

1. Introduction

The service areas of Children and Young People Services, Adult Services, and Resources Management and Safeguarding combine to form the Social Services Directorate. The Directorate has a wide range of statutory duties and responsibilities. Its primary role is to protect, support and meet the social care needs of vulnerable children and adults, helping them to achieve the best quality of life possible.

1.1 What we do – Children and Young People

Children and Young People Services provide help to children and young people who are eligible for care and support. These include children requiring support, who are looked after by the Council, who have left care, who have additional needs and /or disabilities or who need to be safeguarded.

Our broad functions are as follows:

Our Teams:

The Intake and Family Support Team incorporates the Division's Duty function and receives all initial enquiries including child protection issues. Working effectively with partners with a focus on improving integrated working, the Team provide assessment and signposting to ensure families receive the right level of support at the right time. Where needs are identified requiring the involvement of statutory services, a care and support plan is developed and the same Team continue to support those children and families in receipt of this support.

The Care Planning and Proceedings Team ensures a focus on pre and care proceedings allowing team members the time to achieve timely and effective planning for those children whose plans are subject to PLO or before the Court. Where the child's plan is adoption this work is held within the Team to support continuity until the Adoption Order.

The **Children Looked After Team** provides a dedicated Team for children looked after. The Team support children and young people voluntarily accommodated or subject of Care Orders, with the exception of those with a plan for adoption. The Team's focus is on enabling children looked after to achieve their potential through stable placements, appropriate education and positive attachments. Where children require therapeutic support, this is readily available.

The **Fifteen Plus Team** support young people aged 15 and over who are looked after by the Local Authority, young people who are homeless aged between 16 and 18 years, and all care leavers up to the age of 25 years. The Team's commitment to engagement is promoting the increasing involvement of young people not only in their own lives but in improving services for others.

The **Child Health and Disability Team** provide services to children and young people who have a severe or significant learning disability, physical disability, sensory impairment or profound communication impairment. They have strong multi-agency links, particularly with Health, and are currently engaged in regional working to the benefit of disabled children and their families. The Team are also piloting an extension to the service for those with additional needs.

The **Youth Offending Service** is a statutory multi-agency partnership responsible for preventing offending and further offending in the Vale of Glamorgan. Working closely with teams across Children and Young People Services and its partners, the service promotes preventative working that seeks to prevent offending where possible.

The **Placements Team** assesses and approves foster placements for Vale of Glamorgan children in conjunction with our Fostering Panel. This includes an increasing number of kinship placements enabling children to remain within their wider family network. The Team provides support to foster carers, with a commitment to promoting the recruitment and retention of local carers. Identifying and commissioning placements for children looked after, both within our internal resources and within the independent sector when an internal placement cannot be identified is a key part of the Team's role. The Team includes a therapeutic service working with children and their carers to promote placement stability and prevent disruption.

The **Regional Adoption Collaborative** hosted by the Vale of Glamorgan, operates across the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil assessing and approving adopters, providing support and family finding for children whose plan is adoption. The Collaborative is one of the five regional adoption collaboratives across Wales that form part of the National Adoption Service.

Families Achieving Change Together is a Families First early intervention and prevention service enabling families to make positive changes, reducing the number of families developing more complex and challenging needs. The ability of the service to work effectively at and before the front door of statutory children's services is central to effective prevention.

Flying Start is Welsh Government funded and provides support to families to give children a better start in life. Its aim is to improve a child's development, health and well-being in preparation for school in a way that promotes a child's ability to fulfil their potential. Flying Start works in partnership with statutory children's services where children involved with Children and Young People Services live in the Flying Start area.

In partnership with our workforce, we have reviewed our structure to add increased resilience at the front door, to create a dedicated team for children looked after and to enable adequate resources for the completion of pre and care proceedings. Social Work caseloads are carefully monitored to ensure capacity for direct work with children and their families and the completion of core tasks. Business support has been further enhanced to ensure there is adequate support for Social Workers and there are additional resources in our placements team.

Creating an environment within which staff enjoy their work, are supported to deliver within demanding and challenging roles, and to have every opportunity to develop their skills and experience that enables us together to promote positive outcomes for children and their families are central priorities for the Division.

1.2 The Purpose of Our Service Plan

This plan identifies how we will contribute towards achieving the Council's vision – **'Strong communities with a bright future'**.

Our Service Plan outlines our key priorities for the coming year and how we will manage our resources to deliver them. The plan gives an overview of our service, what we aim to achieve, why this is important, how we will achieve it, how we will monitor progress and what success will look like.

It is important that as a Council we have shared values and our service is committed to delivering its priorities within the context of the Council's core values:

- **Ambitious:** Forward thinking, embracing new styles of working and investing in our future
- **Open:** Open to different ideas and being accountable for the decisions we take

- **Together:** Working together as a team that engages with our customers and partners, respects diversity and is committed to quality service
- **Proud:** Proud of the Vale of Glamorgan: proud to service our communities and to be part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

Our Council's priorities are contained in the Corporate Plan 2016-20 and are expressed as well-being outcomes and objectives. These have been decided upon following consultation with key stakeholders including citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan. Our well-being outcomes and objectives are:

Well-Being Outcome	An Inclusive and Safe Vale	An Environmentally Responsible and Prosperous Vale	An Aspirational and Culturally Vibrant Vale	An Active and Healthy Vale
Well-Being Objective	Reducing poverty and social exclusion	Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.	Raising overall standards of achievement.	Encouraging and promoting active and healthy lifestyles.
Well-Being Objective	Providing decent homes and safe communities	Promoting sustainable development and protecting our environment.	Valuing culture and diversity	Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.

The well-being objectives illustrate the contribution Council services will make to achieving the Well-being Goals for Wales. The Well-being Goals have been established to ensure that all relevant bodies in Wales are working towards the same vision as part of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act is intended to make public bodies think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. The contribution our service will make to the Well-being Goals is highlighted throughout our Service Plan.

1.3 Developing Our Plan

Our Service Plan is informed by and reflects the environment within which our service operates. As well as contributing to the Well-being Outcomes and Objectives from our Corporate Plan, our service has taken the following into consideration when drafting our plan:

- The Council's Annual Report (Improvement Plan Part 2) that provides an overall position statement for the year (2017/18) in relation to the key outcome areas associated with Corporate Plan delivery as well as the key aspects and enablers associated with our integrated planning e.g. workforce, financial, ICT, assets etc.;
- Director of Social Services Annual Report 2017/18;
- Our Social Services Budget Programme that includes planned service savings and efficiencies associated with the implementation of the Council's Reshaping Services Programme;
- Our response to findings from Internal Audit Reviews and CIW Reviews and Inspections including the Fostering Service inspection and Children's Services inspection;
- Requirements associated with meeting our duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. With a particular emphasis on the planning and promotion of prevention services, provision of advice and information, assistance services, eligibility and assessment of need and priorities associated with any joint/regional commissioning of services; and
- Emerging priorities and developments arising from collaborative arrangements at a regional level such as Regional Safeguarding Board, the Regional Steering Group and its associated work streams as well as developments associated with Regional Adoption Collaborative, the National Fostering Framework, developments in relation to Reflect, the Integrated Family Support Service and the Disability Futures Programme.

1.4 How We Work - Sustainable Development

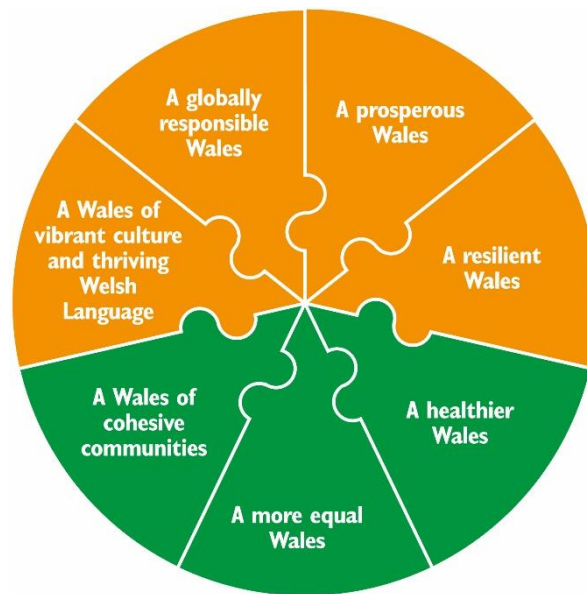
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act:

"You must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by taking account of the sustainable development principle".

The sustainable development principle means considering how actions are taken to support continuous improvement by:

- Looking to the **long term** – for us this means planning for the future and taking a strategic approach to ensure services are sustainable and that we understand the future need and demand for services.
- Taking an **integrated** approach – for us this means thinking about the needs of our customers and working with our partners.
- **Involving** the population in decisions – for us this means engaging with our residents and customers, including the business community and ensuring that we are listening to a wide range of views to inform our thinking.
- Working in a **collaborative** way – for us this means recognising we can achieve more and deliver better services by working as part of a team, for example by working with the Third Sector, Town and Community Councils and neighbouring authorities.
- Understanding the root causes of issues and **preventing** them – for us this means being proactive in our thinking and understanding the need to tackle problems at source for example by undertaking needs assessments to inform our priorities.

In response, our Corporate Plan 2016-20 has reflected on the ways of working ensuring that it is consistent with our approach to planning for the future. These considerations are also reflected in the actions we will take as a service to deliver the Council's priorities. The chart below shows how this service area contributes to the Well-being Goals as defined in the Act. Our contribution is set out in more detail in our action plans which can be found at Appendices A and B.



2. Our Challenges in 2019/20

Children and Young People Services continue to face unprecedented pressures. The continued pace and scale of the changes demanded of public sector organisations in recent years poses a significant risk to both the Service and the Council in achieving its Well-being Outcomes. If these challenges are left unchecked this could affect our ability to secure continuous improvement, our contribution to the Corporate Plan Well-being Outcomes and ultimately impact on our ability to achieve meaningful outcomes for Vale of Glamorgan citizens.

It is clear that we will have to live with budgetary pressures for some time and, so in order to continue to provide services to our customers at an acceptable standard we are considering alternative models of service delivery where appropriate. At the same time, we continue to manage a reduced workforce in some areas and the consequent impact of the loss of experience and knowledge within the Service. Outlined below are the key challenges we face in the coming year:

- Capacity to deliver the level of transformational change required as part of the Social Services Budget Programme and Reshaping Services Agenda and ensuring appropriate resourcing for Reshaping Services projects in order to achieve the required change.(CP1)
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, places a significant level of duties and requirements on local authorities. Despite having these robust mechanisms in place challenges continue to exist in relation to our capacity to fully meet requirements of the Act in a climate where budgets are reducing and demand for Social Services is increasing. (AH7)
- In a climate where resources are being increasingly squeezed, this puts pressure on our capacity to ensure that safeguarding procedures remain robust, are regularly reviewed and updated and applied consistently. (AH11)
- Capacity and capability to meet the growing demand for Social Services to ensure that needs can be met. Demographic changes are having a significant impact, as there are increasing numbers of Children Looked After which is putting pressure on budgets. Increasingly Children Looked After are

also presenting with more complex needs, which as a consequence have required increasingly high cost placements. (CP1)

- Capacity and capability to meet the increasing/growing demand for children and family support services to ensure that needs can be met whilst minimising any overlap/duplication of existing service provision (AH4 & IS006)
- Uncertainty of funding will continue to be a challenge in terms of delivering prevention and early intervention services for the Youth Offending Service. (IS014)
- The increased focus on kinship arrangements has placed increased pressure on our existing resources, due to the requirement to assess members of kin as foster carers. (CP1)
- Growth in referrals to the Regional Adoption Collaborative (Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative VVC) is impacting on all four collaborative authorities. There are also challenges in terms of recruitment of suitable adopters and the timely assessment of potential adopters which is not able to keep up with demand for the number of children requiring adoption. (CP1)
- Impact of increased long –term pressure on social care, health and education resources to support the needs of disabled young people. (IS006)
- Continue to focus on reducing the costs of placements and improving the stability of placements whilst reducing reliance of the independent sector and out of area placements.
- The increasing number and complexity of cases going to care proceedings via the Family Court is having an impact by putting greater pressure on the capacity of our Child Care Teams and is driving up our spend on meeting our legal requirements.
- The skills and experience of our staff continue to be our greatest asset. The recent implementation of the Division's restructure has helped to alleviate some recruitment issues. However, the recruitment of experienced social work staff continues to be a challenge for the Division, which continues to lead to a reliance on agency staff in order to meet workload demands in certain areas. In particular recruitment to business critical posts has been an issue for the division. This, impacts both on our budgets and the sustainability of the service (CP2).
- Supporting and developing staff with the right skill sets in order to respond effectively to the new ways of working associated with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act will remain an ongoing challenge. As a result of the Act, there has been a shift change in how services are now delivered, where the focus now is on co-production of outcomes with individuals. This means working with individuals their families and their carers as equal partners to plan and deliver care and support services to ensure it best meets their care and support needs. This new way of working fundamentally impact on how teams work and requires a greater focus on developing a broader skill base and greater fluidity and flexibility within roles to be able to adapt to the changing policy landscape. (CP2)

3. Our Corporate Plan Priorities for 2019/20

3.1 Corporate Plan Priorities

Children and Young People Services will take the actions outlined below to contribute to the Corporate Well-being Outcomes and Objectives.

Well-being Outcome/ Scrutiny Committee	Well-being Objective	Ref	Corporate Plan Action	Planned 2019/20 Activities
WO1: An Inclusive and Safe Vale (H&SC)	O1: Reducing poverty and social inclusion	IS006	Align relevant activities associated with Families First, Flying Start, Communities First and Supporting People programmes to maximise opportunities across all programmes. During 2019/20 the focus will be on responding to the opportunities presented as part of the Flexible Funding arrangements which incorporates funding associated with Flying Start, Families First and Youth Offending Service activities.	Review the impact of the guidance arising from the new Flexible Funding arrangements. Implement the new grant arrangements under the new Children and Communities Fund.
WO1: An Inclusive and Safe Vale (H&SC)	O2: Providing decent homes and safe communities	IS014	Prevent and tackle incidents of anti-social behaviour including implementing restorative justice approaches for young people. Our focus during 2019/20 will be consolidating our work in relation to our response to the Lord Laming Report whilst further enhancing our approach to restorative justice.	Expand delivery of restorative justice approaches through the implementation of the Policing Children Looked After Protocol, to improve our approach to monitoring and information sharing of Children Looked After in the Youth Justice System. Work with partners to enhance the case management project for implementing trauma informed practice.
WO4: An Active and Healthy Vale (HL&SC)	O8: Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting	AH7	Implement new ways of working in light of the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act with a particular focus on the priority work-streams of:	Implement new assessment, care and support plans (Parts 4 & 6) to strengthen our work in relation to co-production when working with children and their families.

Well-being Outcome/ Scrutiny Committee	Well-being Objective	Ref	Corporate Plan Action	Planned 2019/20 Activities
	independent living.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provision of information, advice and assistance services - eligibility/assessment of need - planning and promotion of preventative services - looked after children - workforce - performance measures - maintaining duties under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. <p>Going forward into 2019/20 our focus will be on further implementing new ways of working in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 with a particular focus on co-production</p>	Develop the wider and more appropriate use of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service/Families First Advice line as a single point of contact for the service.

[Appendix A](#) contains the detailed activity plan which outlines the actions we will undertake in the coming year to deliver our 2019/20 priorities for the Corporate Plan. It also contains planned activity that the service will be undertaking during the year to address identified challenges which do not link to a corporate plan action but contributes towards a Corporate Plan Well-being Objective and Outcome overall.

3.2. Integrated Planning Priorities

Our service is committed to maximising the use of resources so that we can deliver sustainable and cost effective services that best meet people's needs. In order to achieve this, we have identified a series of priority 'enabling actions' that will support us in delivering the key outcomes identified in our Corporate Plan. The key areas of focus will be:

Ref	Integrated Action	Planned activities 2019/20
CP1	Deliver the Council's transformational change programme, Reshaping Services, to enable it to meet the future needs of citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan within the context of unprecedented financial challenges.	As part of Tranche 4 continue to support delivery of the Council's reshaping agenda and associated projects in the Social Services Budget Programme.

Ref	Integrated Action	Planned activities 2019/20
		Implementation of the Therapeutic Fostering Service for Children Looked After and their carers.
CP2	Align the workforce plan to the Reshaping Services strategy, ensuring staff have the necessary skills and training to adapt to the changes in how services are planned and delivered.	<p>Review and strengthen the performance management and support arrangements in relation to sickness absence within the service.</p> <p>Progress succession planning in relation to Practitioner Manager level tiers through the Team Manager development programme.</p> <p>Work with corporate colleagues to deliver targeted recruitment exercise in relation to 'hard to recruit'/business critical posts.</p> <p>Deliver an apprenticeship scheme within the Children and Young People Services Division.</p>

[Appendix B](#) outlines the 'enabling' actions we will undertake to maximise the use of our resources to enable us to deliver our priorities for the same year.

3.3. Managing Our Resources to Deliver Our Priorities

The following sets out how we will manage our resources to achieve the actions in our Service Plan and support our service.

This section provides a summary of these actions, outlining how we will use our resources (including our workforce, ICT, finance, assets and customer insight) and manage identified risks in order to deliver planned improvement.

[Appendix B](#) outlines the 'enabling' actions we will undertake to maximise the use of our resources to enable us to deliver our priorities for the same year.

Workforce Development

Key Service Statistics 2017/18						
Average headcount 2017/18	Average FTE 2017/18	Average days sick		Average days sickness per FTE	Turnover (no of leavers)	#itsaboutme completion rate (%)
		Long term	Short term			
205	176.54	8.93	4.42	13.35	26 (12.68%)	96

During 2017/18, 96% of #itsaboutme staff appraisals were completed for Children and Young People Services, which is marginally less than our performance of 100% during 2016/17. By comparison, in terms of our half year performance (as at September 2018/19), 84.78% of staff appraisals had been completed for the year.

Going forward the key workforce issues impacting on the service are:

- Managing sickness absence rates. This continues to be an area of development across the division. The average days lost to sickness absence per full time equivalent during 2017/18 (13.35 days per

FTE) has deteriorated when compared with 2016/17's reported performance of 10.24 days per FTE. Long term sickness continues to be more of the dominate issue in the Division, as during 2017/18, 8.93 days per FTE were lost due to long term sickness compared to 4.42 days per FTE in terms of short term sickness absence. Equally, our long term sickness rates have slightly worsened increasing from 7.39 days per FTE during 2016/17 to 8.93 days per FTE during 2017/18. In terms of our half year performance (quarter 2), the average number of days sickness absence per full time equivalent has improved very slightly during quarter 2 2018/19, with the Service reporting a quarter 2 performance of 5.32 days per FTE during 2018/19, compared to 5.79 days per FTE during the same period last year. The majority of sickness absence continues to be long term, during quarter 2 2018/19 4.08 days/shifts were lost due to long term sickness compared with 1.24 days/shifts due to short term sickness. This is a similar pattern to the same period last year where 4.05 days/shifts were lost due to long term sickness compared to 1.74 days/shifts lost due to short term sickness. The service continues to be proactive in implementing risk assessment approaches, providing stress awareness training for staff and signposting to the Employee Assistance programme, and automatic referral of stress cases to occupational health. This absence is putting additional pressure on remaining staff who have to cover these absences as well as their own areas of work and if this trend continues it is likely to have a significant impact on capacity within the service overall. In line with corporate direction, we will continue to review and strengthen the performance management and support arrangements in relation to sickness absence within the service.

- Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the division's establishment figures have remained relatively static. The average headcount and FTE during 2016/17 was 209 (181.46 average FTE) compared with 205 (176.54 average FTE) in 2017/18. During the 2017/18, the service reported an overall turnover rate of 12.68% compared to just over 12.92% in 2016/17. In relation to our half year performance for 2018/19 (quarter 2), the turnover rate was 6.31%, which is slightly higher than the same period in the previous year (2017/18) where reported turnover was 4.24%. Going forward we will continue our focus on flexibility within roles and increased emphasis on learning and development, innovation, improved performance and staff engagement which it is anticipated will help build resilience within teams and the service as a whole.
- Succession planning across the Division needs to continue to be a priority. The age profile of the Service has remained relatively static between 2016 and 2017. The proportion of 16-24 year olds continues to remain low within the Division with the continuing trend towards an ageing workforce, which reflects the requirements of social care posts within the Division and the inherent limitations in recruiting 16-24 year olds. Many of the positions (particularly Social Work positions) requires a level of qualification and experience which impacts on the average age candidates that apply for certain posts.
- We have experienced mixed success with recruitment across the Division. For some areas we have had healthy interest in posts advertised, so have been able to successfully recruit to positions readily. For example, the VVC has seen a high level of candidates apply for Social Work positions. However, in some other areas the recruitment picture has been more problematic. This is particularly the case in relation to frontline Social Work posts, for example in Intake and Family Support where, in keeping with the national trend, recruiting permanently to Social Work posts has presented challenges. Further to the recent restructure within the division, the Division has led a bespoke recruitment campaign utilising national publications such as Community Care and social media. Despite some recruitment issues, we have good examples of successfully retaining staff through enabling them to progress into other areas of social work within the Division, and we have also successfully recruited to Social Worker vacancies from our student pool post qualification. In addition, the new structure has encouraged applications from other local authorities.
- We recognise that in light of the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 our working environment has changed. As a result there needs to be a focus on developing a broader skillset amongst our workforce rather than focusing on the specialist skills of a small number of individuals. Through our restructuring of teams we have recognised the importance of creating

added resilience at the front door of our services. This has enabled specific teams within the new structure to be more responsive to service user's needs and the demands placed on this service.

It is important that we continue to maintain and develop the workforce to meet future service needs, both in terms of the numbers employed and the skills and competencies required of those employees. It remains a priority for the Children and Young People Service to continue to support staff development and succession planning despite the pressures of budget and staffing reductions. Our key workforce development priorities for the coming year are:

- Having identified the critical posts to the business and areas where recruitment challenges exist, further explore options that target recruitment more effectively and achieve recruitment to vacant positions.
- Continue to enhance succession planning, particularly in relation to the Practitioner Manager tiers. We will do this through ensuring that our Practitioner Managers are equipped with the skills required to manage modern Social Services through accessing any future Team Manager Development activities;
- Enabling fluidity in staff movement within and across teams, where this supports development, whilst providing a culture that supports staff through change. Flexibility of staff will be a key component as services develop;

ICT

In line with corporate direction we continue to use ICT to work smarter and more flexibly through exploring new ways of working digitally and investing in new technologies. Our ICT priorities for 2019/20 are outlined below reflect our continuing commitment to working smarter and more flexibly in line with the Council's Digital Strategy.

The key ICT issues impacting on the service are:

- Ensuring efficient use of ICT technology and having sufficient time and resources to maximise its use when budgets are reducing remains an ongoing issue.
- The need to establish an agile solution for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative to improve the efficiency of business functions across the region.

Our key areas of focus for 2019/20 are:

- Developing and trialling 'agile working' within the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative.
- Taking stock of our existing IT equipment/technology to assess whether it is 'fit for purpose'.

Collaboration and Partnerships

We continue to explore and promote opportunities for working collaboratively locally and regionally in order to deliver improved services for customers and deliver savings.

Key issues impacting on the service are:

- Inability to deliver key collaborative projects due to a lack of time and capacity to invest in achieving effective regional working. Where regional working is linked to funding streams, the sustainability of regional work/projects is uncertain due the short-term and time-limited nature of funding. This could impact on our ability to deliver on the transformation agenda and on core business requirements.
- Ensuring that our local authority priorities remain at the forefront of discussions and negotiations at the regional level will continue to be an ongoing challenge. This will be essential to ensure we maintain our influence in driving forward change and steer the direction for regional working.

Highlighted below are our planned activities for the coming year.

Name of Collaboration	Brief Description of the Purpose and intended outcomes from the Partnership/ Collaborative Activity	Planned Activity for 2019/20
<p>Regional Adoption Collaborative (VVC) Implementation of recommendations from the Best Value Review of the Regional Adoption Collaborative.</p> <p>Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr, Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff Councils and two Health Boards.</p> <p>Partnership Agreement in place – governance arrangements operate via a Management Board and a Joint Committee.</p>	<p>Four other local authorities and two health boards working together to deliver a regional collaborative for adopted children and their families, with a target to increase the availability of adopters and improve adoption support.</p>	<p>Implement recommendations from Best Value Review of the Regional Adoption Collaborative as agreed by the Management Board and Joint Committee.</p>
<p>National Fostering Framework Strategic Board in place with regional representatives.</p>	<p>An All Wales approach to address the retention and recruitment of foster carers.</p>	<p>Deliver the 2019/20 regional work programme priorities of the National Fostering Framework. (Links to Service Risk)</p>
<p>Children’s Advocacy Service</p>	<p>To fulfil our 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. It also ensures we can evidence that we are meeting Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that sets out that it’s a child’s right to be heard in matters that affect them.</p>	<p>Promote the Children’s Advocacy Service to increase the local take up of the ‘active offer’.</p>
<p>Therapeutic Fostering in partnership with the University Health Board.</p>	<p>To promote and support placement stability and reduce disruption to placements.</p>	<p>Implementation of a Therapeutic Fostering Service for Children Looked After and their carers. (CP1)</p>
<p>Ongoing Implementation of the requirements of the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act regionally with our key partners Linked to the Delivering Transformation Grant and the Regional Steering Group priorities.</p>	<p>Ensure that social services process and practice across the region reflect the Act, the regulations, and the codes of practice, to support us to work within the law. Ensure that staff at all levels have an appropriate understanding of the relevant parts of the legislation and are informed about their duties and responsibilities required to enable compliance with the Act.</p>	<p>Implementation/delivery of projects awarded using transformation funding.</p>

Consultation and Engagement

The Directorate actively engages with stakeholders and service users regarding the quality of service delivery and how we shape future services. Implementation of the SS&WB Act requires us to collate qualitative information that can only be achieved through active consultation with service users. We are endeavouring to plan this work now in this transition year to establish a baseline for future years. In addition and in conjunction with the Policy and Quality Assurance Officer, Heads of Service identify key areas for consultation to help shape future service delivery. Finally, the Act also states that a Citizens Panel or similar arrangements should be in operation, as this forms a work stream with Cardiff Council which is monitored by the Regional Steering Group.

Our annual programme of consultation for 2019/20 is outlined below: Further details on the consultations including the key findings and outcomes will be available in the Engagement Hub.

Consultation Activity Planned 2019/20
Welsh Government Qualitative Measures Consultation
Flying Start & Families First Consultation
Children Looked After Consultation
Fostering Consultation
Care Leavers Consultation
Adoption Consultation
Disability and TRIG Consultation

Finance

The estimated base budget for our service area for 2019/20 is £16.839m (Children's Services £16.098m and the Youth Offending Service £741k) and the planned improvement activities for 2019/20 focus on delivering the in-year savings identified for the service. This is £149k for 2019/20.

The service has been awarded £500k of cost pressures in recognition of the growing numbers of Children Looked After and the associated placement costs.






- **National Minimum Wage (NMA) for Foster Carers-Kinship:** There continues to be an increasing number of kinship arrangements in place. Although this is a positive for promoting the numbers of children able to live within their families, it does create budgetary pressures associated with the cost of supporting these placements.
- **External Placements:** This is the area of greatest pressure within CYPS and is also the most volatile. There continues to be an increase in the numbers and complexity of need within our looked after children population. This creates associated pressures on placement availability in-house and increasing reliance on externally commissioned placements in terms of both independent fostering placements and residential care.






Risk Evaluation




Identifying and analysing the risks to our service is a fundamental aspect of understanding what could hinder our performance as a Council and our ability to meet our priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Risks can be categorised according to four risk themes: legislative/political, resources, service delivery and well-being and reputation.

Outlined below is a summary of our key risks that pose a threat to our service. Some of the risks identified by the service may be solely service risks that are specific to service delivery. Other risks can be aligned to a corporate risk and where this is the case, these are identified below.

For risks that require further mitigation, actions have been identified for delivery in 2019/20. Not all risks will necessitate a mitigating activity. Some risks will already be effectively managed through existing controls that are in place, whilst for others there may be no further mitigating activity that is applicable.




Risk description	Link to Corporate Risk	Residual Risk (as at April 19)	Forecast direction of travel	Mitigating actions planned for 2019/20
Failure to identify and deliver new ways of working and maximise opportunities to deliver alternative service models associated with the Budget Programme and Reshaping Programme and meet savings targets.	CR1: Reshaping Services	2 2 4 (Medium)		No further mitigating actions identified.
Failure to deliver requirements of the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act and our duty to safeguard the well-being of our citizens.	CR2: Legislative Change & Local Government Reform	6 (Medium)		Implementation of new assessment, care and support plans (parts 4 &6) to strengthen our work in relation to co-production when working with children and their families. (AH7) Develop the wider and more appropriate use of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service/Families First Advice line as a single point of contact for the service. (AH7)
Failure to effectively maximise and mobilise our existing workforce to deliver our service priorities and deliver sustainable services both now and in the future. (New suggestion)	CR5: Workforce	6 (Medium)		Progress succession planning in relation to Practitioner Manager level tiers through the Team Manager development programme. (CP2) Deliver an apprenticeship scheme within the Children and Young People Services Division. (CP2)
Insufficient staff capacity to meet the growing demand for services and ensure timely assessments.	CR5: Workforce	6 (Medium)		Work with corporate colleagues to undertake a targeted recruitment exercise in relation to 'hard to recruit'/business critical posts. (CP2)
Failure to implement adequate ICT and information management systems and the financial cost associated with data breaches/cyber-attacks and the wider impact on service delivery.	CR6: Information Security	2 2 4 (Medium)		No further mitigating actions identified.

Risk description	Link to Corporate Risk	Residual Risk (as at April 19)	Forecast direction of travel	Mitigating actions planned for 2019/20
Failure to put in place appropriate safeguards for children and young people and meet our responsibilities for responding to situations effectively where people are 'at risk' of neglect or abuse.	CR10: Safeguarding	3 (Medium/Low)		No further mitigating actions identified. Work is being led by Resource Management and Safeguarding Division.
Failure to challenge poor contractual performance impacting on our ability to deliver cost-effective services and the potential failure of a service arrangement.	CR13: Contract Management	3 (Medium/Low)		No further mitigating actions identified. Work is led by Resource Management and Safeguarding Division.
CS/SR001 Ineffective budget monitoring to meet the growing demand for services.		2 2 4 (Medium)		No further mitigating actions identified.
CS/SR002 Impact of increasing children looked after numbers on placement availability and in particular the demand for specialist residential placements The associated financial impact of high cost placements impacts significantly on our resources.	N/A	12 (High)		<p>Deliver the 2019/20 regional work programme priorities of the National Fostering Framework (Links to collaboration).</p> <p>Implementation of the Therapeutic Fostering Service for Children Looked After and their carers. (CP1) Work with the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) to better manage the independent market to address the challenges associated with placements availability, choice and cost.</p>
CS/SR003 Service user cannot access the services swiftly and their needs are not met.	N/A	2 2 4 (Medium)		<p>Implementation of new assessment, care and support plans (parts 4 &6) to strengthen our work in relation to co-production when working with children and their families. (AH7)</p> <p>Develop the wider and more appropriate use of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service/Families First Advice line as a single point of contact for the service. (AH7)</p>

Risk description	Link to Corporate Risk	Residual Risk (as at April 19)	Forecast direction of travel	Mitigating actions planned for 2019/20
CS/SR004 Continued reduction and regionalisation of grant funding impacting on our ability to deliver service priorities and meet localised need.	N/A	2 2 4 (Medium)		Review the impact of the guidance arising from the new Flexible Funding arrangements. (IS006) Implement the new grant arrangements associated with the new Children and Communities Fund. (IS006)
CS/SR005 Capacity and capability to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients at a time when resources are reducing.	N/A	1 4 4 (Medium)		No further mitigating actions identified.
CS/SR006 Increase in numbers and complexity of care proceedings in the context of reduced court timescales impacting on court costs, Social Worker caseloads and ensuring that other cases receive the attention they require.	N/A	2 3 6 (Medium)		No further mitigating actions identified.

The mitigating actions aligned to our risks identified above are included in our action plan at [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#) to ensure the on-going monitoring of corporate and service level risks.

Risk Key

Scoring risks	
Likelihood score	Refers to how likely it is that the risk will occur, that is, the probability of the risk happening. The scoring ranges between 1 and 4, with 1 being very unlikely, 2 - possible, 3 - probable and 4 being almost certain to happen or has already happened.
Impact score	Refers to what the impact would be if the risk occurred. Again the scoring ranges between 1 and 4, with 1 being low, 2 - medium, 3 - high and 4 being catastrophic. Impact would include things such as financial costs, public wellbeing, environmental/ social impact, damage to reputation, health and safety etc.
Inherent Risk	This is the risk score in a pre-control environment
Residual Risk	Remaining risk score after controls have been applied. Shows impact of controls.
Current controls	This is a control score that provides an indication of the effectiveness of the controls at managing the risk.
Forecast Direction of Travel	Anticipates the future direction of travel of the risk by taking into account factors that are likely to impact on it. Risk increasing  Risk is decreasing  Risk remaining static 

Risk Matrix

Possible Impact or Severity	Catastrophic	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>	8 MEDIUM/HIGH	12 HIGH	16 VERY HIGH
	High	3 <i>MEDIUM/LOW</i>	6 <i>MEDIUM</i>	9 MEDIUM/HIGH	12 HIGH
	Medium	2 LOW	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>	6 <i>MEDIUM</i>	8 MEDIUM/HIGH
	Low	1 VERY LOW	2 LOW	3 <i>MEDIUM/LOW</i>	4 <i>MEDIUM</i>
Low 1-2 Low/Medium 3 Medium 4-6 Medium/High 8-10 High 12-16	Very Unlikely	Possible	Probable	Almost Certain	Likelihood/Probability of Risk Occurring

Children and Young People Services Action Plan 2019/20

Well-being Outcome 1: An Inclusive and Safe Vale	Objective 1: Reducing Poverty and Social Exclusion.
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Well-being Goals	A Resilient Wales (RW)	A Healthier Wales (HW)	A More Equal Wales (EW)	A Wales of Cohesive Communities (CW)	A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language (VW)	A Prosperous Wales (PW)	A Globally Responsible Wales (GW)
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Our Ways of Working	Long Term (LT)	Integrated (I)	Involving (IV)	Collaborative (C)	Preventing (P)
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Ref	Action	Outcome & Key milestone 2019/20	Contribution to Well-being Goals	Integration with the 5 Ways of Working	Start / Finish date	Responsible Officer / Resources required
IS006 CS/A026	Review the impact of the guidance arising from the new Flexible Funding arrangements.	Maximise opportunities for aligning services and minimising duplication of service delivery, whilst continuing to deliver in required areas.	HW EW CW	LT Iv C	April 2019- March 2020	Amber Condy Within existing resources.
IS006 CS/A027	Implement the new grant arrangements under the new Children and Communities Fund.	Maximise opportunities for aligning services and minimising duplication of service delivery, whilst continuing to deliver in required areas.	HW EW CW	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Amber Condy Within existing resources.

Well-being Outcome 1: An Inclusive and Safe Vale	Objective 2: Providing decent homes and safe communities
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Well-being Goals	A Resilient Wales (RW)	A Healthier Wales (HW)	A More Equal Wales (EW)	A Wales of Cohesive Communities (CW)	A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language (VW)	A Prosperous Wales (PW)	A Globally Responsible Wales (GW)
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Our Ways of Working	Long Term (LT)	Integrated (I)	Involving (IV)	Collaborative (C)	Preventing (P)
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Ref	Action	Outcome & Key milestone 2019/20	Contribution to Well-being Goals	Integration with the 5 Ways of Working	Start / Finish date	Responsible Officer / Resources required
IS014 CS/A021	Expand delivery of restorative justice approaches through the implementation of the Policing Children Looked After Protocol, to improve our approach to monitoring and information sharing of Children Looked After in the Youth Justice System.	Reduced reoffending and criminalisation of Children Looked After. Children Looked After in the criminal justice system are provided with the most appropriate service to reduce reoffending.	CW	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Paula Barnett Within existing resources.
IS014 CS/A022	Work with partners to enhance the case management project for implementing trauma informed practice.	Coordinated approach taken to understanding of the causes and effects of traumatic experiences, along with practices that focus on supporting recovery.	CW	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Paula Barnett Within existing resources.

Well-being Outcome 4: An Active and Healthy Vale	Objective 8: Safeguarding those who are vulnerable and promoting independent living.
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Well-being Goals	A Resilient Wales (RW)	A Healthier Wales (HW)	A More Equal Wales (EW)	A Wales of Cohesive Communities (CW)	A Wales of Vibrant Culture & Thriving Welsh Language (VW)	A Prosperous Wales (PW)	A Globally Responsible Wales (GW)
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Ref	Action	Outcome & Key milestone 2019/20	Contribution to Well-being Goals	Integration with the 5 Ways Working	Start / Finish date	Responsible Officer / Resources required
AH007 CR2 CS/A028	Implement new assessment care and support plans (Parts 4 &6) in relation to strengthening our approach to co-production as it relates to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act.	Effectively strengthen our approach to co-production to ensure we effectively work with and involve citizens to best meet their care and support needs.	HW CW	LT I IV C	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
AH7 CR2 CS/A029	Develop the wider and more appropriate use of the Information Advice and Assistance Service/Families First Advice Line as a single point of contact for the service.	Effective management of enquires at the front door to ensure individuals have access to accurate and timely information and advice and effective signposting.	CW HW EW	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Karen Conway Within existing resources.

Appendix B

Integrated Planning

Our Ways of Working	Long Term (LT)	Integrated (I)	Involving (IV)	Collaborative (C)	Preventing (P)
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Ref	Action	Outcome & Key milestone 2019/20	Integration with the 5 Ways of Working	Start / Finish date	Responsible Officer / Resources required
CP1 CS/F031	As part of Tranche 4 continue to support delivery of the Council's Reshaping Services agenda and any other associated projects with the Social Services Budget programme.	We effectively support delivery of the Reshaping Services programme and achieve our savings targets for the service.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CP1 CS/SR002 CS/C032	Implementation of the Therapeutic Fostering Service for Children Looked After and their Carers.	The Therapeutic Fostering Scheme promotes and further supports placement stability and reduces disruption to placements.	LT I IV P	April 2019- March 2020	Karen Conway Within existing resources.
CP2 (CR5) CS/W002	Continue to review and strengthen the performance management and support arrangements in relation to sickness absence within the service.	Reduction in sickness absence rates in line with 2019/20 targets.	LT IV P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CP2 CS/W033	Progress succession planning in relation to the Practitioner Manager tier using the Team Manager Development Programme.	Increased service resilience at the Practitioner Manager level with effective succession planning for the future.	LT IV P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CP2 CS/W034	Work with corporate colleagues to deliver a targeted recruitment exercise	Effective recruitment to specialist and critical posts with increased service resilience.	LT IV P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.

Ref	Action	Outcome & Key milestone 2019/20	Integration with the 5 Ways Working	Start / Finish date	Responsible Officer / Resources required
	in relation to 'hard to recruit'/'business critical' posts.				
CP2 CS/W035	Deliver an apprenticeship scheme within the Children and Young People Services Division.	Increase the number of appointments to entry point positions to enhance succession planning.	LT P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CS/IT036	Develop and pilot an agile working solution for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Collaborative.	Agile working practices improve efficiency of our business functions as they relate to adoption services across the region.	LT IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Angela Harris Within existing resources.
CS/IT037	Undertake an audit of IT equipment.	Ensure efficient and effective use of technology that is 'fit for purpose'.	LT	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CS/C029	Implement recommendations from Best Value Review of the Regional Adoption Collaborative as agreed by the Management Board and Joint Committee.	Improve efficiency of our business functions as they relate to adoption services across the region.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Angela Harris Within existing resources.
CS/C038	Deliver the 2019/20 regional work programme priorities of the National Fostering Framework.	Further enhance and strengthen our regional approach to the recruitment and retention of foster carers.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Karen Conway Within existing resources.
CS/C039	Promote the Children's Advocacy Service to increase the local take up of the 'active offer'.	Increased take up of the 'active offer' associated with the Children's Advocacy service.	LT IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Karen Conway/Amber Condy Within existing resources.

Ref	Action	Outcome & Key milestone 2019/20	Integration with the 5 Ways Working	Start / Finish date	Responsible Officer / Resources required
CS/C040	Implementation/delivery of projects awarded Transformation funding.	Successful delivery of key transformation projects to ensure we can continue to meet our duties and responsibilities associated with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
SR CS/C041	Work with the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) to better manage the independent market to address the challenges associated with placement availability, choice and cost.	Improved management of the cost of placements whilst ensuring these placements are appropriate to meeting needs.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Karen Conway/Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CS/C042	Implement recommendations arising from the Care Inspectorate Wales' Fostering Inspection.	Improved outcomes for our citizens.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.
CS/C043	Implement recommendations arising from the Care Inspectorate Wales' Children's Services Inspection.	Improved outcomes for our citizens.	LT I IV C P	April 2019- March 2020	Rachel Evans Within existing resources.