

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT 2013 – 2014

HOW WE HAVE PROVIDED SOCIAL
SERVICES AND OUR PRIORITIES FOR
IMPROVEMENT

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The Heads of Service who manage the three major divisions within the Social Services Directorate have each produced their own report. These are published separately and deal in more detail with all our key priorities, especially in the following areas.

Children and young people services: services for children in need, children looked after by the Council, child health problems and disability, and safeguarding issues.

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/Key%20Documents/Key%20Documents.aspx

Adult services: services for people with a learning disability, mental health problems, frailty because of ageing, a physical disability or sensory impairment or autism, and safeguarding issues.

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/Key%20Documents/Key%20Documents.aspx

Business management and innovation: corporate and political support, leadership and culture, financial stability and resources, planning and partnerships, commissioning and contracting, workforce development, management and management structure, performance quality/information systems and management, equality and diversity, procedural protection services for vulnerable people.

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/Key%20Documents/Key%20Documents.aspx

There is also a Social Services End of Year Performance Overview and Targets for 2014-2015.

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/Key%20Documents/Key%20Documents.aspx

A list of all the Social Services Reports presented to Cabinet and the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee in 2013/14 is available http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/Key%20Documents/Key%20Documents.aspx; all the reports are on the Council's web-site.

This Annual Report can be made available in other languages and formats upon request. Please contact Colette Limbrick, Operational Manager, The Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Offices, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT or electronically to climbrick@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

1. Introduction

My annual report outlines for people in the Vale of Glamorgan how effectively social services are meeting the needs of service users and carers, how we have delivered on our priorities during 2013/14 and what our focus will be for the next 12 months.

Our job in Social Services is to ensure that vulnerable people and those in need are kept safe and that they receive high quality services in their own homes and in settings such as care homes, domiciliary care, day care for children and fostering services.

Most people in the Vale of Glamorgan experience very good care and support from a wide range of service providers, not just those managed directly by the Council. Our focus on improving outcomes for service users has led to an overall reduction in assessed risk and to a better quality of life for many families. This reflects the dedication and commitment of people working in social care services and the value that the Council places upon our work.

Performance in nearly all key areas has been maintained or improved, despite increased demand for services and the pressures this places on staff. Through service transformation and effective resource management, we have achieved our 2014/15 savings target of more than £2 million and ended the year with a balanced budget.

Wherever possible, we have responded to pressures from increasing demand for services and from budget cuts by taking steps to modernise services and to make them more responsive. This means working hard with other parts of the Council, NHS colleagues, third sector partners and independent providers of care to overcome the barriers to 'joined up' working and to develop the right range and quality of services as key priorities. This programme of collaborative working and service redesign is gathering pace, with more and more staff working in posts and in teams which are shared with the NHS, with other councils or with voluntary organisations.

There have been considerable achievements in the past year, including a reduction in the number of children who need to be looked after away from home and positive outcomes from our work to help the NHS deal effectively with pressures on local hospitals last winter. We have created new joint reablement services with the NHS in Barry Hospital, moved the Woodlands Day Service to better premises in Hen Goleg, finished building the new Extra Care housing facility in Barry, commissioned new placements for looked after children in fostering and residential care and increased the number of families able to use the Flying Start service in Barry.

In the face of an economic recovery which to date has not brought real benefits to many vulnerable groups in society and of continuing austerity measures by central government, we are placing even more emphasis on early intervention and preventative services in adult and children's services. It will help residents in the Vale of Glamorgan to tackle at the right time and in the right way problems which threaten their independence or their right to a family life. People tell us that this is

really important to them and also it is the only way to deal effectively with increasing demand for our services and reducing budgets.

I want to thank all those staff working in the Council who have continued to show exceptional professionalism and dedication in delivering services. I am grateful to them for what they have achieved.

Philip Evans
Director of Social Services

2. Summary

Considerable and effective work has been done over the past year to deliver social services to high standards and to develop these services. Actions to safeguard vulnerable children and adults have been performed well. There have been clear benefits to service users and carers.

Considerable challenges to sustaining and improving levels of performance persist. This means that there is much still to be accomplished. The Council is well placed to continue improving and there are realistic plans in place to deal with areas whether further change is needed.

In the face of demographic change, difficult financial times and changing expectations on public services, it is not surprising that further service remodelling and reform are identified as key priorities. The reports from children's and adult services contain numerous references to changes in services which are based on an understanding of the need to promote independence and to focus care and support away from institutional settings and into people's homes. For example, reablement and family support are becoming more central to service modelling and delivery.

This programme of change is assisted by continued improvements in collaborative working and joint commissioning. One of the most striking features to emerge from my report is the amount of partnership activity taking place at both the strategic and operational level. This is not confined to integration of health and social care, although this is taking place on an unprecedented scale. It is also evident in the excellent co-operation between adult and children's services, between social services and other Council services and across geographical boundaries with other local authorities and agencies.

As a result of these change programmes, users and carers are seeing improvements in their experiences of care and support and in wellbeing outcomes. They are increasingly involved in service review and redesign but there is still more to be done to ensure that they are involved consistently across all service user groups.

Increasing demand and reducing resources mean that many services are under pressure. These include services that the Council provides directly (such as children's placements and family support), those we make available through external providers (such as specialist nursing home placements), and services provided by partner organisations (such as child and adolescent mental health services). There are plans in place to tackle these service gaps and good progress has been made but the challenges will persist.

Internal and external evaluation confirms that most of the factors which support organisational capacity across service delivery in both adults' and children's services are generally in very good order. These include a stable and well qualified workforce, good corporate and political support for social services, strong leadership within the Directorate, effective resource management, good performance management and increased attention to commissioning and contracting.

We can demonstrate that the Cabinet and the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee have done a really good job in making well-informed decisions and in providing effective oversight of social services. Other parts of the Council have played their role well, including the Corporate Parenting Panel which takes a keen interest in the way we look after children living away from home.

3. CURRENT EFFECTIVENESS AND OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2014/15

A. Getting the right help to the right people at the right time (access to services; assessment; case planning)

Our aims as set out in the Social Services Plan 2013-2017:

- *To ensure that people have access to comprehensive information about Social Services and can easily contact key staff. Individuals get prompt advice and support (including advice about their eligibility for service) and are well signposted to other services where appropriate.*
- *To ensure that people using Social Services are supported by assessments, care and support plans, which are regularly reviewed.*
- *To provide services which meet the assessed needs of individuals and families.*

What were our key priorities for 2013-2014?

- Co-ordinate preventative services for families in the greatest need including Flying Start, Families First and Intensive Family Support Services.
- Extend the reablement service and improving the hospital discharge service to help tackle winter pressures in hospitals.
- Work with partners to implement the Carers Information and Consultation Strategy which will improve the information available to, and the engagement of, unpaid carers of people with illnesses or disabilities.

What did we do in 2013-2014?

- We continued to tackle child poverty by working with families in need to raise awareness of entitlements to welfare benefits and allowances and to facilitate access to support services that help people into employment and training.
- Further expansion of Flying Start during the past year with four new projects, including our first partnership in childcare within a school, has allowed the Council to be more ambitious in providing support to families most in need.
- Through the Families First investment fund, we set up the Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) team which has supported children and young people to remain living with their family networks and minimised the need for intervention.
- Children and Young People Services re-located to the Dock Office, providing service users and staff with better reception facilities and working environment.

- In partnership with the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, integrated social care and health assessment and care management teams for most Adult Services have been established.
- We have worked with a wide range of partners to begin implementing the Carers Information and Consultation Strategy, ensuring that carers receive timely and useful information about the support available
- Initial work was undertaken on the development of a Joint Communications Hub with the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, which is intended to play a key role in fully integrating locality social care, housing and health teams and services.
- Eligibility criteria for the Vale Community Resource Service were extended, to support hospital discharge and prevent hospital admissions. Further progress has been made also in implementing the Integrated Hospital Discharge Service.

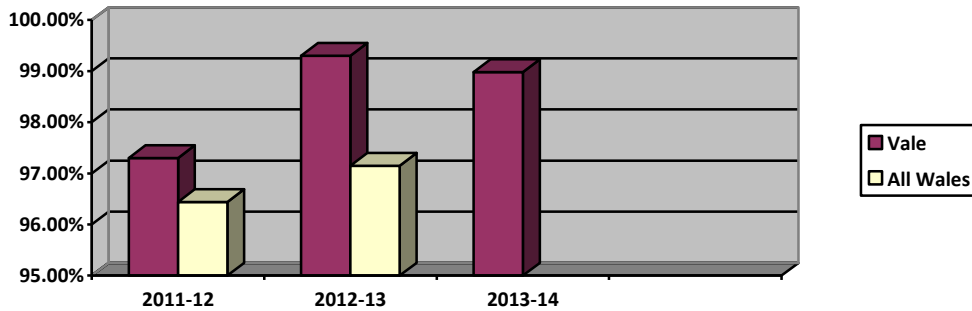
What impact did this have?

- We maintained our performance well above the Welsh average for the timely completion of both initial and core assessments to ensure appropriate support and services are provided to children and families in need.
- We have provided support to a larger number of families by increasing the speed of assessment and extending services that help families in need.
- There is evidence that improved service integration in adult services is providing better experiences for service users who have both social care and health needs by reducing duplication, sharing key information, streamlining assessments, etc.
- We maintained the average length of time an adult can expect to wait for services, despite a significant increase in demand and reductions in staffing.
- We supported an increasing number of older people to regain their independence and remain within their own community.
- Initiatives such as the Vale Community Resource Service and a more integrated approach to hospital discharge have helped us to facilitate a much better response to winter pressures in hospitals than the previous year

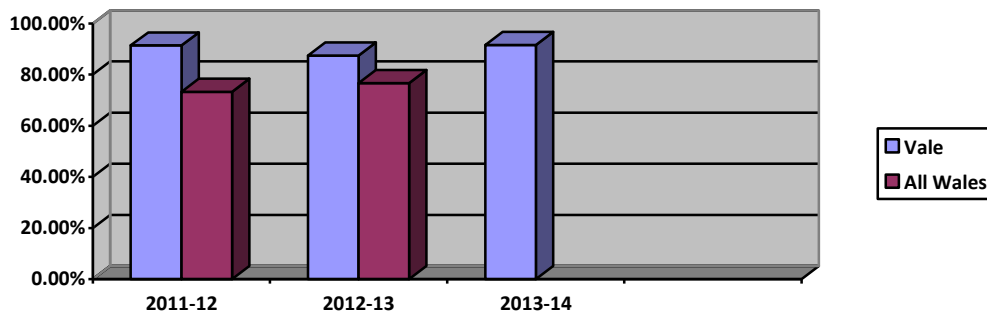
Children

In Children's Services, the focus on prevention and earlier intervention is a key part of the efforts of the Council and its partners to change the way in which services meet families' needs. This approach is being taken forward through a major plan which received political approval in March 2013.

The Division has maintained a high level of performance and exceeded the All Wales average figure in terms of responding to referrals from a wide variety of sources, particularly for decisions made within one working day where a 96% rate for the year was achieved. When there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of being harmed or neglected, the assessment always starts immediately.



The timely completion of Initial and Core Assessment is also critical in ensuring that those children in need of urgent support get the intervention required. We maintained our 89% rate of providing initial assessments in services for children and young people within the timescale and also completed 92% of core assessments within 35 days (compared to the Welsh average of 76% in 2012-13).



Adults

Adult Services continue to go through a period of significant change. One of the key priorities currently is the transformation of services for older people. There has been good work done in joint health and social care 'frailty programmes' across Wales, including the Wyn campaign in the Cardiff and Vale area. However, older people still experience care that is too fragmented leading to confusion and frustration amongst recipients and providers alike. Too often, it's inefficient, over-reliant on crisis responses and too liable to produce detrimental outcomes for older people. We need to replace these old systems and services.

For this reason, all the partner organisations in the Vale of Glamorgan have come together to set out a clear direction for the changes needed. This means a completely

unified approach to delivering adult social care and community health services for older people – with prevention, early intervention, reablement, intermediate and long-term care as part of a single, co-ordinated and community-based system. This is the model that older people want and need to experience - one that is designed to give them a say and the chance to retain control of their lives while providing support and care that guarantees their rights and dignity.

During 2013-14, our efforts to deliver new service models have enabled us to support an increasing number of people at home while reducing the number of people supported in a care home setting. The size of individual care packages has also increased, indicating that we are helping people with more complex needs to remain in their own homes. We also have good evidence that we are screening more effectively at the front door and sign-posting people away from statutory services wherever possible.

In the coming year, we will continue to use additional grant funding from Welsh Government to shape services in ways which focus on the delivery of preventative care and help people to maintain their independence at home. This has the added benefit of reducing demand on acute services and the need for long-term residential care.

Carers

Our performance in completing carers' assessments has remained at a very high level. The Carers Assessment process is based on an internationally recognised model and the Council has received very positive comments from carers in relation to this work. In the nine months to December 2013, 213 Carers' Assessments were completed across the Adult Services division and a total of 296 services provided. Services provided via a Carers' Assessment include Carers' Support Fund up to £300 (most often used to enable carers' breaks), Carers' Emergency Fund (funding contingency care) and Therapies. The full range covers all the support and service areas identified in the Welsh Government Carers Strategy and the former Welsh Government Carers Grants guidance. There are carers' services, funded by the Carers Services Budget, available to carers of people with dementia which do not require an assessment of either the carer or cared for: Vale of Glamorgan Crossroads (respite), Age Connects (Hospital Discharge Service for Carers/respite), Carers Advocate, Carers Handyman, Training, Carers' Emergency Card.

We always organise events during National Carers Week. In 2013, this was planned and delivered with Cardiff Council; the event was well attended and we received positive feedback. Outreach has been provided at a number of carer events including World Mental Health Day, regular participation in Alzheimer's Society Carers' Information programme, and carers' meetings at the Morfa Day Unit at Barry Hospital. We worked with the University Health Board and Cardiff Council to develop and finalise the local response to the new Carers Measure and to implement its requirements. There have been two recent wide-scale carer consultations.

The Family Information Service continues to provide a valued service with a positive audit report received on how it meets its statutory requirements.

We also provide a quarterly newsletter full of information about services, events and schemes to families whose children are registered on the Index of Children with Special and Particular Needs.

"I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate receiving The Index newsletter. There is always so much in there, and it has helped our family in a very positive way with caring for our child and meeting his needs... I hope you can understand how much your work is appreciated, you really have made a positive difference to our family."

What are the main challenges now?

- Ensuring a coherent public services approach to new responsibilities for promoting people's well-being, including the provision of information and advice, preventative and early intervention services.
- Increasing integration and collaborative working with Health, Housing, other Local Authorities, Third Sector partners and private enterprises.
- Maintaining our ability to provide timely and effective assessments and care plans in the face of rising demand and reducing resources, not only in social services but also elsewhere within the Council and across partner organisations..

What are our priorities for 2014-2015?

We will:

- Implement the new integrated unified assessment process across adult social care and health services, to streamline the system, help people have more control over the services they receive and deal with rising demand.
- Revise and streamline our systems for working with other agencies to assess and plan for children in need.
- Use the support provided by the Welsh Government through the Intermediate Care Fund to implement the Joint Communications hub; this will ensure effective screening, signposting and identification of priority needs and promote community wellbeing responses to other needs.
- Review current service models to ensure individuals are able to access appropriate services in a timely manner. This will include examining the capacity of current services and ensuring appropriate allocation of resources.
- Continue working with Cardiff Children's Services and the Cardiff and Vale

University Health Board on the Joint Equipment Service, a Joint Strategy for Children with Disability, and assessment and decision-making around Continuing Health Care criteria for children.

- Develop and promote opportunities for children and young people who have a disability or who undertake a caring role to engage in play, physical and cultural activity.
- Review with the NHS implementation of the Integrated Discharge Service, to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible.
- Extend the provision of reablement rehabilitation services and work with the third sector and business organisations to deliver a preventative, community approach to supporting older people to live as independently as possible,.
- Implement the Cardiff and the Vale Dementia three year plan, with a view to developing an approach which emphasises reablement approach
- Further develop an online employment and skills information resource for individuals, carers and professionals.
- Explore how to develop support options for people who use local NHS drug and alcohol treatment options, to help maintain motivation during this process.

B Providing services which respond to people's needs (range and quality of services)

Our aims as set out in the Social Services Plan 2013-2017:

- *To ensure that people's views on gaps in services and effectiveness of support result in changes and help inform how services are monitored and developed.*
- *To ensure that people are helped to achieve the best possible outcome for them, maximising their independence, developing their abilities and overcoming barriers to social inclusion.*

What were our key priorities for 2013-2014?

- Improve the range of placements for children who are looked after by the Council
- Develop a regional adoption service through the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative
- Consult upon and publish a commissioning strategy for learning disabilities, with the aim of developing our services.
- Continue to implement the Mental Health Measure Welsh Government's

“Together for Mental Health” Strategy and improve response times for community mental health services.

- Improve Occupational Therapy services through the “Assess and Provide” service and additional staff within the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) team.
- Prepare for the consequences of changes to the Independent Living Fund and impact on people with physical disabilities and/or learning disabilities.
- Building on a new locality based plan for re-modelling Older People’s Services and developing greater integration with the NHS.

What did we do in 2013 - 2014?

- A foster carer recruitment strategy was developed including creation of a new social worker post dedicated to recruitment, training and support.
- We invested in more pre-approval foster care training and additional assessment capacity.
- Our foster carer marketing campaign was very successful.
- We met our target of recruiting eight new foster carers, resulting in better outcomes for the children and young people.
- As part of the work to develop a National Adoption Service, the Vale is working with Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Cardiff to create a regional collaborative for improving adoption services.
- Additional preventative services and reablement and rehabilitation services were created in partnership with other local authorities, the NHs and third sector, including co-location of social care and community based health staff within a Community Resource Team base at Barry Hospital.
- Following extensive consultation, a commissioning strategy for learning disabilities was published, to inform further development of the service.
- A Day Opportunities Strategy for people with learning disabilities is helping us to remodel day service provision, working closely with service users and carers.
- Woodlands Day Centre relocated successfully to a more suitable building.
- Work is underway to reconfigure existing sheltered accommodation, to provide specialist reablement units.
- We delivered an improved, more joined up approach to Mental Health services in the Vale.

- There were significant improvements in the waiting times for Occupational Therapy Services.
- Our specialist Sensory Impairment Service has made significant progress in improving the quality of care and support available.

What impact did this have?

Children

There is a high and growing level of demand for children and family services. To ensure that this demand can be met and to go on improving year by year the quality of services available, the Children and Young People Services Commissioning Strategy 2013 - 18 was introduced with four key objectives:

- 1) To support families to stay together by focusing on early intervention and preventative action
- 2) To manage risk confidently and provide support at the “edge of care”
- 3) To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements
- 4) To give children clearly planned journeys through care.

Our performance across a number of important indicators has improved as a result of these actions. This has increased our ability to place children in the Vale rather than outside of the area, resulting in better outcomes for them.

Re-locating Children and Young People’s Services to the Dock Office has provided service users and staff with better reception facilities and working conditions.

Adults

We have been working collaboratively with the City of Cardiff Council and the University Health Board on a number of projects that deliver the required outcomes for the Regional Collaboration Fund (to establish remodelled Adult Social Care services delivery) and the Intermediate Care Fund (to invest in services which support older people to maintain their independence and remain in their own home).

Our focus on remodelling adult services has already led to significant improvements in service efficiency, ensuring that people are supported proportionately and in ways that maintain independence as long as possible. We now have in place faster arrangements for safe discharge and higher levels of independence.

Outcomes for adults using reablement services look promising. Of the 256 service users who had completed their reablement package, nearly 70% were independent and a further 18% required a significantly reduced package of care to meet ongoing needs. Service users have expressed satisfaction with their experience of reablement services. 80% of service users felt they had gained independence as a result of the support they had received and the overwhelming majority were satisfied with the transfer of care from hospital and reported that staff treated them with dignity and respect.

We have focused additional resources on providing an Occupational Therapy follow-up service on people discharged from hospital who were not initially considered suitable for reablement, ensuring that reablement and care packages are reviewed and are the 'right size' in line with changes in need.

We have worked collaboratively with Health and Third sector partners to continue implementing the Mental Health Measure. Mental Health services in the Vale have joined with Vale Housing and the Safer Vale Partnership to ensure that people's mental health is promoted across all sectors.

In Learning Disability Services, we have continued to work in collaboration with Cardiff Council to develop a strategic vision for day opportunities with a focus on delivering a model of provision centred in meeting the specific assessed needs of individual service users and moving away from a building-based model of provision. Improvements already achieved in supported accommodation services have been further enhanced through the process of retendering contracts with independent sector providers. We have also ensured that service users living in supported and other accommodation can make full use of Telecare equipment, to live more independently.

What are the main challenges now?

- Dealing with a high and growing level of demand for children and family services.
- Ensuring that the demand can be met with an improvement in services and through further implementation of the Children and Young People Services Commissioning Strategy 2013 – 2018.
- Meeting the needs of an increasing number of older disabled children and young people needing support, some of whom require 24 hour care.
- Putting in place new and sustainable models of service with an emphasis on joint commissioning with the NHS, shared financial modelling and resource management, increasing the range of service providers, and workforce planning.
- Exploring and costing the changes required to the social care and health economies in delivering changed service models and increasing the range of service providers.

What are our priorities for 2014-2015?

We will:

- Complete the 2015 expansion phase for Flying Start which will provide support to 1,200 children.
- Achieve the target set within our Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy, to increase the number of new Foster Carers during 2014/15.

- Complete development of an 'intensive placement support team' to provide additional support to foster carers dealing with more challenging children and young people, which will ensure that the Council is able to respond to children with more complex needs
- Deliver the provision of smaller units of residential accommodation for children with more complex needs, the first of three being operational by the summer of 2014.
- Consider and act on recommendations arising from the project on Remodelling Services for Children with Disabilities across the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff, to achieve improved outcomes for children.
- Reduce the number of care leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- Increase sustainability and stability of looked after children and young people's placements.
- Continue working closely with partner agencies on helping young people move from Children's Services to Adult Services through good transition planning and support, including updates to the Transition Protocol and underlying policy guidance.
- Implement the Day Opportunities Strategy and action plans in adult services, to ensure that people are enabled to participate in meaningful and more typical daytime activities and to maximise their independence.
- Use the support provided through the Welsh Government's Regional Collaborative Fund to provide further daytime opportunities for people with learning disabilities through the day services strategy across Cardiff and the Vale.
- Work with the Vale of Glamorgan Housing Service and Registered Social Landlords to develop innovative and cost effective housing and support options that help people to remain independent.
- Ensure that new Extra Care accommodation for older people is fully used as an alternative to more institutional models of care, working with providers to ensure that places are allocated according to a shared understanding of needs.
- Use the Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund to extend the reablement service so that more people have the opportunity to maximise their potential for achieving independence, through improved response times in providing home adaptations and appropriate housing placements.

C. Achieving good outcomes for service users and carers(arrangements to protect vulnerable people)

Our aim as set out in the Social Services Plan 2013-2017:

- *To ensure that people at particular risk have their wellbeing promoted and are safeguarded from abuse and exploitation through the Council working in co-ordination with other organisations*

What were our priorities for 2013-2014

- Merge the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) across the Vale and Cardiff and ensure our statutory responsibilities in respect of the joint LSCB are delivered.
- Merge the Vale and the Cardiff and Area Adult Protection Committees into an Adult Safeguarding Board.
- Deliver additional Protection of Vulnerable Adult investigation training to relevant staff as necessary, to support robust investigation of abuse allegations.

What did we do in 2013-2014?

- Having concluded the merger of the Cardiff and Vale LSCBs, we worked with the Council's Safeguarding Steering Group and schools to deliver our safeguarding responsibilities within all the Council's Services (including schools and Human Resources).
- With other agencies which have safeguarding responsibilities, we implemented protocols in respect of neglect and child sexual exploitation, to improve our ability to deal effectively with these cases.
- We are consulting annually with vulnerable adults involved in the formal protection arrangements (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) and using the information to bring about improvements.
- We are surveying annually the views of children involved in the child protection process and reporting this back to the LSCB.
- Additional Protection of Vulnerable Adult investigation training has been delivered to relevant staff, to support robust investigation of abuse allegations.
- Residential Care Homes for older people have received Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Service awareness training, with plans to expand this service to hospitals.

What impact did this have?

Children

We have been able to improve the processes we have in place to safeguard children and young people, with 96% of decisions being made within one day from the point of referral. We have seen a decrease in the number of children on the Child Protection Register from 118 in April 2013 to 86 in March 2014. .

For those Looked After Children where there are particular challenges in securing better health and education outcomes, we continued to improve the percentage of children receiving a health assessment from 66% in 2013 to 70% in 2014 and also increased the number having a Personal Education Plan from 69% in 2013 to 76% in 2014.

We have also worked to ensure that our staff have the skills required to undertake investigations when allegations of abuse are received and that an assessment always starts immediately where there are concerns that a child might be at risk.

Educational achievement of some of our young people leaving care

One young person will be qualifying as a solicitor during 2014, another has finished her degree and qualified as a Social Worker, four others are at University, and a number are taking their A Levels.

Adults

Having established the Corporate Safeguarding Group, we have been able to ensure that safeguarding is a priority for all services in the Council and the lessons from this work have been shared with other organisations. The result has been a more focused way of working when we are planning services and joint responses where safeguarding is a shared priority.

We have maintained an increased focus on the POVA process where we have been keeping individuals and families informed of issues if concerns regarding welfare have been raised. Through sharing safeguarding information within the Directorate, effective action has been taken in dealing with quality issues within a number of independent sector service settings. We have also used detailed information available regarding how the POVA process works to support a review of our effectiveness.

We have worked with independent sector service providers to ensure that they have the knowledge needed to manage their services safely and appropriately.

To ensure that there is consistency in our role in safeguarding both children and adults, the Central Safeguarding Unit established within the Directorate ensures that learning and experience is being transferred between the child and adult protection processes.

What are the main challenges now?

- The Council will need to ensure that there is a sustained momentum in our joint working with other organisations as we seek to ensure that people are protected from harm and abuse. The risk is that the work already undertaken becomes more difficult in the face of other pressures such as the management of the social services budget and any impact on staff.
- We need to keep pace with growing evidence about the many different forms of abuse experienced by children and adults, including child sexual exploitation, trafficking, internet grooming and financial abuse of vulnerable people.
- All Local Authorities will be required to ensure that the new Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act is implemented in line with revised regulations and guidance. In doing so, we will need to meet the challenge of ensuring appropriate resources to support the safeguarding requirements in the legislation, especially the new statutory responsibilities within adult protection.

What are our priorities for 2014-2015?

We will:

- Maintain effective partnership working with all agencies through the new joint Safeguarding Children Board across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Review our responses to forms of abuse where there is national or regional evidence of increasingly prevalence (such as child sexual exploitation, trafficking and internet grooming).
- Consider the resource implications of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act and case law for both the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards teams.
- Train appropriate staff in adult services in investigative skills, to ensure that we identify issues early enough to make a difference

D. Helping staff to do their best (workforce issues; performance management)

Our aims as set out in the Social Services Plan for 2013-2017:

- *To use performance management information as a key means of improving customer outcome and the services provided.*
- *To ensure that robust workforce planning arrangements are in place within the Directorate.*

What were our priorities for 2013-2014?

- To produce a comprehensive Directorate Workforce Plan.

- Provide an end of year performance statement setting out how our robust workforce arrangements contribute to the delivery of services

What did we do in 2013-2014?

- The staff group within social services is generally stable and well-experienced. Our use of agency staff is kept at low levels. Where staff turnover has occurred, the Directorate has been successful in recruiting to vacant posts within acceptable timescales, thereby minimising the impact on service delivery.
- The Social Services Workforce Plan 2013-17 was approved. It helps us to ensure that a sufficient, skilled, safe and focused workforce is available to meet assessed needs. The plan addresses issues of recruitment and retention, vetting, registration, competency, qualifications, skill-mix, training needs and support requirements
- The Performance Development and Review System (PDRS) is in place for individual staff and, in 2013/14, 100% of staff completed the process. An annual qualification and training needs audit is completed for all Vale commissioned social care sector providers and an analysis of the audit and PDRS data enables training to be planned on the basis of the needs of the whole social care sector in the Vale.
- The Team Manager Development Programme is helping to ensure that current and future managers are equipped with the skills required to manage a modern social service.
- We worked with the wider social care sector to ensure that the training provided meets their requirements and independent and voluntary service providers received 27% of all training provided.
- The uptake of new e-learning modules has been supported though purchasing licenses and the provision of IT equipment for social care providers to use with their staff.
- As part of the SWIFT Consortium across five local authorities, the electronic case management systems used in children's and adult services have been revised to ensure that these are less bureaucratic and time consuming.
- In partnership with Cardiff Council and as part of a national initiative, the assessment system for older people system has been simplified, with the development of new forms for completion by staff. Work was started during the year to modify the IT system to support these new ways of working.
- We have ensured that the new performance management system has been implemented in social services, with information being reported to the corporate centre and to elected members within agreed timescales.

- Managers within the Directorate have maintained effective systems for managing performance, monitoring outcomes, achievements and shortfalls, and taking corrective action as required.
- We established the Space Project in Children's Services to relocate staff to the Dock's Office and improve the reception and working environment for service users and staff.
- Against a backdrop of improving performance year-on-year, we have worked hard to assist staff to either remain in work or to support them back to work after a period of absence, including increased take up of flu inoculation. This has resulted in reduced absence levels among staff groups where sickness absence management had been more problematic. The Directorate experienced a lower level of absence due to ill health during 2013/2014 than in the previous financial year.

What impact did this have?

We have continued our annual qualification and training needs audit for all social care sector providers. In addition, and as part of our commitment to support staff in key partner agencies, 27% of all training provided during 2013/14 was delivered to the independent and voluntary sector (exceeding our target of 25%). We have been able to promote the greater use of e-learning through advertising, presentations and direct support. Working to increase access to the Learning Pool has supported this initiative.

To date three team managers, five practitioner managers and one assistant team manager have successfully completed the Team Management Development Programme. In addition, two managers are being supported to undertake Level 5 QCF in Leadership and Management and three are being supported to undertake the Institute of Leadership and Management QCF Level 3 Management.

We have been able to simplify the IT system to enable the timely and accurate reporting of information within the Unified Assessment Process (UAP) and the Integrated Childcare System (ICS). This has built on the work undertaken to streamline the UAP itself where service users will experience a speedier and more integrated assessment from health and social care staff. Improving the recording of performance management information means we are able to share information within the Directorate and to the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.

We have continued to undertake audits of services during the year to ensure the quality of services and to assist with proposed changes to ways of working. During the year, an audit was undertaken with regards to out of county placements for working aged adults and for processes within the Learning Disability Services.

There is an extensive range of policies and procedures in place across the Directorate, which establish quality standards for the service. These are readily available to staff. A review framework is in place to ensure that policies are updated at least every three years and more regularly where policy and legislative changes dictate. Policy consultation arrangements are in place, together with robust process ratification via the

senior management team.

What are the main challenges now?

- Regardless of the financial challenges faced by the Council, the Social Services Directorate recognises the importance of continuing to examine how services are delivered and using resources to achieve outcomes for service users. Our staff and the staff of other social care service providers in the Vale remain our best asset in delivering first class services. We will continue to improve levels of skills and knowledge, to enhance their impact.
- The new requirements under the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 on all Local Authorities means that our staff across the Directorate will need new information and support to ensure that not only are we compliant with the new law when it is implemented but also that it is used to drive improvements in the delivery of services.

What are our priorities for 2014 - 2015?

We will:

- Meet the performance targets set by the Council for social services.
- Relocate the Community Support Team to Hen Goleg and, in collaboration with our partners, look at further ways to promote integrated working with the NHS.
- Deliver training for Day Services staff working with adults on the autistic spectrum.
- Continue to work with local providers of social care support to improve their skills and experience of providing support services to people using substances and those undergoing rehabilitation/treatment.
- Deliver training for staff to ensure they are delivering the new Integrated Assessment process.
- We will consider the options for increasing the scale on which social care training is delivered in partnership with other local authorities.
- We will plan a programme of training to support the changes planned within Social Services in the coming year. This will include issues arising as a result of preparing to implement the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act and the changes being made to services as a result of service reconfiguration and integrated working.

E. Developing quality services that deliver best value (planning and partnerships, commissioning and contracting, resource management)

Our aims as set out in our Social Services Plan for 2013-2017:

- *To ensure that services are designed to reflect community need, that people who may use or need services and staff help to identify priorities and that clear models of services are identified in commissioning strategies and annual commissioning plans.*
- *To have in place clear planning and programme management processes which help to ensure an appropriate range of services that deliver equity of access, joined up services and best value from a variety of providers with defined, proportionate budgets directed to meeting service priorities.*

What were our priorities for 2013-2014?

- Complete agreed service models and commissioning plans for all areas of service.
- Continue the work with Cardiff Council and the Cardiff & Vale UHB to develop and implement integrated services.
- Create an adult service-remodelling unit with Cardiff Council, if grant funding is made available from the Welsh Government.
- Consider the options for the delivery of long term care, to address the current shortfall in independent sector nursing home provision, particularly in relation to people with dementia related illnesses.

What did we do in 2013-2014?

- We have helped the Council to make and implement difficult decisions, including savings proposals and service redesign.
- Through service transformation and effective resource management, we have achieved our savings target of more than £2 million for 2013/14 and ended the year with a balanced budget. There is an effective Budget Programme Board in place for Social Services with high level political and corporate engagement and oversight.
- We have developed proposals for new affordable service models of care through the service reconfiguration programme.
- We have increased the range of services delivered on a regional basis through the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative of ten local authorities (SEWIC), where there has been a business case that demonstrates this will improve quality and/or efficiency. This includes the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs), which manages the purchase of independent sector

placements for looked after children, and the high cost regional brokerage and procurement hub which does the same for adult learning disability and mental health placements.

- Service models and commissioning plans for three key service areas are being implemented to change the service models for older people, people with learning disabilities and children and families. These set out how the Council intends to secure the services that people will need (both now and in the future), whether these are provided by social services directly, by the third sector, by the private sector or by organisations such as stakeholder cooperatives. We seek to ensure that improvements in the range and quality of services are based on robust information about need, demand, performance, costs and potential service providers.
- We have completed the actions with regard to service commissioning that were detailed in the Directorate's three-year Change Plan.
- We have created a joint commissioning unit with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and Cardiff Council.
- We have continued to work with Cardiff Council and the University Health Board to develop and implement integrated services.
- We have led the Regional Collaboration Fund initiative to ensure this £650,000 grant-funded programme across the Vale and Cardiff delivers the anticipated outcomes within the timescales agreed.
- The key partnerships in which Social Services play a lead role continue to work well. These include the Health Social Care and Well Being Partnership, the Children and Young People's Partnership, the Area Adult Protection Committee (AAPC) for adults and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). During the year, the AAPC and LSCB were re-launched as regional Boards covering the Vale and Cardiff. The Council also has a very active Corporate Parenting Panel, to make sure that all the children and young people it looks after receive the support, care and protection they deserve.
- The Council remains committed to the work of the Integrated Health and Social Care Programme Board, with senior political and corporate management representation at all levels. During the year, the governance arrangements for integrated working have been revised to increase the pace and scale of change. The structure also includes representation of the third sector. These arrangements will assist in how we plan how we can work together to help shape health and social services for our communities over the next three to five years and beyond.
- The key strategic plans for the Social Services Directorate in 2013/2014 were the Directorate Service Plan 2013-17 and the Budget Programme, which has been in place since November 2011. The Service Plan provides a four year overview of the Directorate's work and sets out our contribution towards achieving the Council's key outcomes and objectives, as outlined in the

What impact did this have?

Recognising the challenges faced in setting our budgets, we have brought forward a number of savings proposals and service redesigns to both meet the consequences of a reduction in available expenditure and also the importance of providing different levels of support to key groups of people most in need.

Having increased the range of services delivered on a regional basis through the SEWIC framework, we are able to work more collaboratively with local authorities across south east Wales pooling our resources, buying power and strategic decisions helping to provide an increasing range of services for both children and older people in a more efficient way.

In completing our commissioning plans, we have been able to continue our joint working with the University Health Board and Cardiff Council, especially around integrated services and the remodelling of services for older people. The most visible outcome of these partnerships has been the use of the Regional Collaboration Fund. This has enabled us to:

- improve reablement services for older people (in part by locating a wide range of staff together in Barry Hospital and to facilitate mobile working);
- introduce a new approach to integrated assessment
- review cases more robustly cases involving people with learning disabilities; and
- increase the number of Occupational Therapists.

We have continued to support joint appointments and there are now three senior posts within adult services that are shared appointments with either City of Cardiff Council or Local Authority or Cardiff and Vale UHB. Staff are being provided with joint training and single management. They have very quickly broken down unhelpful boundaries and started to deliver co-ordinated care. As a consequence, more people are being helped to live independently.

The independent and voluntary sectors and other potential service providers have a clear understanding of the intentions of the local authority and its partners and there is constructive dialogue with them. For example, prevention and early intervention are a major theme within the range of contracts in place with third sector organisations and in innovative voluntary services such as those in Dinas Powys and the Friendly Advantage befriending schemes funded by Big Lottery. All Service Level Agreements with the third sector have been reviewed regularly to ensure that they do meet the requirements of the commissioning strategies. We have concentrated on maintaining good relations through engagement from both operational and contracting staff, and at a strategic level through the work on remodelling adult social care.

We continued to work with Cardiff Council and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board to overcome problems we all face in securing sufficient long-term nursing home placements. During 2013/2014, the two local authorities began looking at collaborating in procurement of domiciliary care services and this will be continued in 2014/2015. A

template for developing a Market Position Statement was agreed during the year and this will be completed in 2014/2015.

The Provider Performance Protocol was used on a number of occasions during the year as some service providers struggled to meet the quality standards required. The protocol enabled the Council and its partners to deal with issues of poor performance in a considered and timely manner.

This is the first time that the whole Directorate has combined to produce a unified service plan. It outlines what the Directorate is trying to achieve, why this is important, how it will be achieved, how we will monitor progress and what success will look like. The plan combines service planning with other key planning documents. Helping to implement these plans has been a priority objective across the Council and representatives from across all directorates have been actively involved. The Director is responsible for reporting progress on the plans through the corporate and political processes within the Council. Actions within the Directorate Service Plan are reported through the political process on a quarterly basis. The Budget Programme is reported on a monthly basis.

What are the main challenges now?

- The Social Services Directorate is committed to making savings of at least £700,000 in 2014/15 and to preparing for even more stringent budget reductions in following years.
- The Council will need to ensure that it continues to receive good value for money from the services it commissions and, in doing so, reflects the strategic direction of the Council in wanting to provide services to people more locally in the Vale, whether in supporting children (within their own families and in care) or adults in their own homes.
- As a Council, we need to continue contributing to changed service models while also managing the pressures arising from both increasing demand and reduced budgets and staffing levels. We understand the challenge of co-ordinating an improvement agenda which is shared by a wide range of stakeholders, especially service users and carers.
- Because of the difficult financial context and increasing demands for services, the only sustainable answer for social services in the longer-term is for the Council and its partners to change the pattern of services. This work must be based upon an understanding that we need to reduce dependence wherever possible and focus services on prevention, using the strengths within families and communities as key resources. This requires:
 - reshaping services in line with new models and developing our commissioning strategies, partly to divert demand but also to make sure that people get the right support at the right time;
 - finding new types of service providers while helping current providers to become more efficient and reduce costs, where possible;

- integrating services;
- regionalising services;
- even better recourse management; and
- some retrenchment.
- Our commissioning strategies and plans will need to reflect the Council's commitment to working with a wide range of service providers, including social enterprises and cooperatives in ensuring that the diverse needs of service users and carers.
- Over the last six months, the Vale Youth Offending Service has seen an increase in the number of young people sentenced to custody. ,
- Implementation of the Mental Health (Wales) Measure is still in progress. The Council and the Local Health Board will need to find ways of working together to redesign services so that they are more closely aligned to the needs of service users.
- Local government is committed to putting in place this year a national adoption service spanning central, regional and local accountabilities. This Council is leading on the work needed to put in place a regional collaborative called Vale, Valleys and Cardiff.
- The Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 will have a profound impact. There will be some increased rights to services, especially for carers. Community expectations will need to change if local authorities are to manage the demographic and resource challenges and implement the fundamental change. Local government, Local Health Boards and other public bodies will be required to work together even more in meeting new responsibilities for improving people's well-being.

What are our priorities for 2014 - 2015?

We will:

- Deliver budget savings while making sure that the Council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities for providing care and support through a well-managed Budget Programme.
- Make good use of the Regional Collaboration Fund and the new Intermediate Care Fund, in line with the proposals submitted to Welsh Government, to change service models in adult services as set out in our Commissioning Strategies.
- Reduce the number of placements with Independent Fostering Agencies.

- Make best use of our commissioned local residential provision for looked after children once it is operational.
- Host the regional adoption collaborative for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff.
- Refresh our Youth Offending Prevention Strategy with the aim of ensuring appropriate identification and delivery of services to children and young people most at risk of offending and anti-social behaviour.
- Review use of custody levels in partnership with Cardiff YOS and Cardiff and Vale Magistrates Court
- Consult with Cardiff Council and the Cardiff and Vale UHB about a joint Commissioning Strategy for Mental Health Services.
- Explore with our partners the cost and benefits of re-organising the provision of Community Mental Health Teams, to ensure our services are able to meet the challenge of increasing demand and expectations from primary care referrers while continuing to offer quality secondary care interventions.
- Reconfigure Locality Services to deliver a more integrated model of health and social care services that can meet the demands of the population in the future.
- Consider the extent to which Telecare can be used to better support people with dementia and strategies to increase its uptake.

4. Prospects for Improvement

i. Corporate and Political Support

Senior staff in the Directorate have a defined role in meetings of the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and the Council. At the level of governance, the Director of Social Services is encouraged to play a key role in advising the Executive on policy-making and budget-setting. During the year, the Director held meetings on a monthly basis with the Leader of the Council and provided regular briefings to Cabinet Members. The Heads of Service also met regularly with their Cabinet members to ensure that they were fully aware of issues affecting social services at all times.

During 2013/2014, the revised corporate management structure within the Council was fully operational. The Council remains strongly compliant with the statutory guidance on the role and accountabilities of the Director of Social Services issued by the Welsh Government in June 2009 and Social Services continue to be managed in one Directorate. The Director is a member of the Corporate Management Team and acts as Deputy Managing Director on a rotational basis with the other Service Directors.

Recent inspections confirm that the Directorate continues to benefit from stable and effective political and corporate support in delivering its responsibilities. 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. This includes identifying priorities, challenges and risks.

Governance arrangements for managing the extensive programme of collaborative working with the NHS, Cardiff Council and the Third Sector has been clarified and strengthened during the year. All the partners have signed a wide-ranging collaborative agreement.

ii. Leadership and Culture

The overall senior management structure for the social services directorate has been stable. There has been a change within the senior management team with a new Head of Children and Young People's Services appointed in September 2013.

The Social Services Management Team consists of the Director, Heads of Service and Operational Managers from across the Directorate. The team has met on a regular basis, ensuring that the key strategic and service issues for social care are debated and appropriate decisions made to support service delivery and improvement. There is a strong professional culture and a willingness by staff to accept responsibility for their own practice and learning. We strive to ensure that there is a clear vision and direction for Social Services in order to gain staff commitment to high standards and continuous improvement. Our work with Welsh Government policy and professional leads, the service and workforce regulators, audit and inspection bodies is characterised by mutual respect and a willingness to cooperate in improvement activity.

The Council is committed to collaborative action where this benefits our residents and helps to ensure good use of resources, effectiveness and consistency. The Directorate continues to show commitment and leadership with regard to partnership working with the Local Health Board and Cardiff Council, the third sector and private providers. Governance arrangements for integrated working rest with the strategic leadership governance board for social care and health. This management structure includes the most senior political and corporate leaders across the two local authorities, the health board and the local third sector organisations. Managers have continued to receive very detailed and timely management and financial information to assist them in managing their services.

iii. Financial Stability and Resources

Resource management is a key priority for Social Services. Establishing the Budget Programme Board has ensured that the financial position within Social Services continues to be monitored and managed at a senior level across the Council.

2013/14 proved to be a very difficult financial year for social services. As well as dealing with increased demand for services and the adverse budgetary effects of a cap on the charges that could be paid by those receiving domiciliary and day care services, Social Services were also required to make cost savings of £2 million to meet the corporate requirements of the overall Council budget.

Detail of revenue budget for 2013/2014 is shown in the table below.

| Service | Budget (£'000) |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Children and Young People | 15,083 |
| Adult Services | 36,124 |
| Business Management and Innovation | 298 |
| Directorate Total | 52,348 |

In children's services, there were pressures on the Children's Placemen budget. In adult services, expenditure on Community Care Packages continued to grow; it is the Directorate's most volatile budget and the one most dependent upon levels of service demand which are not entirely within the Council's direct control as a result of the demographic pressures in relation to older people and the above inflation increase in fees for care home placements.

Despite the difficult context, the 2013/14 year end financial position for the Social Services revenue budget was a £5k favourable variance. £2.241M of the Social Services Fund had been approved for use in 2013/14; however, this funding was not required at year end.

This out turn should be seen in the light of savings to be achieved in future years. There are considerable savings targets for 2014/15 and 2016/17. These savings are the minimum level of savings that will be required and, with the continuation of central government austerity measures, it is inevitable that these saving targets will increase.

iv. Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity form an integral part of our service planning. The Council has a range of policies in place to ensure equality including policies regarding the Welsh Language, Equal Opportunities' and Race Equality. Progress against the actions detailed in each policy is required from the Directorate. All divisions within the Directorate are working towards the Vale Equalities Scheme which has identified four levels of achievement.

In December 2012 the Deputy Minister for Social Services launched “More Than Just Words...” which is a strategic framework to strengthen Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. A three year action plan is contained within the Framework and all local authorities are required to report their progress against the targets. There is a commitment to working with the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative to coordinate our progress against the national action plan. At the end of the first year of the action plan, progress has been made in identifying Welsh language speakers within the workforce so that service users and their carers can work with the service in a language of their choice. Work is ongoing to analyse the data received by the Council with regard to the prevalence of people who wish to use Welsh in some way when they receive services.

As well as distributing information throughout the community, we continue to make available a range of leaflets through the corporate contact centre to provide enquirers and those referred to social services with a bespoke set of information. The Vale of Glamorgan Care Directory, available at a range of outlets, offers advice and signposting to people looking to address their own care needs independently. It remains our most requested publication. The Council relaunched its website in 2013 and we were active participants in the redevelopment work. The Department continues to work with its partners to produce joint information and signposting where practicable.

All service changes within Social Services have been the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment and these are now included as appropriate in Cabinet Reports.

v. Involving Users and Carers

The Older People’s Forum in the Vale continues to be very active advocates and provide an important voice in service development issues such as the new extra care scheme.

As part of our commitment to shifting power to service users and carers wherever possible and to engaging them in the evaluation and design of services, we have improved our consultation framework. It is now organised to reflect service priorities and consultation exercises are now timed to support any service reconfiguration work being undertaken within the Directorate. Each exercise considers the most appropriate method of engaging with that service user group, with flexibility to adapt methods for individual service users as required. Reports and issue logs are prepared and shared with service areas to identify recommendations and existing good practice to inform service improvements.

Consultation exercises are now timed to support any service reconfiguration work being undertaken. An annual report outlining the findings of the consultation work has been considered by the Social Services Management Team for the first time in 2013/2014. The report outlines a number of findings.

- Service users are generally satisfied with the services that they receive.
- Information regarding services is generally appropriate.

- There are gaps in services, particularly with regard to respite services.

vi. Dealing with Complaints

The NHS and Community Care Act (1990), Children Act (1989 Part III) and the National Minimum Standards and Regulations (2002) for Fostering Services require local authorities to maintain a representations and complaints procedure for social services functions.

The Social Services Directorate believes strongly that handling complaints well is a crucial part of its responsibilities. A good complaints handling system is a vital part of ensuring that our service users receive the service to which they are entitled. It enables the Directorate to:

- acknowledge quickly when mistakes have been made;
- put them right effectively and to apologise where appropriate;
- ensure that we learn lessons from complaints.

Some people who contact Social Services are not sure if they want to make a formal complaint. In these cases, the Complaints Officer offers to meet with them to try and help clarify the issues and listen to their concerns. The Complaints Officer made 77 visits to service users/families of service users during the reporting period. No service users/families of service users visited progressed to their making a complaint as the Complaints Officer was able to alleviate their anxieties or to signpost them to other services. This process has achieved a reduction in potential complaints escalating from 96 progressing to stage 1 in 2010-11, 41 in 2011-12 to none last year.

During 2013-2014, four Social Services cases in respect of the Vale of Glamorgan were received by the Ombudsman. Three of these complaints were not investigated but there was a case, carried forward from 2012/2013, which produced a finding of maladministration in one area of work.

Number of representations received by the Directorate

| | Enquiries* | Complaints |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Adult Services | 22 | 17 |
| Children and Young People Services | 22 | 32 |
| Business Management and Innovation | 9 | 5 |
| Total | 53 | 54 |

There has been a decrease in the overall number of complaints in the past year, from 56 to 54. To understand the volume of complaints vis-à-vis the number of service users, the proportion was approximately 0.35% in adult services (5419 people receiving social services or referred during the year and 17 complaints) and 1.62% in Children and Young People Services (1973 children receiving social services or referred during the year and 32 complaints). The higher proportion of complaints per service user in Children and Young People Services reflects the fact that families are more likely to experience intervention on an involuntary basis, as the result of safeguarding concerns.

Stages at which complaints were resolved

| | Adult Services | Children and Young People Services | Business Management and Innovation |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|
| Stage 1 Local Resolution | 13 | 31 | 4 |
| Stage 2 Formal Consideration | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Stage 3 The Independent Panel | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 17 | 32 | 5 |

87 compliments were received during 2013-14. All the compliments were about the excellent service or support the service user had received and often named specific staff

If you are in need of help from social services and eligible for assistance, we will support your right to:

- have a safe home and community
- maintain your personal dignity and self-respect
- increase your independence;
- improve your quality of life and ability to make use of opportunities
- improve your health and emotional well-being
- achieve economic security
- exercise choice and control, wherever possible
- make a positive contribution to your community.

The Vale of Glamorgan Social Services Charter