted as a finalist in the Local Government Chronicle Awards. Equally, our innovative 'Your Choice', outcome-focussed domiciliary care model has received wide-spread attention across the sector and has recently been recently shortlisted under a 'Citizen-led' Category of the Social Care Wales Accolade.

These projects along with our numerous other achievements (as outlined in the rest of this report), is testament to the efforts and commitment of our staff. I want to thank all those members of staff, our partners and members of the public who have been involved in this vital work. In taking this approach I hope that you will see the links between what we have done in delivering services that focuses on the needs of people, and the combined impact that the Council has had in promoting and improving the well-being of those we help.

Shown below is a map providing a summary of Social Services in the Vale of Glamorgan.



2. Director's Summary of Performance

Despite budgetary pressures and the growing demand for our services, we have continued to demonstrate resilience and sustained high levels of performance in relation to our services. Continuing to sustain and improve services whilst managing customer expectations in a climate of diminishing resources will continue to be a challenge going forward. Reporting the performance measures this year has been more challenging, as we have made a hugely significant change in how we monitor and record our case work and performance by implementing the All Wales Community Care Information System.

A snapshot of some of the key performance highlights from 2017/18 are outlined below:

2.1 Adult Services Performance Overview

The Customer Contact Centre continues to respond well to managing demand for our Adult Social Care Services. Across 2017/18, the average monthly referral demand for



Adult Services was 642 calls, with on average 30 calls for service requests received per day. The Contact Centre also continues to effectively resolve Adult Social Care and Health enquires at the 'front door', as during 2017/18 69.5% of adult services social care enquiries were resolved at the at the Single Point of Contact (via the Contact Centre), with only 29.3% referred to Social Work

Teams and 0.95% were referred to the Third Sector. In relation to Hospital Discharge Social Care referrals dealt with by the Contact Centre, 77.86% were resolved at the single point of contact, a further 21.59% were referred to Social Work Teams and 0.55% were signposted to the Third Sector for information and support.

- There continues to be a strong emphasis on increasing the number of direct payments to adults and utilising Telecare services to give people greater control and independence over their choice of care. During 2017/18 we have increased the number of adult services users receiving packages via direct payments from 248 users at end of year 2016/17 to 278 users in 2017/18 and consistently have exceeded our target of 75 users.
- We also continue to promote the use of Telecare services to enable people to remain independent in their own homes. During 2017/18, there were 330 Telecare users (made up of 249 TeleV users and 81 TeleV+). The Vale Community Resource Service is effectively supporting older people to regain their independence through reablement support packages.



- We continue to perform solidly in relation to Delayed Transfers of Care (delays associated with organising discharge from hospital). For example, during 2017/18 the rate of delayed transfers of care was 2.85 per 1,000 population. Although winter pressures would have had an impact on the performance of this measure, our significant investment in tackling this issue has maintained our position. For example during 2017/18, we further resourced/invested in our Integrated Discharge



Service through the Intermediate Care Fund to develop a more co-ordinated and well managed approach to reducing the length of time an older person spends in hospital.

Despite a change in the definition of how we measure the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), we continue to make good progress. During 2017/18, the average time to deliver DFG work (Adults and Children combined) was 188 days. Our continued success has been reinforced by effective collaborative working between Social Services and Housing. Of those that received a DFG in 2017/18, 100% of people felt that the assistance made them feel safer and more independent in their own home, which exceeded our performance in the previous year of 99% (2016/17).



2.2 Children and Young People Services Performance Overview



- Our Service has consistently performed well in terms of maintaining contact with children looked after, as this can be seen in the positive performance we have had over the last year. We continue to maintain a high level of contact with young people formerly looked after at 100% during 2017/18 and 100% of these young people were in suitable non-emergency accommodation at the age of 19.

- We continue to work proactively with a range of partners to support and assist young people leaving care to engage in further education, training or employment. 48.53% of care leavers were known to be engaged in education, training or employment 12 months after leaving care in 2017/18.
- In terms of educational outcomes we continue to sustain our performance with no pupils in local authority care (at age 15) leaving compulsory education, training or work-based learning without an approved external qualification.
- Through the effective support provided to families, the majority of children (78%) accessing Flying Start services reached the required developmental milestones at aged 3, an increase of 25% on our performance last year (previous year's performance for 2016/17 was 53%). In addition, during the 2017/18 (2016/17 academic year), 85% of the Flying Start cohort achieved at least the expected outcome (Outcome 5+) for the Foundation Phase.



- We have concentrated on the stability of placements, as 11.57% of children experience three or more placements.
- We are safely reducing both the cost and need for higher tier interventions. Through our targeted approach during 2017/18 85.46% of children were supported to remain living with their family and 3.79% of children looked after returned home from care during the year. We have made strong progress in this area despite the service dealing with increasingly more complex cases.
- We have successfully delivered early intervention and prevention through the Flying Start and the Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) team (part of Families First). During 2017/18, 98% of Families First service users reported they were satisfied with the Families First service they had



3.1 Service Specific Consultations

During 2017/18, five service-specific consultations were undertaken that included: Fostering Services, Residential Care Services, Adult Placement Service, Community Resource Team and Flying Start. Outlined below is a summary of the key findings arising from this work.

Fostering Services

A consultation of all mainstream and kinship foster carers took the form of both a survey and focus group. In total 50 individuals were consulted of which there were 26 respondents representing a 52% response rate. The consultation highlighted that overall foster carers were pleased with the support they received from the Fostering Service. Most carers were satisfied with the information they received about their assessment and approval process. Nearly all respondents received appropriate written information during their assessment and were asked for relevant information such as referees. The consultation also identified high levels of satisfaction with the assessment and approval process.

Generally there was a satisfactory level of involvement of key people during the matching process and carers felt that elements such as their culture, religion, race and disability had all been taken into account during the matching process. The consultation also identified that nearly all respondents were 'quite satisfied' with the matching process. However, some respondents identified they would like further information about the child they are being matched with in relation to their needs and background. There was a high level of satisfaction with the training available and that carers needs are taken into account as part of supervision. In relation to training, respondents generally felt that the courses were relevant to their needs with many indicating they are satisfied with most aspects of the training. The consultation highlighted that the frequency of supervision varied in some cases, but most received regular supervision and most said this was with the same Social Worker. However not all respondents felt that supervision addressed their issues of concern for them or the service. Roles within the Fostering Service appear to be transparent to foster carers, as respondents reported feeling they had access to most aspects of support. Despite some comments about lack of response to queries and lack of support in some instance, most carers felt satisfied with their Social Worker.



Residential Services Consultation

Residents and their relatives were consulted on their satisfaction and experience of residential care services in the Vale in the form of a questionnaire. Overall respondents felt that the well-being of service users is considered or enhanced by the residential care setting and generally residents and their families/carers were satisfied with nearly all aspects of their care.

Information provision was also identified as an area of satisfaction amongst residents and their families, however some did identify that they did not feel that they received a sufficient amount of information with some commenting that they had not received a handbook.

Residents and their families that visited the residential homes prior to taking up residence highlighted that they appreciated the opportunity to meet with staff and

other residents. They generally felt welcomed and encouraged to feel at home when they moved in.

The consultation identified that resident's well-being are well met in relation to their personal care and daily routines. Whilst their independence continues to be encouraged through the provision of support to help them continue to do tasks for themselves (where appropriate). In terms of meeting resident's nutritional needs the consultation indicated that residents feel that the food is generally of good quality and variety and that their emotional needs are also looked after by staff encouraging good social interactions between residents.

Although residents were generally satisfied with the level of care they receive, some had limited experience of residents' meetings and some were unsure as to whether they took place.



Adult Placement Service

As part of this consultation, both service users placed with host families and host who had been recently approved (within 12 months of the consultation) were the subject of the consultation. Of the respondents, 14 were host and 12 were service users.

Overall feedback for the Adult Placement service was very positive in relation to both service users and hosts. All respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with the Adult Placement Service. The consultation also highlighted that the respondents felt that they receive clear information on the services available and particularly valued verbal information. Generally respondents were satisfied with the level of information they received before they accessed the service and that the service guides were useful in preparing them for how the service will support them.

Very high levels of satisfaction were reported in relation to the service identifying a suitable host/service user match and service users were very satisfied with where they lived and felt welcome. The consultation highlighted that there is some uncertainty regarding what review meetings were but most felt they were involved and kept informed by the service.



Flying Start

Parents accessing Flying Start services were consulted on their satisfaction and experience of the service in the form of both a questionnaire and two focus groups. In total just 40 responded to the survey.

Overall parents indicated they were very satisfied with the Flying Start service provision. Generally respondents felt that the information they received was timely and relevant to their need and that Support Workers spent enough time with them. Respondents identified that they felt involved and listened to and that the service was responsive to their queries and would signpost them to additional support (where applicable).

In terms of outcomes, overall respondents felt that Flying Start had improved their confidence in parenting and that families felt engaged to participate in other Flying

Start services. Amongst almost all respondents, the service has met their expectations with very few suggestions for improvement identified.

3.2 Other ways we have involved service users to inform service delivery

We continuously explore ways we can involve our service users in helping to shape our services. For example, within Children and Young People Services, the 15 Plus Team has developed a Young People's Forum bringing care leavers together to inform service delivery. One of the recent developments has involved young people and care leavers in the recruitment of social workers and social work managers via a young people's panel. The young people prepared, asked and scored their own questions which formed part of the formal evaluation process. The Division has made a commitment that all interviews for social work staff will involve young people going forward.

3.3 Welsh Government Qualitative Measures

A requirement under Section 145 of the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is that we measure through qualitative means (questionnaires and interviews) our performance in relation to citizen's who are in receipt of care and support (have care/support plan in place). This work took the form of questionnaires and interviews and facilitates a qualitative analysis of outcomes for service users and their families. Questionnaires and covering letters to all relevant service users that included children and young people known to the department, their parents, all informal carers and adults (all of which were made available in English, Welsh and an easy read version where applicable). The consultation began during January 2018 and closed by the end of March 2018.

Overall 1,980 questionnaires were circulated to services users with 643 returns, representing a 32.5% response rate. The questionnaires can be analysed by service user groups. These thematic groups include children and young people, parents, adults, as well as adults who responded to the easy read questionnaire, carers, adults who have received support from the Community Resource Team and parents/guardians who have accessed support via the Families First Information Line. Outlined below is a summary of the key findings from this consultation in relation to these user groups.

Children and Young People Questionnaire

In total 250 young person questionnaires were circulated and 23 young people responded representing a 9% response rate. 83% of respondents said that they lived in a home where they are happy and 75% said they were happy with the people that they lived with. Of these young people, 78% said they had a sense of belonging to the area where they lived and 91% said they were happy with their family, friends and neighbours, with one respondent commenting that 'my friends and family always make me smile'. 87% of respondents indicated that they feel safe with one commenting that they know that they are 'always looked after and kept safe'. In addition to this, the majority of respondents (73%) said they knew who to speak to about their care and support quoting teachers, family, foster carers, friends and their Social Worker. Nearly 75% of all respondents also indicated that they had received

the right level of information or advice when they needed it and 73% said that they felt that they felt listened to in relation to their care and support and 91% of respondents said that they had been treated with respect.

All respondents felt that people wanted what was best for them, but none of them indicated they had been made aware of their rights as a child/young person. When asked what Social Services has done well, many young people were able to provide positive comments that indicated they are generally satisfied with the care and support they have received and that their experience of foster care was on the whole positive and that their Social Worker was very supportive. There were very few areas of improvement identified. These related to improving stability of Social Workers (not changing Social Workers), access to more information, being listened to more and having more contact with their family. Children and Young People Services recognise the importance of continuity of Social Workers for children and young people and are developing proposals to both amend the structure of teams and to achieve a permanent workforce in all areas.

Parental Questionnaire

Of the 299 parents that were sent a questionnaire, 20 responded representing a 7% response rate. Of these respondents, 84% felt that they had been actively involved with Social Services and positively commented on the support their family had received. The majority of respondents (90%) agreed that their Social Worker listens to them and all respondents with the exception of one agreed/strongly agreed that their Social Worker does what they say they will do. In addition, 89% of parents agreed/strongly agreed that their Social Worker notices what is working well in relation to their family in securing the well-being, safety and care of their child/ren. The consultation indicates that respondents feel that the Social Workers provide clear information and advice that is tailored to each family's needs, as 87% of respondents said they agreed/strongly agreed that their Social Worker had been clear with them regarding any concerns they had regarding their family situation. Generally it appears that both parents and Social Workers are working together consensually, as 100% of respondents said that they agreed with the concerns identified with their Social Worker and 71% agreed that their Social Worker listened to their problems. From the questionnaire it is clear that respondents feel that their Social Worker is committed to supporting their family to find resolutions, and 94% indicated that their Social Worker cares about solving their problems.

Overall parents' experiences have been very positive, where it is felt that Social Workers have been supportive and helpful through otherwise very challenging circumstances for a family. Respondents generally recognised that where the Social Worker was unable to help, this was mostly because it was out of their control. There is also the sense that Social Workers strive to involve the whole family in meetings and provide clear and consistent advice to families. When asked what we had done well, there were a number of positive comments such as parents feeling that they had been listened to and that Social Workers were described as 'helpful, clear, approachable and pleasant'. In feedback the respondents also commented on how their Social Worker had effectively signposted them to information and advice and how the provision of short breaks was appreciated.

When respondents were asked to identify what could be improved (in relation to Social Services), some of these suggestions were:

- Organising Direct Payments and enabling parents to have some more time for themselves.
- Shorter gaps between visits/contacts.
- More childcare provision, Special Educational Needs (SEN) support and overnight respite.
- How we address issues where parents are unhappy with the support they have received.
- Improving consistency and continuity with Social Workers.
- Access and contact with their Social Worker.

Adult Services Questionnaire

In total 1,048 questionnaires were circulated to Adult Service Users where 494 responded representing a 47% response rate.

86% of respondents felt that they live in a home that best supports their well-being, many of which indicated that they had received adaptations which have made their lives easier. Almost 50% of respondents said that they can do things that are important to them, but some (34%) indicated that they struggle to do some things that they used to do. Despite this, 51% said that they feel part of their community as they receive help and support to get out and socialise. However, for those that highlighted that they had difficulty getting out and about in the community, some indicated they felt isolated mainly due to their disability or because they are looking after a relative. Overall the majority (76%) of respondents said they felt safe, and for those who indicated that they did not feel safe this was due to their mobility issues or feeling vulnerable where they lived. 79% of respondents said they knew who to speak to about their care and support quoting staff at the settings they attend, Social Workers and Young Person's Advisors (for young adults). Equally nearly 75% of all respondents said they had received the right information and advice when needed, but some did comment on the lack of communication and contradictory information at times. Overall respondents feel that their views and opinions are listened to, as 79% said they had been actively involved in decisions about their care and support and 91% said they had been treated with dignity and respect. 63% of Young adults that responded to the questionnaire (18-24) said that they had received information and advice to prepare them for adulthood.

Over half of all respondents made positive comments about Social Services. Most felt they were happy in the settings they attended and the opportunities they could access to reduce feelings of isolation enabling them to meet new people and enjoy activities. Generally respondents felt listened to and were appreciative of the care and support they received. In terms of areas of improvement, respondents suggested improving communication between departments having more contact with their Social Worker and some commented on the delayed responses to queries. In some instances, some respondents indicated they would prefer to receive information in plainer English to make information easier to understand.

Adult Services Easy Read Questionnaire

There were an additional 75 easy read questionnaires requested that were circulated, of which 29 adults responded (with a 38% response rate). 86% of respondents felt that they live in a home that best supports their well-being. Analysis of the easy read questionnaire respondents showed that some felt they could not do the things they liked due to either mobility or sensory impairment issues. The majority (83%) of respondents said they felt a sense of belonging where they lived quoting that they had lots of friends and enjoy the local amenities, but some felt there was too much change in relation to staff at some settings. Most (86%) indicated that they feel safe. Overall respondents to the easy read questionnaire appear to know where and how to access support, as 82% said they knew who to speak to and nearly 75% felt that they had received the right information and advice when they needed it. Equally respondents feel that their views and opinions had been taken into account, as 76% felt they had been listened to and 90% indicated they had been treated with respect. The majority of the comments were very complimentary about the support and care they had received.

Carers Questionnaire

Of the 126 questionnaires sent circulated, 26 carers responded representing a 20% response rate. 83% of carers said that they lived in a home that best supported their well-being. 68% said that they feel safe, but commented that where they did not this was due to their own mobility issues.

It is evident from the questionnaire that many carers struggle to do things without respite support, as just over 50% said they could 'sometimes' do things that were important. Despite this, most (67%) indicated that they still felt part of their community, but that undertaking a caring role does take up a lot of their time and can impact on their ability to interact in their communities.

All respondents with the exception of one said they were satisfied with the support they had received and 75% said they knew who to contact about accessing care and support and 61% said they had received the right information and advice when needed. Nearly all carers indicated they had been involved in decision making about the care and support needs of the person that they care for and most felt that they are involved in decisions about their own care and support.

60% of respondents felt they are supported to continue in their caring role and 58% indicated they are happy with the support they had received and one commented on how valuable the carers' assessment had been. Although, in most instances their caring role takes up a significant amount of time, 64% felt that they can find time to look after their own health and well-being.

When asked what they thought Social Services had done well, many commented on the help and respite they had received and feeling less isolated as a result of accessing support and that the information and communication they received was good. In terms of areas for improvement, respondents suggested improving communication between departments and the need for services to be more proactive in providing services to prevent individual's circumstance reaching a crisis point.

Community Resource Team Questionnaire

In total 100 questionnaires were circulated to service users that had accessed/received support from the Community Resource Team and were independent when discharged from the service (during the period December 2017 and March 2018). In addition to the standardised questions as part of the Welsh Government survey, the Council added some additional questions to make the questionnaire more service specific. Of these 100 questionnaires, 45 service users responded (with a 53% response rate).

Nearly all (89%) of respondents said they feel happy where they live and that their home supports their well-being with just over 50% of respondents saying they can continue to do things that are important to them.

Over 60% have a sense of belonging in their community and most (78%) said that they felt safe, and where they did not this mostly related to safety concerns associated with their mobility issues.

Nearly all respondents indicated that they could access the right advice and information when they needed it and that they had been treated with dignity and respect with comments being very positive towards care staff.

79% of respondents had received a copy of their Service Delivery Plan and in nearly all cases (89%) respondents felt that the support has enabled them to maintain or improve their levels of independence.

Overall 72% of respondents rated the service they received as 'excellent' with very positive comments in relation to how patient and supportive the staff had been and how the service had 'catered for all their needs'.

Families First Information Line (FFAL) Questionnaire

In total 82 families were sent a questionnaire, with only 6 responses (7% response rate). These questionnaires were circulated to service users that had accessed the Families First Information Line (which is part of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service) during the period December 2017 and March 2018. In addition to the standardised questions as part of the Welsh Government survey, the Council added some additional questions to make the questionnaire more service specific.

Half the respondents (3) felt that they lived in a home that best supports their well-being and most felt part of their community and safe. Despite the low response rate, half of the respondents (3) said they had accessed the right information and advice when they needed it and that they were treated with dignity and respect.

In terms of the service specific aspects of the questionnaire, overall respondents were positive about the initial contact/call they had describing it as 'really helpful and positive'. Of the 6 respondents, 4 had received home visits the majority of which received very positive feedback.

The majority of respondents felt that the advice line gave them the support they needed and that they felt reassured about how the service could help them. Generally the respondents felt included in the decision making and that the support

worker/professionals listened to their concerns and views. Overall respondents were very positive about the professionals that had visited them in relation to how patient, supportive and helpful they were.



3.4 Population Needs Assessment

Recently we have, together with our partners across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, undertaken our [Population Needs Assessment](#) as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This assessment has helped us to gather evidence that can be used as basis to plan for more effective citizen centred services. Several methods and sources were used to gather information for this assessment, to give a balanced and rounded view of the main care and support needs and assets in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. This work involved public surveys for adults and for young people; focus group interviews with residents, and a survey for local professionals and organisations providing care or support.

This Population Needs Assessment was informed by survey work under the 'Let's Talk' banner which saw more than 1,000 residents and other stakeholders participate in the consultation process of talking about life in the Vale. The survey showed that having a say in decisions is very important to Vale residents, although few reported believing that they could influence decisions.

In terms of key highlights from this assessment, 25.4% of respondents reported that their levels of well-being are 'very good' and 53.8% of respondents reported having 'full control' over their daily life. Respondents cited that the factors that prevented them from having control were in relation to physical ability, emotional/mental health and lack of money. However, more than half of the respondents did indicate they had received help, advice or support that focused on preventing/reducing problems in the future.

The Vale of Glamorgan's headline areas of need that were identified through the assessment¹ were:

- Clear inequalities between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' often masked by local authority level statistics.
- The largest inequality gap in healthy life expectancy in Wales for females.
- High levels of alcohol consumption, particularly by older people in rural areas.
- Green spaces not always found in areas where they are needed most to have a positive impact on well-being.
- Engaging with the harder to reach groups still proves challenging and new innovative ways to reach all of our population need to be considered.
- A risk of isolating those in rural areas who find it difficult to access services.
- A lack of data in relation to a number of equality groups to better understand the needs and assets of all our population.
- Vale residents are concerned about the unknown long term economic impacts from the EU referendum result.

¹ Let's Talk: Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

- High house prices which may become unaffordable to local people and the impact this has on a feeling of belonging and community cohesion.
- The impact of further welfare reforms increasing the divide between those in the most and least deprived areas.
- An increased demand for services due to an ageing population at a time of financial austerity.
- Linked to an ageing population particularly in rural areas an increased risk of social isolation due to concerns around transport links in rural communities.
- The impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences on life chances with high levels of harmful behaviours concentrated in the most deprived areas.

Over the next few years we intend to address these areas of need by strengthening our focus on engagement with our citizens and service users to promote their involvement in helping to shape and deliver services in the Vale of Glamorgan. Some of the other findings from this Population Needs Assessment are referred to later on in this report.

Our consultation priorities going forward

During 2018/19 we will continue to promote effective engagement with our service users and citizens by:

- Progressing the Citizen’s Panel, by building on the learning from our ‘Experts by Experience’ pilot.
- Deliver a rolling programme of service-specific consultations to evaluate service user satisfaction and experiences.
- Continuing to meet our duty under Section 145 of the Social Service Well-being (Wales) Act to measure our performance in relation to our service user’s experience and achievement of outcomes in relation to the care and support they receive.

4. Compliments and Complaints



4.1 Compliments

Receiving compliments/praise is central to enabling us to recognise the efforts of our staff who are often delivering services at the front line under challenging circumstances. Putting in place appropriate mechanisms to collate compliments enables us to see areas where we are performing particularly well as well as helping us to further reinforce the positive attitudes and behaviours of our staff to further motivate and engage our workforce.

During 2017/18, 19 compliments were received providing a good spread across both Adult and Children and Young People Services. These compliments related to the services and support services users received and they often named specific staff where they felt the individual had done over and above what was expected of them.

To put this data in context, outlined below is a snapshot of some of the compliments we have received from service users:

I am writing to let you know how impressed we were with X's work during our adoption experience'. X has provided 'kindness and support' 'allowing us to talk about our anxieties' 'we have really appreciated her knowledae'.

'I am writing on behalf of my mum Mrs X, she would like to thank you all for your help and kindness during the weeks she was under your care recently. A big thank you to everyone involved as it really was a team effort. Thank you all for a fantastic job.'

'To all the ladies who came to help X and X when we needed you. Thank you so much such for all the good work'.

'As for X visiting firstly I'd like to say on record what an asset she is to social services. She is a kind, compassionate, understanding lady who I felt was so genuine, you're very lucky to have her in the team.'

'X was doubtful that Mr A would be accepting of any care and this care package has been a success in that sense and all agreed it was down to the fundamental ground work that Y undertook with Mr A and the rapport she established with him, exact detail in the care plan. Y was highly praised by all in the meeting.'

4.2 Complaints

Our responsiveness and learning from complaints demonstrates that we are providing very good care and support. We have developed a robust approach to how we deal with and manage our complaints. Through taking a proactive listening and learning approach that acknowledges our extended duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of service users we have been able to effectively mitigate against complaints.

The Social Services Complaints Officer continues to work proactively with service users to quickly deal with their concerns to effectively prevent issues escalating to complaints. During 2017/18, 156 issues were raised by service users and/or their carers/family which were followed up with a visit. At these visits the Complaints Officer will listen to the service user's concerns to further clarify any issues. In most instances the Complaints Officer is able to alleviate a service user's concerns at this stage and in some cases can signpost the service user onto other sources of information or services they might not have been aware of. As a consequence of these efforts, fewer issues escalate into enquiries² and complaints. During 2017/18, of the 156 issues raised only 46 went on to become enquiries requiring a more formal response and 4 went on to become a complaint. Of these 46 enquiries, 26 related to Adult Services and 20 related to Children and Young People Services. No enquiries were received in relation to our Resource Management and Safeguarding Division. There were 55 complaints received during 2017/18 (that were not referred to the Ombudsman). Of these 55 complaints, 21 were for Adult Services, 30 were for Children and Young People Services and 4 related to our Resource Management and Safeguarding Division.

During 2017/18, the Ombudsman received 9 Social Services cases for consideration, 4 of which related to Adult Services and 5 related to Children and Young People Services. Of these 1 was investigated, 5 were not investigated and 3 were considered premature.³

Of the 55 complaints received (that were not referred to the Ombudsman), 93% (51) were resolved at Stage one (local resolution) and 7% (4) were resolved at Stage two (formal consideration).

The nature of complaints are increasingly becoming more complex, despite this we continue to improve our responsiveness to complaints within the designated timescales. During 2017/18, 100% of Stage 1 Adult Services and Resource Management and Safeguarding complaints were resolved within the designated timescales⁴ and Children and Young Peoples Service reported that 92% of Stage 1 complaints were resolved within timescales. Similarly, for Stage 2 complaints relating to Children, 1 of the 2 complaints were resolved within the designated timescales. However, it should be noted that in relation to Stage 2 complaints, the complainants were made aware of the reason for the extension to the timescale, and in agreement with the Director of Social Services.

² An enquiry is an issue/concern that has been reported by a service user that is formally recorded by the Complaints Officer and responded to, but not escalated as a complaint.

³ These figures are provisional until we receive confirmation from the Ombudsman annually.

⁴ The designated timescale for responding to Stage 1 complaints is 10 working days and a further 5 working days to confirm the outcome of the discussion and for Stage 2 the timescales are 25 working days .

The table shown below provides a full breakdown of all compliments, enquiries and complaints received during 2017/18.

Service Division	Compliments	Enquiries	Complaints Stage 1	Complaints Stage 2	Ombudsman	Total complaints (including Ombudsman) and enquiries received
Adult Services	13	26	19	2	4	51
Children and Young People Services	5	20	28	2	5	55
Resource Management & Safeguarding	1	0	4	0	0	4
Total	19	46	51	4	9	110

The top three ranking reasons for complaint were in relation to quality or level of service available (18 complaints) ongoing concerns (18 complaints) and complaints about staff or other residents (12 complaints).

Complaints by service users provide the Directorate with valuable information that can help us to further shape and improve how we deliver our services. The outcomes from Stage 1 complaints often highlight any shortfalls in service delivery and formal action plans are developed from recommendations arising from Stage 2 complaint or complaints investigated by the Ombudsman. By looking at these issues collectively we are able to identify the key areas of focus going forward.

During 2017/18 a summary of these key lessons learnt included:

- Explaining our duties under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures;
- Being clear in how we communicate the limitations of our resources and expectations around service delivery;
- Providing effective and timely feedback and communication such as advising service users of changes to appointments, along with providing a rationale for decision making to both service users and family members;
- Ensuring family members understand the implications of court proceedings;
- Ensuring that appropriate support is provided to families;
- Improving our responsiveness to service users by responding to contact promptly, returning phone calls and acknowledging letters within designated timescales;
- Ensuring we remain mindful of any care proceedings;
- Improving our response timeliness of care planning and meetings; and
- Ensuring service users understand our charging policies.

Our complaints priorities going forward:

In terms of our priorities for improvement during 2018/19, we will focus on:

- Working with independent investigators to make an improvement in the time taken to complete Stage 2 investigations by reviewing the support offered to investigators;
- Continuing to work with managers and staff to make an improvement in the time taken to complete Stage 1 complaints;
- Developing training to facilitate the inputting and updating of the data on the complaints/compliments spreadsheet in the absence of a Complaints Administrator;
- Implementing the use of a Customer Feedback Questionnaire;
- Further increasing the number of Independent Investigators and Independent Persons on the database;
- Continuing to work with Corporate Complaints on responding to Ombudsman requests within timescales requested;
- Improving how we collate information in response to FOI requests;
- Continuing to share information with the Joint Monitoring Group on provider complaints;
- Further developing monitoring and evaluation processes to improve the ability of the Directorate to learn from complaints and use the outcomes and recommendations arising from complaints to improve services through the provision of quarterly reports on lessons learnt. This will enable us to further explore, understand and act on the learning from our complaints with particular reference to the emerging themes during the year;
- Focusing on contributing to Corporate Complaint reporting;
- Developing mechanisms to better support complainants with complaints relating to provider services;
- Implementing a policy for dealing with vexatious complainants;
- Continuing to provide a rolling programme of training to staff; and
- Improving our response times at Stage 1 to prevent the escalation to Stage 2.

5. Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help



Securing positive outcomes and enhancing the well-being of people who are in need of care and support is at the heart of delivering Sustainable Social Services. Since the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 became statute in April 2016, we have made significant strides forward in embedding the requirements of the Act in our day to day practice. This has ensured that we are best placed to meet the challenges and demands on our services by maintaining a focus on supporting the well-being of people who are in need of care and support. The Act has also enabled us to ensure we can give citizens a voice and control over defining their care and

support needs by working with the Council to co-produce outcomes and to shape and support services both now and in the future.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is strongly aligned to the Social Services legislation and the changes we are introducing. For example, we have linked the way we identify the issues that are important to our residents via the [Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment](#) and the [Cardiff and Vale's Population Needs Assessment](#). This information gathering has been supported by engaging with citizens. We have gathered a lot of information by listening to what our citizens have told us about themselves and their communities as part of our "Let's Talk" campaign.

This section of our Annual Report sets out our performance in promoting and improving the key aspects of Well-being of people in the Vale of Glamorgan who need care and support, and carers who need support. We have set it out to show how our work is linked to the six National Quality Standards for well-being. It sets out the priorities we identified in the Annual Report last year, plus additional priority actions related to new ways of working and gives information on our progress. It provides data where this is relevant and available, gives real life examples of the impact on people, as well as setting out our priorities for 2018/19.



5.1 WELL-BEING STANDARD 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

As a Council we are committed to delivering high quality services that reflect and best meet the needs of our service users which underpins the way we want to work with people. As a result we are continually embracing opportunities to involve and engage service users and partners in shaping and defining service delivery. Working in partnership with our service users to give them voice and control regarding defining their care and support needs is a fundamental aspect associated with Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in order to co-produce well-being outcomes.

Giving people a voice and control in shaping services and being involved in decision making is a fundamental aspect the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A snapshot from the Population Needs Assessment highlighted that overall the level of well-being reported by respondents was 'very good' by a quarter (25.4%) of respondents in the Vale of Glamorgan, and 53.8% of respondents in the Vale indicated that they have full control over their daily life. Just over 1 in 10 (12%) of the people who completed our survey were in receipt of care and support services or had previously received them. Of those who received services, 69% said they were happy with the services they received. 59% felt they were sufficiently involved in decisions about their care and support, with a further quarter saying they were sometimes involved. 1 in 10 people did not feel sufficiently involved in these decisions.

A key part of supporting people to co-produce their own well-being outcomes involves giving people access to the right tools, services and support networks. We have progressed this work by improving access to information on services and signposting to partner agencies. During 2017/18, we launched the Dewis Cymru Information

Portal which is an online resource for accessing well-being information across Wales. This portal acts as an effective signposting tool for residents to access information about preventative services/resources/networks. Since its launch, Dewis Cymru has been populated with over 1,000 resources relating to Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Work is ongoing to raise awareness of the portal and to further evolve it by promoting it to other professionals at networking events. This will ensure that we can continue to strengthen and enhance the breadth of resources available on Dewis in the future.

Dewis has been a complementary addition to the Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) that has been implemented in response to requirements under Section 17 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The IAA provides a means through which residents can obtain information about the care and support system and type of services available and how to access them. For adults the IAA is accessed via the Customer Contact Centre where service users/their carers are asked the nature of their enquiry and if it relates to Adult Services these details are captured via the Contact Centre's Customer Relationship Management System which then enters a work queue. The trained CRM Officers will then call back the service user to provide them with tailored information, advice and assistance in order to resolve their request at the first point of contact. During 2017/18, the average monthly referral demand for Adult Services was 642 calls, with on average 30 calls for service requests received per day. The Contact Centre also continues to effectively resolve Adult Social Care and Health enquiries at the 'front door', as during 2017/18 69.5% of adult services social care enquiries were resolved at the at the Single Point of Contact (via the Contact Centre), with only 29.31% referred to Social Work Teams. The provision of IAA has become established as a key preventative service for anyone accessing adult social services to enable people to make their own informed decisions about their care and support needs.

For children, we have drawn together the services delivered by the Family Information Service, the Families First Advice Line and the Duty function within Children and Young People Services to ensure effective provision at and before the front door.

We have enhanced implementation of the IAA service through the delivery of joint training sessions that have been delivered to partners to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each element of the IAA and to assist signposting of referrals. A visual aid has been produced that provides an illustration to staff, partners and the public of how the IAA model operates.

What did we plan to do last year?

For 2017/18 we identified two key priorities for delivery:

- Pilot delivery of an outcome focused Case Management and Measurement System within Long Term Care.

The purpose of this priority was to give service users a voice and control over the services they access and receive whilst enhancing the resilience of domiciliary care provision.

- Pilot a Citizen's Engagement Panel for people with care and support needs under the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act.

This priority was identified to ensure that we actively engage with our clients to develop ways in which they can help shape and define our service models.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

Having set out what we planned to do in 2017/18, I wanted us to be clear about the progress we have made and what difference it has made to those we help. As we are in the early stages of development of some of this work, in some cases this relates to ongoing pieces of work.



Pilot delivery of an outcome focused case management and measurement system within Long Term Care Service.

We have continued to ensure that citizens play a central role in defining their care and support needs and how best they can be met. Through the implementation of Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 there has been a shift change to ensure citizens have more choice and control over their care and support decisions. There has been a shift from 'eligible individuals' to looking at 'eligible needs' in order to access statutory provision.

A key development during 2017/18 has been the piloting of an Outcome Focused Case Management and Measurement System known as the 'Your Choice' Pilot. Developing a truly outcome focused approach to care and support at home has been a long term goal for social care organisations across Wales and the rest of the UK. The 'Your Choice' Pilot offers a new way of providing care and support for people who need help to remain healthy, safe and independent in their own homes. It is designed to give individuals greater freedom, promote their independence and increase their well-being in a way that matters to them.

The Vale of Glamorgan Adult Services spends over £14 million on supporting 950 people through the commissioning of private domiciliary care agencies. By changing the method of commissioning from inflexible care timetables to one that is flexible and outcome focused we have been able to ensure service users are in control of defining their care needs. Adopting this approach has involved a whole scale change in the way we work that involves a team of Social Workers, Social Work Managers, Care Agency Brokerage Staff, Commissioners and partner Domiciliary Care Agencies working effectively together. This approach also represents a shift in methodology that places an emphasis on building relationships and is based on sharing the responsibility for the planning and directing of care and support at home. As a consequence of adopting this approach, individuals are able to have their needs met in a way that matters to them whilst improving their well-being and quality of life. The 'Your Choice' Pilot is the first time in Wales that there is an equal partnership between the person receiving the care and the Care Agency and the Social Worker has been established with each party having clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Through establishing the Pilot, the 'Your Choice' team agreed to a set of principles and conditions that would help define this new model. It was agreed this new way of working would:

- Improve the lives of the people using 'Your Choice' Care at home;
- Embrace a collaborative approach;
- Ensure that Care and Support Plans and Personal Plans are genuinely co-produced in a manner that matters to the person;
- Mean that the tripartite of participants is seen of equal value;
- Reduce unnecessary administration on Social Work teams and Social Services Brokerage Teams;
- Be cost neutral; and
- Provide for eligible care and support needs.

A 'Your Choice' Policy has also been developed that further describes and defines the approach of this model. The roll out of this revolutionary approach across all care agencies for all eligible people in the Vale of Glamorgan Council will take place from June 2018 onwards. This approach is also being integrated into a National Commissioning Tool for domiciliary care which is also informing the implementation of the National Care and Support at Home Strategy, so that all people in Wales can take control of their care.

The Outcome Focused 'Your Choice' Pilot has been reviewed and well received by our service users, the pilot provider and partner professionals. Over the last 12 months that the pilot has been operational there have been 15 participants that have received in excess of 325 hours of outcome-focused care at home per week.

The Vale of Glamorgan has recently been shortlisted for this national social care award under the 'Citizen-led services' category. The Social Care Wales Accolades are biennial awards that recognise and celebrate and share the best practice of other organisations, groups. The success of the pilot is also evident through the case studies highlighted below and the appending video.

SERVICE USER STORIES:

Hello, my name is Anthony.

I like to be called Tony. I was born in Cardiff in 1954 and lived in Cogan and Penarth. I went to the local comp St Cyres and from there I did an apprenticeship on engineering. I went to Barry College before going to a London University in Cricklewood, I was there for three years then finished at Swansea University for a degree in logistics and transport.

I worked for the local authority as a transport manager but had to take early retirement due to my health. I met my wife in Llandough she was a nurse we had a daughter Emma who I am very proud of. I was a big rugby player in my younger days playing for Cardiff, Newport and Penarth. I also enjoyed playing cricket.

In addition to this 'Outcome Focused' work, we have also implemented new assessment processes that are aligned to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A new regional Care and Support Assessment and Care Planning tool is in place for all specialisms (with the exception of working age mental health) and following its initial release we completed a review of the tool with practitioners to further streamline the process.

The amended tool has been built into Welsh Community Care Information System. The assessment and care planning processes are now fully compliant with the requirements of the Act and facilitate an assessment where the principles of the Act are embedded, enabling practitioners to focus on personal outcomes, improving well-being and adopting a 'what matters' approach, that gives individuals greater voice and control in the assessment and care planning process. This new process supports individuals to identify solutions that will help them to achieve their personal outcomes. It determines what the individual can do with and without the support of family friends or carers themselves, whether we can signpost to useful agencies or whether any assessed needs meet the eligibility criteria to receive managed care and support. We also have new Regional Assessment and Service Delivery Plan in place for our Occupational Therapists to ensure that the principles of the Act are embedded within their assessment process and work is in progress with our Vale Community Resource Service team to undertake a similar exercise.



Pilot a Citizen's Engagement Panel for people with care and support needs under the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act.

We have progressed work in relation to developing a Citizen's Engagement Panel for people with care and support needs by establishing an 'Experts by Experience' (EBE) pilot. The pilot group consisted of service users (that attend the New Horizons Day Centre), carers and staff members. The purpose of the pilot was to establish a mechanism through which we could engage with service users and carers to help shape how we develop and deliver services both now and in the future.

For the initial pilot phase, the group explored two priorities in relation to providing feedback to the Council on the quality assurance of Council Services and the quality assurance of externally commissioned providers. It is anticipated that this pilot work will support us to define what quality services look like, as well as contribute to developing, evaluating and testing a quality assurance toolkit. The EBE Group discussed and identified some potential areas of development in relation to quality assurance which have been incorporated into an action plan for follow up. Further engagement work is required to agree how this model of working could be further enhanced to help inform the design, development and delivery of services that best meet people's care and support needs.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

Engaging our service users in helping to access information to co-produce and define their desired outcomes will continue to be significant focus. Therefore, our priorities for 2018/19 will involve:

1. Expand and extend the use of Dewis Cymru for the provision of information, advice and assistance for preventative services.

This action will enable us to give citizens more choice and control over their care and support decisions by focusing on 'eligible needs'. This will also help us to reduce unnecessary dependence on statutory services and where possible signposting individuals to other sources of support.

2. Fully implementing outcome-based commissioning across all Domiciliary Care Agencies.

This action will enable us to work with service users to co-produce personal well-being outcomes that will effectively meet their care and support needs and achieve greater levels of independence.

3. Develop a Learning Disability Commissioning Strategy.

This action will enable us to work with service users to co-produce personal well-being outcomes that will effectively meet their care and support needs and achieve greater levels of independence.



5.2 WELL-BEING STANDARD 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

The Vale of Glamorgan is committed as part of its Corporate Plan for 2016 to 2020 to supporting its residents to become more active and healthy. One of our goals is to encourage and promote active and healthy lifestyles.

As part of the Population Needs Assessment consultation, focus group work identified that respondents valued the positive impact physical exercise has on their own well-being. Physical activity was also mentioned as providing a 'mental release' for carers.

The Population Needs Assessment also highlighted that the most common issues affecting young people in the Vale were emotional and mental health issues and specifically identified needs in relation to the availability and access to timely mental health support and services. In relation to adults, 1 in 10 respondents (12.8%) of respondents said they either had no control or some control but would like more. Of these respondents 42.8% identified emotional or mental health as a factor in preventing them from having sufficient control in their lives. This was the second most common response after physical ability.

By adopting a more joined up approach to promoting physical and mental health we have been able to develop a more person-centred focus. This is not unique to people who use social services, but people who do may need more support to achieve positive outcomes and fulfilled lives. Only by putting people at the centre, and working

with them, their families and carers and with a broad range of partners can we support them to achieve optimal levels of well-being.

We have achieved considerable success through working in partnership with key agencies across the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff and this has led to some very positive outcomes for people. This is something that has also been recognised by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) through their feedback where they highlighted that 'there are good established relationships with all partners which supports good outcomes for people'. With our regional and local partners, we continue to deliver a programme of service reform which is being managed under the Intermediate Care Fund.

What did we plan to do last year?

For 2017/18 we identified two key priorities for delivery:

- Developing a joined up Care Package Approval Process with the University Health Board to further enhance the Integrated Discharge Service.
- Working with partners on the Regional Partnership Board to plan services in response to the Population Needs Assessment.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

During 2017/18 we have made some significant progress in relation to promoting and protecting people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being. Much of this work is at the developmental stages so will continue to be ongoing priorities.



Developing a joined up Care Package Approval Process with the University Health Board to further enhance the Integrated Discharge Service.

We have continued to respond positively to the growing demand for our services and the pressure this places on health and social care budgets. We have done this by working effectively with our health partners to reduce Delayed Transfers of Care (DTCOC).

Our Integrated Discharge Service continues to play a pivotal role in both reducing Delayed Transfers of Care whilst supporting reablement and improving people's independence at home. The Integrated Discharge Service has established strong links with hospital wards to ensure that people with the most complex needs have a multi-disciplinary approach to co-ordinating safe discharges. We have allocated social workers to specific hospital wards to start discharge planning at an early stage so to avoid unnecessary hospital stays. We have also effectively joined up the Discharge Service with our Accommodation Solutions Service, which provides rapid access to housing, adaptations, cleaning and supported accommodation to help further facilitate earlier discharge from hospital. We have also built effective relationship with the Age Connects Hospital Discharge Scheme to provide information, advice and assistance alongside short term support to assist the transition from hospital to home.

During 2017/18, a joint Care Package Approval process was agreed with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) for use on complex hospital discharges. This new process has further reinforced our close working relationships between the two organisations and has helped to remove unnecessary barriers to timely and safe discharges from hospital. The process sets up a mechanism for the joint funding of care and support for people with a complexity of health and social care needs, and importantly a joint approach to the monitoring and review of the individual's care after discharge.

As a result of developing a far more co-ordinated and well managed approach we have effectively reduced the length of time older people spend in Hospital. As at end of year (2017/18), the rate of Delayed Transfers of Care due to social care reasons (aged over 75) was 2.85 per 1,000 population.

CASE STUDY

Mr A lives with complex health conditions that impact on his ability to maintain his own well-being and safety at home, which has meant that his health has fluctuated over many years resulting in multiple hospital admissions.

Despite his fluctuating health, Mr A has enjoyed one constant in that he attended the local authority New Horizons Day Opportunities Centre and wanted to continue to attend to keep in contact with his friends and support networks.

Through the joint funding agreement, we were able to work with the UHB to develop a Care and Support Plan to provide ongoing health care, while maintaining his attendance at New Horizons which had become so important to him. In this way, Mr A has enjoyed a period of stability in his life that has benefitted his health and his well-being.



Working with partners on the Regional Partnership Board to plan services in response to the Population Needs Assessment.

The **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** introduced a duty on local authorities and Local Health Boards to prepare and publish an assessment of the care and support needs of the population. We worked in partnership with our key public and voluntary sector partners across Cardiff and the Vale under the banner of 'Let's Talk'. This work was overseen by the Regional Partnership Board and undertaken in tandem with the Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment which was a requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Detailed findings across the eleven population groups were presented in the report alongside a series of cross-cutting findings that have been used to define what the next steps are to address the issues identified. Following the publication of this assessment, the Directorate has continued to work closely with its partners as part of the Regional Partnership Board to develop our response to the [Population Needs Assessment](#) in the form of an [Area Plan](#). This Area plan sets out the priority actions in response to the Population Needs Assessment over a 5 year period. In addition to this an [Area Action Plan](#) has also been developed that provides the detail of how these actions will be delivered.

The main areas of focus within the Area Plan include:

- Older people with long term conditions, including people with dementia;
- Children with complex needs;
- Learning disability and autism;
- Integrated Family Support Services;
- Adult and young carers.

Both the Area Plan and Area Action Plan were approved by the Regional Partnership board in February 2018 and by our Cabinet in March 2018 in readiness for publication in April. In terms of governance, the priorities from the Area Plan will be incorporated into the Regional Partnership Board's future work programme from 2018/19 and progress will be reported as part of the Regional Partnership Board's Annual Report.

Through these key strategic plans, we strive to ensure that there is a clear vision and direction for Social Services, partly to gain staff commitment to high standards and continuous improvement for the Directorate. Progressing the delivery of this Area Plan will be a focus going forward into 2018/19.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 our priorities will focus on:

1. Strengthening communications with the Mental Health Service in order to support effective transition for young people into Adult Mental Health Services.
2. Further developing and implementing the Integrated Autism Service to strengthen links with other services and to enhance the service user and carer experience.

These actions will enable us to enhance the integration and co-ordination of our services delivered across the health and social care spectrum. This approach will also support us to focus on delivering more person centred care/support to enhance the well-being of our service users and their carers.

5.3 WELL-BEING STANDARD 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

Safeguarding is about protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers. It is our primary function as a local authority Social Services department. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act has made some changes and introduced a stronger, robust and effective partnership approach to safeguarding. Each professional and organisation must do everything they can, to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse.

As a result this has been a fundamental focus for us during 2017/18; ensuring that this principle is fully embedded across the whole Council and not just within Social Services. This is something that has also been recognised by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) where in their feedback they identified that there is a good understanding of the authority's safeguarding responsibility and all members have

been provided with training as part of their induction with regular reports and information to Scrutiny and Cabinet on safeguarding issues.

An internal audit review of Corporate Safeguarding was undertaken during 2017 that highlighted that our Safer Recruitment procedures are robust and fully embedded and that training and awareness of safeguarding is evident in the majority of departments. We have continued to strengthen our compliance in relation to the Safer Recruitment Policy across both Council services and schools. At end of year (2017/18) compliance with the policy across the Council was 99% compared to 97% during 2016/17. Similarly compliance with the policy remains strong across Schools at 93% (2017/18), showing just a slight dip from 94% in 2016/17. Therefore the overall combined compliance across both the Council and Schools has remained at 95% for 2017/18.

The Council has published a Corporate Safeguarding Policy which set out our duties and the support available to elected members, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers when they have concerns regarding a safeguarding matter. It also prescribes the steps that the Vale of Glamorgan Council will take to protect and safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This policy has recently been updated to reflect the new statutory responsibilities arising from the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to:

- promoting the well-being of people who need care and support;
- the duty to report an 'adult at risk' to all relevant partners and make enquiries if there is reasonable cause to suspect a person is an 'adult at risk' in their area;
- the introduction and use of Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs);
- the duty to report a 'child at risk' to all relevant partners and to make enquiries if they are informed a child may be at risk in their area; and
- the establishment of Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards with a focus on prevention and protection.

We continue to play a key role in steering the direction and development of the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board (RSCB) and the Regional Safeguarding Adults Board (RSAB). Recently, we participated in a series of facilitated events for all safeguarding partners enabled us to recognise that both Boards had been operating sub-optimally in a number of key respects. The Board meetings themselves needed to focus on inter-professional critique and asking more fundamental 'so what' questions about core protection activity. Both Boards lacked an appropriate data suite that enabled members to interrogate core adult or child protection activity. It also became evident that both Boards were encountering challenges and issues that were common to each. It is notable that some of the challenges and gaps identified in-region were also highlighted by the National Independent Safeguarding Board when it evaluated the 2016/17 Annual Reports from all 6 Regions.

It was also apparent that the Children's Board was facing a significant challenge in meeting a backlog in concluding a number of Child Practice Reviews (CPR). In addition to reflecting ineffective grip on the CPR/APR process, concerns about sourcing CPR/APR reviewers and authors and difficulties in the process for reaching Board agreement, it was clear above all that the absence of an effective joint Boards' business unit for 2 years had been the critical factor in undermining the ability of the Boards and CPR process to function effectively.

Significant strides have been made in unlocking these inter-related challenges creating real momentum in overcoming the CPR blockage and underpinning overall Board effectiveness. These include: -

- The establishment of a fully staffed and highly effective and energetic Joint Boards Business Unit;
- Joining the Boards' quarterly meetings to a single day event with a strong focus on the key joint agenda priorities including policy, analysis, strategic development and the nuts and bolts of business effectiveness;
- Stronger co-chairing arrangements led by Directors with specialist backgrounds in adult and children's safeguarding respectively;
- Revised common sub-group structures led by appropriate senior Board professionals and enabling more effective focus on delivering against annual priorities;
- Decluttered Board agenda to enable better decision-making greater participation, more clearly focused debate and promoting interagency learning and challenge;
- Movement in the completion of outstanding CPRs;
- A newly launched Website;
- Refresh of Training across adults and children's professionals.

During 2017/18, workshops were led by Jan Horwarth (Emeritus Professor at the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield) that related to both the Children and Adults Safeguarding Boards. These workshops identified themed actions and the sub-groups required to move forward the work of the Boards.

In relation to the Regional Safeguarding Adult Board, the workshops highlighted two key priorities:

- Domiciliary and Home Care.
- Workforce.

For the Regional Safeguarding Children Board, the workshop highlighted four priorities:

- Effectiveness of the Child Protection System.
- Children on the edge of the Child Protection System.
- Securing service-user participation.
- Learning lessons from reviews.

The priorities identified via these workshops were used to inform the development of Annual Business Plans for the Regional Safeguarding Children Board and the Regional Safeguarding Adult Board which sets out the strategic priorities and actions for delivery during 2018/19. More detailed actions in response to these priorities are outlined within the Regional Safeguarding Children Board [Annual Plan](#) and the Regional Safeguarding Adult Board [Annual Plan](#).

Following the publication of the Welsh Government's '[Working Together to Safeguard People](#)' guidance, the Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Boards successfully secured a

bid to produce the revised national procedures for adult and child protection associated with this guidance.

What did we plan to do last year?

In relation to taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm we identified two priorities:

- To improve procedures with providers of nursing, residential and domiciliary care to enable early intervention and prevent the escalation of incidents.
- Ensuring staff and potential referrers are aware of the requirements under the statutory guidance relating to their duty to report safeguarding concerns.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?



Improving procedures with providers of nursing, residential and domiciliary care to enable early intervention and prevent the escalation of incidents.

Safeguarding adults at risk of harm as a result of suffering abuse and neglect is fundamental to the role of Social Services and is a key priority outlined within the Corporate Plan 2016-20. Abuse of adults can happen anywhere including residential/nursing care settings.

During 2017/18 a key focus has been on improving the consistency of our response in relation to nursing/residential and domiciliary care. This is to ensure we have robust processes in place to address potential safeguarding concerns and to prevent them from escalating.

During 2017/18, we have continued to focus on implementing the actions outlined in the Operation Jasmine Action Plan. There has been significant progress in terms of the alignment of our policies and processes with Cardiff Council and this work continues to be monitored through the Regional Safeguarding Adults Board. The current focus has been on forming joint groups to look at the alignment of processes with Cardiff by undertaking a joint review of the 'Escalating Concerns Protocol'. As a result of this joint work we have developed a shared policy for the region. This has helped to bring greater consistency in terms of how concerns are dealt with within care settings and has also enabled the sharing of best practice.



Ensuring staff and potential referrers are aware of the requirements under the statutory guidance relating to their duty to report safeguarding concerns.

One of the key principles of safeguarding is that it is 'everyone's responsibility'. It is vital that all staff understand that they have a duty to report safeguarding concerns and promote the well-being of a child and adult that may be 'at risk' of harm or abuse. Raising awareness and understanding of our Safeguarding policy and practice is therefore a central feature of this work.

During 2017/18, we have taken steps to further strengthen our responsibility for safeguarding by delivering safeguarding training to over 346 staff to enable them to effectively fulfil their new statutory duties as outlined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. We have also launched a Safeguarding hotline to give staff a single point of contact to report any concerns they have regarding the well-being of an adult or child they believe to be at risk of harm or abuse. This has further enhanced our safeguarding mechanisms and reinforced our 'statutory duty to report' as outlined in the Act.

During Safeguarding Week in November 2017, a staff conference was held to further stress the importance that safeguarding should be at the forefront of everyone's mind and not treated as an afterthought. The conference was designed to raise awareness amongst staff not just within Social Services, but across all council services on what to do when they encounter instances of suspected abuse/harm. In total 100 members of staff attended the conference from a broad spectrum of services across the Council. At the end of the event, attendees were encouraged to complete an evaluation where 75.7% of Social Services respondents and 62.8% of non-Social Services respondents felt that the event was very/completely relevant to their needs. In relation to feeling equipped to do their job, 100% of Social Services respondents and 83.7% of non-Social Services respondents said the event made them feel very/completely equipped to fulfil the requirement of their job. 100% of Social Service respondents and 86% of non-Social Services respondents said they felt they could put their learning into practice from the event.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will:

1. Support the completion of the review of the All Wales Child and Adult Protection Procedures with the focus on combining the safeguarding procedures for both adults and children nationally across Wales and the associated preparatory work for implementing revised safeguarding procedures.

This work will ensure that we continue to remain compliant with the new statutory requirements associated with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and this can be delivered consistently on a regional and national scale.

2. Continue to focus on the delivery of the Corporate Safeguarding Action Plan and put in place appropriate mechanisms to monitor compliance of the policy across the Council for all relevant staff, contractors and volunteers.

This will support us to further strengthen our approach to our compliance and monitoring our safeguarding policy and practice across the whole Council.



5.4 WELL-BEING STANDARD 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

The Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 provides a legal basis for our commitment to support people to 'reach their full potential' and to effectively participate in society. It's also about enabling our service users participate in decisions affecting them.

The Population Needs Assessment identified that just over 1 in 10 (12%) of the people who participated in the consultation were in receipt of care and support services or had previously received them. Of those who received services, 69% said they were happy with the services they received. 59% felt they were sufficiently involved in decisions about their care and support, with a further quarter saying they were sometimes involved. 1 in 10 people did not feel sufficiently involved in these decisions.

What did we plan to do last year?

- During 2017/18 we set out to procure of both a Children and Adults Advocacy Service in line with the national approach. This was identified as a key priority for 2017/18 to enable us to fulfil our statutory requirement in relation to advocacy outlined in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?



Procure a Children and Adults Advocacy Service in line with the national approach.

It is essential that individuals, both children and adults have a voice when decisions are being made regarding care and support. Therefore it is vital advocacy mechanisms are in place to support children and adults to express their views to help inform decision making processes.

In relation to children, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out that it's a child's right to be heard in matters affecting them. We also have a statutory responsibility to provide advocacy services to children and young people as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act to enable individuals to access support to enable them to participate in decision making that affects them.

During 2017/18 we successfully worked with Cardiff to procure an advocacy service for children and young people in accordance with the national approach. The new contract was awarded to the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to provide independent advocacy to children and young people in care, in need or leaving care across the region. This new service went live on 1st July 2017. Since its launch NYAS has provided advocacy support (active offers) to 18 children and young people.

CASE STUDY: Revocation of Adoption Order

The initial referral was received from the foster carer because the young person was approaching his 17th birthday and he wanted to be made subject to a full Care Order.

On meeting with the young person he gave a detailed account of his family history - where he outlined that he was adopted at 5 years of age and abused by his adopted parents. This abuse had resulted in him being taken into Care where he remained on a Section 20 Agreement. He was receiving therapeutic support from Action for Children relating to his childhood experience and he felt that in order to move on with his life he wanted no future association with them.

Action taken:

NYAS obtained minutes from a number of LAC Reviews and spoke to the Independent Reviewing Officer and designated Social Worker to ascertain the action taken in respect of the young person's views and his Section 20 Status. NYAS also sought independent Legal advice for the young person where they believed there were sufficient grounds for revoking the adoption order.

NYAS held a meeting with the Action for Children Services Team Manager, Social Worker, Legal and other professionals. Following this meeting the Local Authority agreed to progress the revocation of the Care Order.

Outcome:

The case appeared before High Court and the Adoption Order was revoked and a Care Order granted. In addition, the Judge changed his adopted name to his birth name. The NYAS involvement in this case was significant - exploring legal avenues, and ensuring the young person's views, wishes and feelings were listened to but also protecting his legal rights which together resulted in a positive outcome for the young person.

In relation to adults, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and United Nations Principles for Older Persons set out the right to be heard in matters affecting them. There is also a duty under Part 10 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 for the provision of an Independent Professional Advocacy service to certain groups of people receiving care and support.

We are keen to ensure that the access to advocacy is as straight forward as possible, so that there are no barriers and people can access the advocacy support when they need it. An Independent Advocacy Service focuses on giving individuals a voice, involvement, rights and control over decisions that are made about their care and support.

The Vale of Glamorgan is acting as the lead commissioner for three organisations that include Cardiff Council and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. Adopting a tripartite approach with Cardiff Council and the University Health Board is the first of its kind and evidences how we have strong working relationships across the region and a commitment to ensuring that people can readily access advocacy support.

During 2017, a working group produced an Options Appraisal to evaluate the options available for developing a Cardiff and Vale Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA). As a result of this, our intention is to commission an independent organisation to provide a 'Single Point of Access' or 'Gateway' for all advocacy services for adults across the region during the pilot period (over approximately 2 years). Investment in a Regional Single Point of Access for Advocacy will offer:

- Continuity for current users of advocacy and existing providers.
- A consistent regional approach to Advocacy across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and for all populations.
- A positive promotion of advocacy and IPA amongst hard to reach groups, such as people using Substance Misuse services, Black and Minority ethnic groups and LGBT communities.
- Opportunity for local advocacy providers to develop expertise in Independent Professional Advocacy.
- Opportunity for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan commissioners to gather baseline information regarding demand, scope and quality of IPA to inform longer term commissioning following pilot period which is currently unavailable and places other commissioning options at risk.
- Enable time for local providers to meet requirements for Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 as this will most likely be a requirement of future commissioning of IPA.

This 'Gateway to Advocacy' will also enable Adult Services to understand the demand for the different types of advocacy service and the Independent Professional Advocacy Service, which is yet unknown, which can then be used to inform an Advocacy Commissioning Strategy within the scope of the pilot.

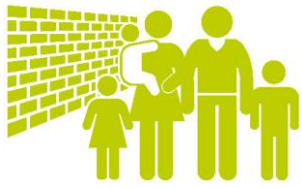
The development of a new website to promote the service is currently underway and we intend to commission the regional service so that it is operational from June 2018.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will:

1. Progress the procurement and implementation of a Regional Independent Professional Advocacy Service for Adults.

To fulfil the requirement in relation to advocacy determined through the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014).



5.5 WELL-BEING STANDARD 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

Building healthy relationships has a huge impact on an individual's mental health and overall well-being. It was identified as one of the key cross-cutting findings in the Population Needs Assessment. Those respondents highlighted that 1 in 7 (15.2%) said they felt lonely some or all/most of the time. Fostering positive personal and family relationships sets the foundations for supporting an individual's mental health and sense of well-being. Carers UK undertakes an annual survey of its carers. Out of respondents in Wales, findings included three quarters (75%) of carers are concerned about the impact of caring on their health over the next year; 3 in 5 (61%) are worried about the impact their caring role will have on relationships with friends and family⁵.

An equally significant aspect of our work involves supporting individuals to recognise what 'unsafe' relationships look like. Based on Welsh Government Children in Need Census information, during March 2015 we had the highest rates of Children in Need (51%) where domestic abuse was listed as a parenting factor⁶. Therefore, focusing on supporting individuals to recognise behaviours within relationship not only helps the individual to learn from these experiences but also enables them to spot the early signs of abuse. Focusing on forging positive and safe relationships presents more opportunities for us to work more effectively together to prevent and protect individuals from abuse and neglect.

What did we plan to do last year?

We identified three priorities for delivery during 2017/18:

- Increasing the use of reablement care to help people to achieve their potential for independence and reduce the need for council-arranged care.
- Conclude the pilot of our Therapeutic Fostering scheme intended to promote placement stability for Looked After Children.
- Extending the pilot for Direct Family Support to promote the prospect of children remaining within their families.

⁵ Carers Wales (2016). State of Caring 2015.

⁶ Let's Talk: Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?



Increasing the use of reablement care to help people to achieve their potential for independence and reduce the need for council-arranged care.

Through effective partnership working with the NHS we have been able to further integrate health and social care services in relation to reablement services. One of our significant successes during 2017/18 has been the development of a 6 bed reablement unit. These 6 intermediate care beds based at 'The Bay' Reablement Unit (at Ty Dyfan Residential Home) are suitable for individuals that need more intensive support with daily living over a short period of time prior to returning home.

Before this unit was established, the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS) were only able to support individuals in their own home, which meant those who were not at a 'functional level' to cope at home with a support package could not be supported which resulted in extended hospital stays. These additional beds at the unit have enabled us to alleviate the pressure on hospital beds by reducing unnecessary hospital admissions and provide the bridge between hospital discharge and home whilst supporting individuals to regain their independence. A central feature of this new model has been the establishment of a multi-disciplinary team to ensure that patients receive a seamless transition home within 6 weeks of admission.

On entry to the unit each individual has their own therapeutic intervention plan and a multi-disciplinary team meet weekly to discuss and review progress and goal for the purposes of discharge planning. The therapeutic intervention aspect is provided by the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS) following a needs-based assessment. On average each person receives approximately 63 hours per week of therapeutic support. Between December 2016 and April 2018, 60 people have been admitted to the unit and of these just 9 were readmitted to hospital due to medical need whilst 51 people were successfully discharged from the unit. The maximum level of care that can be provided at home on discharge from hospital is in the region of 28 hours a week. Following discharge from 'The Bay' unit, the average person required just 4.5 hours of care a week, 23.5 hours less than the average care package per week received by those who had not accessed the reablement support unit.

Not only has this facility helped to alleviate the pressure on hospital beds, but it has also resulted in making substantial savings for both the Council and the Health Board. The reduction in care package costs alone equates to an average of saving of £334.88 per person per week. Therefore, if an individual's care needs remained unchanged the financial savings for all 51 individuals would be £888,101. This has produced a net benefit for the Health Board as well, as the individuals admitted to the unit saved a total of 1,711 days in hospital equating to a saving of £769,950.

Aside from the financial savings, there have also been positive outcomes for individuals in terms of them regaining independence. Of the 51 people that were discharged successfully from the unit, approximately nearly half (23) completely regained their independence and did not require ongoing support at home. Of those that required a care package, the maximum amount provided on discharge was 16 hours per week.

CASE STUDY

Carol is a recent temporary resident at 'The Bay' Reablement Unit (Ty Dyfan Care Home) who has benefited from our innovative approach to reablement services. Carol had a fall and cut her head and fractured her pelvis. She was very upset, because she had had enough of hospitals. She went on to spend a week in Hospital before she was transferred to Barry Hospital where she underwent a programme of physiotherapy for 4 to 5 weeks. But the volume of patients was a problem. She then relocated to the reablement unit at Ty Dyfan where she was greeted by staff who showed her around the facilities. Staff were able to make progress and provide a tailored service that suited Carol's needs and goals. She received daily therapeutic input from the specialist staff. Carol said that if she hadn't gone to the unit and stayed in Barry Hospital, I would have been there for longer, because I didn't have much confidence at all. I would recommend the unit to anybody, because I thought it was wonderful.

The care provided at the unit and the Vale's Integrated Health and Social Care Locality Model was recently shortlisted as a finalist under the 'Social Care: Locality Services' category of the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Awards.

To learn more about Carol's story click on this video [link](#)

Alongside the reablement unit support, we have continued to promote the take up of our Telecare services. During 2017/18, there were 330 new Telecare users. Due to changes made to the Supporting People Grant, we have expanded the provision of Telecare to all tenure types across the Vale which has enabled more individualised/person centred approach to providing Telecare support.

Through effectively utilising the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) grant we have further enhanced our preventive services and promoted independent living through a series of additional support services. Such services include the establishment of a new ramp installation service by Care and Repair, a luncheon club for older people provided by Cadoxton Youth Project, the delivery of hot food across the Vale via the Food Shed and Art and Craft Therapy sessions delivered by Nexus. These initiatives collectively support and promote greater levels of independent living and have been developed with sustainability and self-care/self-financing in mind.



Conclude the pilot of our Therapeutic Fostering Scheme intended to promote placement stability for Looked After Children.

During 2017/18 we implemented a Therapeutic Fostering Pilot to support placement stability and reduce the number of placements that disrupt. The pilot has explored the development of a multi-disciplinary team that involves a psychotherapist and social care staff to work with carers and children to reduce placement disruption and the reliance on more costly placements. Despite the success of the pilot, given the temporary nature of the arrangements and not being a usual employer of health staff, we have experienced challenges in recruiting and

retaining staff. Having agreed the merits of the scheme, we are currently having discussions with our Health Board partners to scope a more sustainable model.

We have continued to focus on strengthening placement stability. During 2017/18, 11.57% of children experienced three or more placements. We remain committed also to recruiting more in-house foster carers and to supporting the work of the National Fostering Framework which has been developed across Wales to address the national shortage of mainstream foster carers. We are currently working with Cardiff to develop a regional work programme in line with the National Framework.



Extending the pilot for Direct Family Support to promote the prospect of children remaining within their families.

During 2017/18, we successfully piloted a project to provide a more intensive Direct Family Support approach to children and their families on the edge of care. The purpose of the pilot was to mobilise resources promptly to enable professionals to work with families to improve their parenting capacity and better meet the needs of their children. This pilot has been successful in preventing the accommodation of children into our care and returning children home where it is safe to do so. The outcomes from the pilot have been used to inform the re-commissioning of our Family Support Services which are currently out to tender.

During 2017/18, 85.46% of children were supported to remain living with their family and 3.79% of children returned home from care during the year. This pilot has been successful and a service specification has been developed and the new Family Support Service will be tendered by the end of 2017/18.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

1. Continue to enhance our collaborative approach in relation to Flying Start and Families First by further aligning their activities.

Greater alignment of these activities enhances the delivery of more joined up approach to information sharing and service delivery.

2. Establishing a Reflect Service in line with Welsh Government priorities.

This will enable us to develop a more joined up approach to working with parents who have experienced the removal of children into care to support them to better life choices/decisions for any future children.



5.6 WELL-BEING 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

Social and economic inclusion is fundamental to enhancing a person's sense of well-being. If an individual has enough money to live on, has good social networks and can enjoy living in good quality and affordable accommodation that meets their needs, they are more likely to experience a good quality of life.

Loneliness and isolation are issues that can seriously affect the health and well-being of people of all ages. The Public Service Board's (PSB) Well-being Assessment for the Vale of Glamorgan highlighted that a significantly high number of females aged 65+ are predicted to be living alone than males and by 2035 it is predicted this will double. Despite these challenges the engagement work undertaken as part of the PSB's Well-being Assessment's 'Let's Talk' campaign highlighted that many people felt that their friends and neighbours are the best thing about where they live. This was particularly noticeable in the Barry area. From the engagement work it was clear there is a sense of community and that residents recognise how vital these social networks are in maintaining their health and well-being.

Being able to access good quality affordable housing is also challenging especially when the average house prices in the Vale of Glamorgan are one of the highest in Wales. Homelessness is not just a problem reserved for urban areas. The Population Needs Assessment highlights that in the Vale there are around 270-430 people per year assessed for homelessness. The Population Needs Assessment identified that the most common reasons for homelessness could be linked to a loss of rented/tied accommodation, people being asked to leave family's/friend's homes, moving on from institutional care and fleeing domestic violence and abuse. As outlined in the PSB's Well-being Assessment, the 2011 Census showed that for the first time in over 30 years the private rented sector has grown larger than the social rented sector in the Vale of Glamorgan.

To promote greater economic stability, individuals need to have access to and sustain employment and there needs to be a focus on educational attainment. The PSB Assessment identified that overall the Vale has a lower than average percentage of workless households and children living in workless households. Poor accommodation and poverty also go hand in hand. The Population Needs Assessment also highlighted that just over 1 in 5 residents are currently living in fuel poverty. Another barrier to economic well-being is having access to good quality and affordable childcare. The most recent Childcare Sufficiency Audit (2016/17) highlighted that 77.6% of respondents to the survey felt that Childcare was too expensive. The Vale's Family Information Service increasingly receives enquiries from parents who experience difficulties in finding suitable and flexible childcare to meet their needs. As a Council we continue to look at ways we can support the childcare market through the provision of up to date information and advice services. Therefore our role in all this is to work effectively with our key stakeholders to better co-ordinate and signpost residents to services that will give them greater

economic stability, connectivity within their communities and access to good quality housing.

What did we plan to do last year?

We identified 2 priorities for delivery during 2017/18:

1. Continuing to work on developing an effective commissioning strategy for accommodation with care to meet the increasing demand for older people to remain independent for as long as practical.
2. Further developing the use of direct payments with a particular emphasis on learning disability.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?



Continuing to work on developing an effective commissioning strategy for Accommodation with Care to meet the increasing demand for older people to remain independent for as long as practical.

The quality, suitability, adaptability and affordability of housing for older people are recognised as key factors enabling individuals to continue to live independently for as long as possible.

We have continued to provide supported accommodation and have enhanced accommodation choices through expanding the Adult Placement Service. The service offers both long term and short term placements to people in a supportive family environment. Between April and November 2017, there were a total of 34 people in long term placements and 43 people accessing short term respite support. 22 of which were people who are in long term placements and 21 who are not in placements within the Adult Placement Service.

We have also made significant progress towards the development of a commissioning strategy for Accommodation with Care in order to meet the increasing demand for older people to remain as independent for as long as possible. Discussions are underway with the Council's Housing Department to develop opportunities informed by the findings of the recent Market Position Statement and the Population Needs Assessment. Going forward we will be working on a regional basis to develop a Commissioning Strategy for Accommodation with Care.



Further developing the use of direct payments with a particular emphasis on learning disability

There continues to be an emphasis on increasing the number of direct payments to adults to give people greater control and independence over their choice of care. For example, we have increased the number of adult services users receiving direct payments from 248 users at end of year 2016/17 to 278 users in 2017/18. The Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) acknowledged in their recent feedback that we have increased the number of people using direct payments which has helped to ensure we can better

meet demand and improve outcomes and choices for people. Increasing the number of users that commission packages of care via Direct Payments has overall resulted in an annual saving of £75,601.12 for new packages as at 31st March 2018 a further £136,228 of savings were achieved through the recovery of unused funds. For 2017/18, a total of £211,829 savings were made.

CASE STUDY

During 2017 one of our Social Care Officers supported a service user and their family to access respite via Direct Payments. The family had previously noted that they had little flexibility with their respite arrangements and had to book so far in advance, that a spontaneous break away hadn't happened in years. This put a lot of pressure on the family dynamic, and at times, tested relationships. The service user's care and support needs were increasing, and her seizures were unpredictable. This caused great distress to the family. It meant that they often had to cancel respite as the citizen was too ill to leave her home.

Although initially hesitant to make the change, the family were soon reassured that they would receive the same level of support, but had control over who would provide that support. As a result of moving to Direct Payments, the family were able to pay the same support staff that worked with the service user during the week, who knew her very well, to support the provision of a short respite breaks. This respite enabled the primary carer to focus on her own wellbeing for a short period. It enabled the carer to have a break from her caring role, whether this was going out for dinner once a month, going shopping for herself once a week, or going away for a few nights with her husband. The service user was able to stay in her own home during periods of ill health, and the family were reassured that familiar faces were giving their family member a high level of care and support.

By delivering a different respite model for people with a learning disability, we have been able to provide more placements at less cost. Through offering Direct Payments and Adult Placement, many people were able to have their respite needs met. For people with very high and complex needs the Willows regional (Cardiff and Vale) Respite House meets this need. The savings from delivering respite in this way has been in circa of £80K in the 8 months following the closure of Rhoose Road (with an ongoing net saving of £120K for the full year).

CASE STUDY

E was referred to the Adult Placement Service (APS) for respite provision following the closure of Rhoose Road residential respite house. An initial visit took place with E and her mother. E's mother expressed concern that APS would not meet her daughter's needs and stated how she would prefer a residential care environment for her daughter. APS staff explained the service to E and her mother and both seemed a little more keen to explore the provision further. E and her mother were both familiar with one of the hosts who also lived near their home.

E has now had several respite stays and reports to enjoy them – this has been evidenced via respite reviews carried out with E. E's mother has also reported to be happy with the service and has commented on the level of flexibility it provides, particularly when she was moving home and APS were able to accommodate changes to respite requests at short notice.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will:

1. Work with our partners regionally to develop an Accommodation with Care Strategy to promote independent living.

To ensure that we have a strategy for the development of accommodation that can support the needs of our older population.

2. Implement a bespoke Family Information Service database and record management system.

This action will enable parents to access childcare information and advice to find the most suitable and cost effective childcare options that meet their needs.

6. How We Do What We Do



6.1 Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

Through our established workforce planning and staff engagement processes we continue to maintain a highly skilled and resilient workforce that is responsive to the constantly changing legislative environment in which we work. The Directorate continues to focus on sustaining staff retention, successful recruitment and effective staff, despite the budgetary pressures and demands on our services we face.

We have continued to invest in developing our people which has been enabled by the launch of the Staff Charter. The Charter sets out a framework of mutual expectations for both the Council and all employees to meet the demands of over the next few years. It seeks to set out the support that our employees can reasonably expect and the responsibilities and qualities that are expected of them in return.

Following the successful launch of the Staff Charter in 2016, a Council Wide Survey was developed. This is the second year that the survey has been conducted and overall findings from the 2017 survey have been very positive in order to measure our progress in relation to the Staff Charter. The findings in relation to Social Services were as follows:

- Overall the average response rate to the 20 expectations (statements) outlined in the Charter for Social Services was 76% which was above the average positive responses received in the previous year at 72%.
- The top ranking assertion at 93.31% was 'I am trusted to get on with my job' which also showed a 3.21% improvement on the previous year (2016). The findings correlate with the ethos of the Directorate where staff feel empowered

in their roles to think independently and are encouraged to enhance and develop their skills. The biggest shift change was in relation to the statement 'I am treated with respect' which was also ranked 2nd for positive response. For this statement there has been an 11.7% improvement increasing from 77% in 2016 to 88.73% in 2017. The other three top ranking statements related to 'I have regular contact with my line manager' (85.56% positive responses), 'I am clear about what is expected of me' (84.15% positive response) and 'I am managed in a fair and consistent way' (82.04% positive response).

- The lowest ranking assertion related to 'I am helped to understand my wider contribution' at 54.23% which also showed a 2.32% drop compared with the previous year. The other four lower ranking statements related to 'I am kept informed about the wider council' (63.03% positive response), 'I have the opportunity to contribute to change' (64.79% positive response), 'I have the opportunity to test out new ideas' (65.49% positive response) and 'I am given the opportunity to develop' (68.66% positive response). This highlights that further awareness raising and engagement work is needed to support staff to understand their wider contribution and that there are mechanisms in place that will enable them to influence and shape change in tandem with enhancing development opportunities.

Our award winning Leadership Café has introduced a new informal way for current and aspiring leaders within the Vale of Glamorgan to network, share ideas and promote best practice. Alongside this the new Management Competency Framework, has established a mechanism for defining and developing the skill set of our managers to ensure they can confidently undertake their roles in line with the Council's Reshaping Programme and effectively respond to change. This way of working recognises that our workforce are our greatest asset for driving change and improving the well-being of our citizens.

Across the Directorate we have in place and deliver whole sector Workforce Plans which demonstrate that there is currently a sufficient, skilled, safe and focused workforce available to meet assessed needs. These plans address issues of recruitment and retention, qualifications vetting, registration, competences, skill-mix, training needs and support requirements.

Our key workforce plans during 2017/18 were to:

Workforce plans for 2017/18	Our key achievements and outcomes
Maintaining the stability and resilience of the service and supporting a structure that is fit for purpose and reflects our duties as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act whilst optimising the skill set of our workforce.	We agreed and put in place new reporting lines within the Directorate which have now been implemented following the appointment of the vacant Operational Manager posts. The structure has had the effect of ensuring the Directorate's structure is fit for purpose to enable us to best meet our statutory requirement and particular those associated with the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act. On the whole our workforce has remained stable within the Child Health and Disability and 15 Plus Teams with increased stability within our Intake and Family

Workforce plans for 2017/18	Our key achievements and outcomes
workforce appropriately and to operate services at the appropriate scale. This will include reducing the amount of routine work done by our most professionally qualified staff and taking advantage of increased qualification levels at lower grades.	Glamorgan have staff undertaking the programme, which will further enhance their skills in undertaking assessments. The Vale of Glamorgan Council worked alongside Cardiff Council to explore the feasibility of developing a Regional Social Care Workforce Development Unit. We presented a Business Case to Cabinet in November to gain approval for developing this regional training and workforce unit with the view to merge the two training teams.
To identify the critical posts to the business and areas where recruitment challenges exist, in order to explore options that target recruitment more effectively and achieve recruitment to vacant positions.	Invested in the development of a substantial yet bespoke recruitment campaign for Social Workers and Social Work Managers, utilising UK wide publications/social media platforms to market the appeal of working and living in the Vale of Glamorgan. The campaign, launched in September 2017, has resulted in recruitment to a number of posts within the Authority and has created a strategy on which the Authority can build. Successful recruitment exercises have also been undertaken at the Vale Community Resource Service. This included local leaflet delivery and an open day. This work has resulted in an increase in the number of people being recruited. We have agreed to fund a QCF qualification.
Continuing to focus on reducing our reliance on agency staff, where recruitment of permanent staff continues to present challenges.	An enhanced recruitment process is in place and where possible we are recruiting sessional staff to reduce our reliance on agency staff in the future. However, this continues to remain a key priority going forward.
Encouraging staff to become more skilled in using new technology to support agile working and improve service delivery for the people they support.	All staff are office based. However, improvements have been made about flexible working to allow them the ability to work from other bases and home in order to maximise their productivity. Individuals who do not need to be office based have been given the tools to access the IT network from other bases through laptops, tablets, and remote working access.
Continuing to support the implementation of the Social Work Career Progression Framework to ensure that we retain staff and reward them appropriately for their commitment to the Authority through effective training and mentoring and practice development opportunities.	We are committed to the recruitment and retention of staff, both as a Social Services Directorate and more widely as a Council. We offer a comprehensive training package and promote the release and attendance of staff. The Social Worker progression framework launched in September 2016 is now fully embedded as good practice within Social Services to give Social Workers choices in defining their future social care career path. The Framework reflects the requirements of continuing professional development and supports the Authority in developing a skilled workforce to

Workforce plans for 2017/18	Our key achievements and outcomes
	<p>meet the demands of the role.</p> <p>This progression framework has helped to improve recruitment, retention and support to staff. To successfully progress to the next grade staff are required to submit an application that evidences against set criteria the application of their skills, knowledge and experience.</p>
<p>Exploring the issues around recruitment to better understand what the barriers are to attracting the right candidates to enable us to adopt more creative methods of recruitment.</p>	<p>Within Children and Young Peoples Services this work is part of the development of a wider Workforce Strategy that is being conducted in partnership with colleagues across the Social Services Directorate.</p>

In sustaining and improving our services we have identified a range of priority actions for our organisation that we intend to take forward during 2018/19 to ensure that we can continue to effectively support our staff to deliver change.

Our Workforce priorities for 2018/19:

During 2018/19 we plan to:

- Address any vacancies that exist in relation to critical posts by continuing our focus on reducing our reliance of agency staff and exploring more targeted recruitment opportunities. We will also look to identify the barriers to attracting the right candidates to posts whilst developing more innovative methods of recruitment.

This action will enable us to improve the stability of the workforce in critical areas where are reliant on agency staffing.



6.2 Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

The Social Services Budget is carefully monitored throughout the year. To ensure effective monitoring a Budget Programme Board is in place to provide high level oversight and action. This includes regular updates of progress against savings targets as well as an understanding of the growing pressures facing the directorate and the Council. Individual savings schemes and cost pressures are considered by the Council’s Cabinet at appropriate intervals throughout the year.

The Welsh Government has committed to continue supporting local government and its partners in supporting the transformation under the new Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the range of sector challenges that we face. Last year

these resources were transferred into the Revenue Support Grant. Recognising the positive improvements made by working across the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff Social Services departments, both organisations continue to pool these funds together to support this ongoing transformation.

Grant funding was available in 2017/18 in recognition of the pressures associated in supporting people to be discharged from hospital, with an allocation of £369K to the Vale of Glamorgan. In addition, the Welsh Government also provides £111K of new funding to support carers to have respite.

The Vale of Glamorgan continues to benefit from regional approaches supported by the Integrated Care Fund. These projects and service enhancements are wide ranging and focus on a number of areas such as improving our advice and assistance, as well as focussing on reablement to help people to live more independently. There is good evidence that even in the context of significant growth in both demand and complexity of need, that we are managing the budget. This growth is appearing across the sector but most obviously with older people requiring care at home and children requiring placement.

The Social Services Budget Programme Board has delivered a programme of significant savings over many years. This year was no exception and again our savings were fully achieved in 2017/18. This year we recognised that achieving savings alone would not be sufficient. An approach which also addressed growing costs and pressures would be required. To this end we employed innovative approaches to manage rising demand and developed plans to manage increasing costs. In addition significant cost pressures have been supported by the Council and this has enabled Social Services to move to more efficient models of provision yet maintain the essential support that our population needs.

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

We continue to explore and promote opportunities for working collaboratively locally and regionally in order to deliver improved services for customers and deliver savings. Despite the pressure points associated with the existing budgetary pressures and the rising demand for our services we continued to respond positively to these challenges by taking steps to reshape and integrate our services.



Reshaping Services

We have continued to successfully support the Council's Reshaping Services Programme and its associated projects through the delivery of key projects. During 2017/18 we had set a Social Services Budget Savings target of £335K, of which £325K was successfully achieved by year end. £10K of savings were not made in relation to Physical Disabilities Day Services during the year, however work has been undertaken to identify this saving and this will now be delivered during 2018/19.

We achieved our savings target of £80K in relation to the remodelling of our Learning Disability Respite service. These savings were achieved in the 8 months following the closure of Rhoose Road (with an ongoing net saving of £120K for the full year).

During 2017/18, we have also reviewed our Meals on Wheels provision for those in need of care and support. During April 2017 Meals on Wheels provision by the Council was ceased and all service users were signposted to alternative provision. One of these providers is a Social Enterprise known as the 'Food Shed' who provide hot cooked meals daily. In total 41 of the 45 clients in receipt of Meals on Wheels moved to using the Food Shed as an alternative meal provision in 2017. Adopting this approach has also contributed to achieving a £30k saving to the Directorate's budget.

In relation to Direct Payments we over exceeded our target of £100K for 2017/18, where in total £211,829 savings were made. £75,601 of these savings related to new Direct Payment packages and £136,228 of savings were achieved through the recovery of unused funds. Other savings made during 2017/18 included £100K for the Review Team and £15K in relation to the Transport Review work.

In addition to the identified Social Services budget savings target of £335K, an additional £20K of savings were realised during 2017/18 that were originally projected for 2018/19 relating to the Older Persons Day Services.



Our Leadership and Governance

The Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) has consistently commended the way in which the Directorate contributes to very effective corporate governance arrangements. Managers work hard to ensure that the Executive, Scrutiny Committee and the Corporate

Management Team receive the best possible professional advice and information on all Social Services matters, to ensure that our Councillors can hold us to account for our performance.

During 2017/18 we successfully implemented a restructure across the Directorate to ensure staffing structures are 'fit for purpose' to enable us to comply with requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and confidently tackle the social care challenges that lie ahead. The new structure with its reporting lines came into effect in September 2017 that has built resilience and succession planning within teams.

To support this new structure we have invested heavily in succession planning of our future leaders and the development of our staff. The Social Worker Progression Framework launched is now fully embedded as good practice within the Directorate and gives Social Workers choices in defining their future social care career path. From the recent restructure it is evident that our approach to succession planning has been effective as there were a significant number of internal promotions during the restructure.

The governance arrangements for managing our partnership arrangements, working with the NHS, Cardiff Council and the Third Sector have continued to work well. We continue to ensure a coherent approach to this very diverse programme through the Directorate's Regional Steering Group Programme Board, which meets on a monthly

basis to oversee the major partnership reform programmes. In relation to the Governance associated with compliance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, there are well-established work streams in place to address all key aspects of the Act's delivery that is led by Senior Officers within the Vale of Glamorgan Council. To date our focus has been on ensuring compliance with the Act, which has involved working closely with our partners to undertake a complete review of all aspects of our services in relation to the Act.



Our Partnership Working and Collaboration

Through pursuing a progressive collaborative agenda by working closely with a range of health and social care partners we have been able to deliver more integrated support services.

We have further strengthened the work of the Regional Adoption Collaborative (known as the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative VVC) by working as part of the National Adoption Service to raise the profile of adoption to attract more people to consider adoption as an option. These developments have been supported by a Best Value Review of the service which has made the case for investment in the recruitment and assessment of adopters and in adoption support, in line with regional and national priorities. The Collaborative has also launched its new website this year which provides an excellent information source and will enhance our reach and ability to raise awareness of the service.

The regional Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) continues to have a positive impact on the well-being of children and young people in need and particularly those at risk of parental substance misuse. By working in partnership with Cardiff Council and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the multi-disciplinary team works closely with families to deliver targeted and intensive interventions to improve the outcome for each child.

During November 2017, we were just one of 11 agencies who successfully launched the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) at that point in time. The system went live within a 3 month period. All staff have been trained on the new system and are using it effectively across the Directorate. The Welsh Community Care Information Solution (WCCIS) will allow information to be shared between different Health Boards and Social Services departments instantly, helping to deliver improved care and support for the population of Wales. The new system will enable Social Services (adult and children) and a range of community health services (including mental health, therapy and community nursing) to more effectively plan, co-ordinate and deliver services and support for individuals, families and communities. It will support information sharing requirements, case management and workflow for Health and Social Care organisations across Wales.

We have continued to foster strong working relationships regionally with our key partners in relation to implementing the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. For example, we have reviewed and implemented a new Regional Care and Support Assessment and Care Planning tool is now in place for all specialisms in relation to Adult Services (with the exception of working age mental health), which has now been incorporated as part of the new Welsh Community Care Information System. This assessment and care planning tool is fully compliant with the Act and

enables practitioners to focus on personal outcomes and on improving well-being to give individuals a greater voice and control in relation to their care. We have also established a new regional assessment and service delivery plan in place for our Occupational Therapists to ensure that the principles of the Act are embedded within their assessment process.

We have further enhanced and strengthened our partnership working with Cardiff Council by progressing the regional project to develop a 'Regional Workforce Development Unit'. An Options Appraisal and Business Case has been completed and approved outlining the preferred way forward. This new model will see the appointment of a Regional Training Manager and a TUPE transfer of staff to the host authority (identified as Cardiff Council). This model will enable us to develop a more joined up approach delivering social care training and development and will enable us to undertake workforce development and business planning and improvement at a regional level.

There are a number of key partnerships where Social Services plays a central role in relation to safeguarding. These include the Children and Young People's Partnership, the Regional Safeguarding Children Board (RSCB) and the Regional Safeguarding Adults Board (RSAB). Since their re-launch as regional Boards, there has been a series of key achievements. During 2017/18, The Regional Safeguarding Adults Board has undergone a significant consolidation and delivery phase. As a result of feedback received from the National Safeguarding Board we have reshaped our planning focus. A small Business Unit has been established to work with partner agencies to develop sub-group activity and produce more meaningful performance information. We have also successfully launched a [website](#) for the Children and Adults Safeguarding Board. This last year (2017/18) has been a significant time in terms of setting both the adults and children's Regional Safeguarding Boards on a stronger footing.

Our Governance, Leadership and Partnership Priorities for 2018/19

During 2018/19 we plan to focus on:

- Progressing the development and implementation of the Regional Workforce Unit in partnership with Cardiff Social Services.
- Realising further savings in relation to Reshaping Projects associated with Learning Disability Day Services, Direct Payments, Western Vale Older Person's Day Centre, Physical Disability Day Services, Residential Care Services, charging and income generation and Domiciliary Care Commissioning Arrangements.

The Regional Development Unit will enable us to offer a more consistent approach to training and development across the Sector and streamline funding across the region. The unit will enable us to standardise practice and be more responsive to training needs whilst supporting staff to work effectively as well as develop new specialisms that will support succession planning. Progressing the Reshaping Services Agenda, remains a high priority for the Directorate to ensure we can continue to effectively manage the demands on our services whilst balancing the pressures on our budgets.

7. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents



This report summarises, with key information and analysis, the success of the local authority in improving the wellbeing of those people who need our help and support. This is not the only source of information available to members of the public, key partners and service providers. We have a significant amount of background information that sits behind this report and that provide a lot of additional detail about what we do and how we do it. Importantly if something is not mentioned in this report as a key priority it doesn't mean we're not doing it, as there is a lot of activity across social services that play a part in helping us to provide for some of the most vulnerable groups in our community.

To access further information about what we do then these are some of the documents that will provide more detail:

- [Vale of Glamorgan County Council Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020](#)
- The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board Annual report
- [The Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment.](#)
- The [Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment](#) and the associated [Area Plan](#) and [Area Action Plan](#).
- CIW reports
- WAO reports
- Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Board Annual Report
- [Vale of Glamorgan Council Self- Assessment](#)
- [Children and Young People Services: Service Plan](#)
- [Adult Services: Service Plan](#)
- [Resource Management, Safeguarding & Performance](#)