

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 29 September 2022
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2021/22 – Final Version
Purpose of Report:	To ensure that Cabinet agrees the future priorities for the Directorate of Social Services
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Social Services Senior Management Team Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Challenge Version of the Director’s report was considered by Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee in July. Committee members provided positive feedback. • A finalised version following feedback from partners is being presented to Cabinet for approval. • The report contains a number of priorities which the Director of Social Services has determined. These have been set in the context of the pandemic and significant changes in demand. Cabinet is asked to agree these improvement priorities. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet considers the content of this report.
2. That Cabinet approves the Director's Annual Report for 2021/22 as attached as Appendix A to this Report.
3. That Cabinet agrees the improvement priorities for Social Services as set out in the Director's Annual Report for 2021/22.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To ensure that the Director's Annual Report is considered by elected members.
2. To ensure that the Director's Annual Report for 2021/22 has the approval and agreement of Cabinet.
3. To ensure that the priorities as set out by the Director of Social Services are approved by Cabinet.

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the statutory duties, the Director of Social Services is required by the Welsh Government to produce an annual report on the effectiveness of social care services in the Vale of Glamorgan and on our plans for improvement. This gives the Director an opportunity to provide people in the Vale of Glamorgan with a rounded picture of social services based on evidence drawn from a wide range of sources such as what users and carers say, key performance indicators and measurements of progress against the overall goals of the Council.
- 1.2 The report is written for a wide range of people, including service users and carers but also Elected Members, the Council's own staff and the range of partners and providers who help us deliver our services. It is used by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as evidence and to guide their inspection programme in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.3 The report reflects on progress over the last financial year.
- 1.4 The Corporate Plan sets out our vision for the next four years by identifying priorities that are aligned to well-being outcomes and objectives. In planning how we will deliver services over the coming years, our annual Service Plans 2020-21 outline our service specific contributions to their priorities. The corporate Service Planning process has been used to set out our improvement agenda and to inform the development of the priorities for 2021-22 in the Director's Annual Report.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 This is an important report for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan, members of the Council and our partners, both statutory and in other sectors. It outlines the

current context within which social services are operating and details proposed priorities for improvement.

- 2.2 The final report (attached as Appendix A - <https://sway.office.com/5VQ82daUa242TvqE?ref=Link>) has been prepared following the circulation of a challenge version. This has allowed key stakeholders opportunities to comment and make observations before the report is finalised, ensuring that it accurately reflects the position of social services.
- 2.3 As part of the challenge process, the challenge version of the report was presented to Scrutiny Committee to provide Elected Members with an opportunity to contribute their views. This is regarded as a key milestone in finalising the report because of the crucial role which the Committee has in providing consistent oversight and monitoring of social services.
- 2.4 The challenge version was amended following consideration at Scrutiny Committee and the feedback from partners and stakeholders. Scrutiny Committee asked for some further explanation of the role of some of the teams mentioned, and for further analysis of the directorate's performance.
- 2.5 The final report will be made available via the Council's website.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The challenge version of the report was a consultation document and was sent for consideration to a wide range of partners. A feedback pro forma was provided which was returned via email. The comments received were evaluated and, where appropriate, changes to the report were made. There are no matters in the report which relate to an individual ward.
- 3.2 The need to ensure that services are sustainable in the longer term is a key element in the priority outcomes set out in the annual report. This is consistent with the direction set by Welsh Government for delivering sustainable social services through greater emphasis on prevention and people accepting more responsibility for tackling factors which can increase demand for social care and health services.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1 There are no Climate Change and Nature Implications as a result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1 The report is set within the context of:
 - increasing demand for help and support;

- managing the impact of the UK Government’s previous austerity measures on public sector finances; and
 - efforts to focus on more of our work on supporting people to remain as independent as possible.
- 5.2** The priority objectives contained in the reports will be delivered within the financial constraints set by the Social Services Budget Programme, which is approved by Cabinet and reported regularly.

Employment

- 5.3** There are no employment issues as a result of this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4** The former reporting requirements for Directors of Social Services in part 6 of the “Statutory Guidance on the Role and Accountabilities of the Director of Social Services” (Welsh Government June 2009) have been replaced as a consequence of both the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014; and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

- 5.5** The requirements for the social services report are scattered under a number of pieces of legislation and codes. In purely headline terms the requirements are that every local authority must produce an annual report on the discharge of its social services functions and the report must include:

- An evaluation of the performance in delivering social services functions for the past year including lessons learned (Part 8 Code on the role of the Director);
- How the local authority has achieved the six quality standards for well-being outcomes (set out in the code on measuring performance);
- Qualitative and quantitative data relating to the achievement of well-being outcomes (also set out in the code on measuring performance);
- The extent of which the local authority has met requirements under Parts 3 and 4 of the SSWB Act as set out in separate codes covering assessing needs and meeting needs;
- Objectives for promoting the well-being of people needing care and support and carers needing support for the following year including those identified by population needs assessments under section 14 of the SSWB Act;
- Assurances concerning: structural arrangements enabling good governance and strong accountability, effective partnership working via Partnership Boards and safeguarding arrangements;
- The local authority’s performance in handling and investigating complaints responses to any inspections of its social services functions;
- An update on Welsh language provision how the local authority has engaged people (including children) in the production of the report.

6. Background Papers

The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance:

[https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance.pdf](https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/The_Local_Authority_Annual_Social_Services_Reports_Guidance.pdf)

[Report to Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee – 5th July 2022](#)

([Minute 111](#)).

Vale of Glamorgan Council Social Services: Director's Annual Report 2021-2022





















Foreword

Well-being Standard 1:

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

Well-being Standard 2:

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

Well-being Standard 3:

Taking steps to
protect and
safeguard people
from abuse, neglect
or harm

Well-being Standard 4:

Encouraging and
supporting people to
learn, develop and
participate in
society.

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Well-being Standard 5:

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

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Well-being Standard 6:

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

As the Director of Social Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2021/22.

The report is framed around the six well-being standards, as defined by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The report details the progress made against each of the priorities we said we would focus on over the past 12 months. The progress and developments outlined within this report are closely aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25 and associated Annual Delivery Plan for 2022-23.

Under each well-being standard the report identifies the key priorities for the forthcoming year. The identification of priorities for next year was not done in isolation but was part of a far more holistic and integrated process that is closely aligned to our public consultation on the Annual Delivery Plan. The

priorities/actions set out in the Annual Delivery Plan have been shaped by the voice of our citizens and remains the key planning document we have used this year to support the identification of priorities for Social Services in the forthcoming year.

This past year has been the most challenging Social Services has ever experienced and I said the same about the previous year. The pandemic put our social care services under enormous pressure which significantly challenged how we deliver our services and in particular fulfilled our statutory roles and functions. As we emerge from this situation the legacy of lock downs, the pandemic and Brexit has resulted in significantly increased demand and serious staffing challenges.

Although we anticipate that the challenges will remain with us for potentially years to come, we are evolving and adapting our response to the rapidly changing and uncertain landscape. Our approach has been defined by our ability to quickly galvanise our workforce to work in new ways. None of this could have been achieved without their dedication and resilience. Our capacity to navigate through this crisis was also further reinforced through effective collaboration with our partners. By working with our partners, communities, and citizens we have been able to maximise our efforts and help those most in need. We owe it to all of those that need and use our services to make them responsive and available to them in a timely way.

There are several achievements over the last year that we are proud to celebrate (as outlined in this report). Throughout this challenging year we have continued to stick to our strategic aims and I am pleased to see real progress in increasing the control our service users have over their care and support, and our move towards more strengths based models.

I want to thank all those members of staff and our partners for the vital role they play in delivering high quality care and support to the citizens of the Vale of Glamorgan.



Director's Summary of Performance

Summary of Performance



Despite the ongoing nature of the pandemic, we have continued to collect a range of performance measures from across the three divisions (Children and Young People Services, Adult Services, and Resource Management and Safeguarding) that make up the Directorate. This collection and reporting of performance information alongside other management information is undertaken through the Welsh Community Care and Information System (WCCIS). Collecting a suite of performance measures provides us with a snapshot of our performance over the past year.

The pandemic and the growing demand for our services has presented a number of challenges for how we deliver our services, despite this we have continued to consistently meet the targets we set which in turn has contributed to enhancing the well-being of our citizens.

During 2021/22, some of our key performance achievements have included continuing to enable where possible children to remain with families and enhancing support to enable adults to live more independently in their own homes. We have also continued to maintain a good awareness of the areas of performance we wish to improve. In particular these areas include timeliness of assessments and review of care and support plans. We recognise that there are a number of challenges and associated risks in the future, but through our robust approach to managing our performance we are in a good position to respond to these challenges.

Outlined below are some infographics that provide a snapshot of our performance over the last year. In addition comparative annual statistics for local authorities from the Welsh Government's Stats Wales¹ website. However, please note these data sets available from Stats Wales are not reflective of this year's data and so comparison is limited. In considering our highlights we have reviewed this information, our progress since last year in determining our performance highlights and areas for improvement.

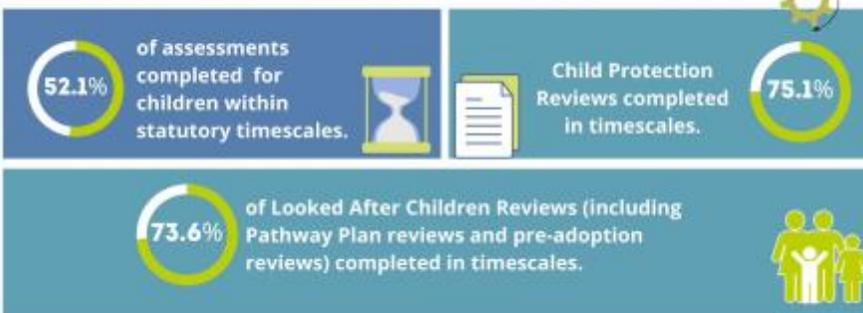
¹<https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/Social-Services>



Social Services Performance Snapshot HIGHLIGHTS



Social Services Performance Snapshot IMPROVEMENT AREAS



Our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Two years on, and the pandemic has continued to shape and challenge how we deliver and operate our services. Since the majority of our services are person-focused and reliant on face to face contact, this has presented a number of challenges. We continue to adapt and develop new ways of working that ensure that we can operate services safely for our citizens and staff. It has challenged how we deliver our statutory functions, safeguard those at risk, whilst ensuring we continue to meet the care and support needs of all our citizens. The pandemic has also driven a surge in demand for social care services at a time when our capacity and services are stretched.

Despite these challenges we have been able to quickly adapt our systems, processes and services to effectively respond and where necessary reprioritise and repurpose our resources to areas where they were needed most. We feel that our positive relationships with our citizens, our understanding of their needs alongside the dedication of our staff has guided us through this public health crisis.

Outlined below is a summary of how we have responded to the crisis via the recently established PPE Team. It highlights the extraordinary efforts staff have made in keeping our residents and staff safe.



Throughout the Pandemic our staff and volunteers have shown remarkable resilience in what has been an extremely challenging time. Their effort and dedication to their roles has been amazing.

The PPE team have been instrumental in our response to COVID-19. This team was established at the outset of the pandemic to support and co-ordinate the distribution of PPE across frontline Council departments, including schools, social care staff, residential and nursing care homes, social care providers, unpaid carers and Third Sector organisations. Throughout the pandemic, the PPE Team have shown incredible resilience in what has been an extremely challenging time. Shown below are some of the compliments we have had the pleasure to receive.

“ Just a quick email to thank all of you in the PPE team for all of your hard work and support these past 18 months. Not only has it ensured protection for myself and my team, but to all the departments across the entire council. ”



“ Thanks, your service has been amazing and much appreciated over these last two years. ”

“ My wife and I would like to extend to you and all your hard working colleagues our thanks for the way that we have been looked after during these troubled times. Can we please pass on our wishes for you to have a very merry Christmas and a peaceful new year, without all of you we don't know what could have happened to us. Take care, stay safe. ”

“ Can we just say thank you to your team for all your support and deliveries over the pandemic! ”



Challenges

Several challenges over this past year have been the direct result of the pandemic, however many of these were pre-existing challenges that have been further exacerbated by Covid-19. The main overarching challenge facing Social Services has been sustaining service delivery and performance whilst managing rising demand for our services at a time when our resources are being stretched.

The pandemic has offered us opportunities to learn from our experiences and to explore and establish new ways of working that will enable us to transform our services in the future. Now that we are in a position to manage the risks associated with Covid-19, the main challenge going forward is on ensuring we can build a resilient workforce and future proof our services both now and in the future .

Summarised in the slides below is a snapshot of some of the key challenges Social Services has tackled over the last year and challenges that we are likely to continue to face going forward.



The service has experienced significant increases in demand for care and support during the period of the pandemic, reflected both in numbers and complexity. Causes of this increase have been multiple and the impact on children and families and therefore the service is expected to be enduring.

Linked to increasing levels of demand, the number of children looked after has increased. This places increased pressure on our existing resources and in a placement context, the service has become further reliant on externally purchased care.

Our Regional Adoption Collaborative has continued to experience increases in demand for post-adoption support. In addition, through a national drive for the introduction of best practice guides, although positive in the context of improving standards nationally, it is placing a considerable increased demand on the service and a resultant shortfall in current resources has been identified nationally.

Children Looked After placements remain a challenge, due to ongoing lack of availability of placements and associated rising costs.



Adult Services

Overview of service challenges

The number of citizens requiring care and support is increasing, but our supply of domiciliary care and personal assistants is limited due to workforce capacity.

We are noting that more people are now accessing the statutory services and are presenting with more complex needs, reducing our opportunity to interact at an earlier stage and signposting to preventative services.

As a consequence of the inability to commission packages of care, people are waiting longer to access services and, therefore remain on Social Worker caseloads for longer as unpaid carers need additional support.

Our reablement service is compromised because it is used to provide packages of care to people in the community and reducing their reablement capacity. This will result in an increase in the size of the average package of care in terms of hours provided as the reablement component is compromised.

We are focused on keeping people at home safely, but in a reactive way rather than proactive and meeting their longer term goals sustainably.

The fragility of the Approved Mental Health Service Professionals continues to be of concern. Although we have made good progress, with more sustainable plans, there is still fragility.

Grant funding continued but clarity was received later into the year, which prevented us from making strategic decisions regarding projects and services to support their sustainability. Going into 2022/23, there remains uncertainty regarding the funding position and the grant conditions.

Workforce related pressures- we have seen several experienced Social Workers leave the Division, choosing to retire. We have been unable to appoint to vacant positions with the same level of knowledge and experience, which leaves some of our teams with gaps in experience and knowledge whilst other staff develop.

Challenges associated with ensuring that the citizens we work with are supported to access services in different ways, and to ensure that they have the skills to use our services through increased digital inclusion schemes.

Delivering our day to day services in light of changing Covid guidance to ensure people are safe has been challenging. Added to this are concerns regarding staff wellbeing in terms of their concerns and ability to provide safe staffing levels to support our citizens.

Challenges remain regarding our capacity to progress our strategic priorities when the operational demands have been so high.



Resource Management and Safeguarding Services

Overview of service challenges

- Potential lack of resilience of residential provision due care home closures, which has resulted in the movement of residents to our own internal provision. Consequently, this has resulted in a saturation within our own provision.
- Within the domiciliary market there are significant capacity challenges that are being risk assessed and managed by the brokerage and case management teams. This has resulted in some residents awaiting the availability of care packages in the community to meet their needs.

- Monitoring the quality assurance of our externally commissioned service providers is increasingly more challenging due to insufficient capacity and resources to undertake this work.
- We anticipate that this will be mitigated over the next year with additional capacity created through access to successful cost pressure bids and grants from Welsh Government.

There are pressures on our capacity to ensure our safeguarding procedures remain robust due to significant increasing number of adult safeguarding referrals and rising numbers of children that become looked after.

- Timescales for adhering to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) continues to place significant pressure on the Division.
- There is a review ongoing to monitor this service in light of the new Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) whilst we await Welsh Government Plans to implement the new safeguards.

The move to a preferred operating model will see the adoption of new working practices that will present new challenges. We will need to ensure that the needs of our citizens and service continue to be met and even enhanced during this period of change.

How We Shape Our Services



Engaging with our citizens is vital to ensuring we understand the service user experience and can use this insight to enhance the quality of our service delivery. Engagement is essential to developing a more citizen-centred approach for how we provide care and support. Developing accessible and meaningful opportunities for consultation and engagement not only values the views of citizens and their experiences but it is also a key driver for improvement. Enhancing mechanisms through which individuals can have their 'voices' heard not only empowers our citizens to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes, but it is pivotal to the transformation of our services.

Although the Pandemic has been disruptive to our programme of engagement, it has provided us with the opportunity to look at how we use digital technology to engage with our citizens. It has also enabled us to explore and better understand people's personal experiences of the pandemic which in turn has opened opportunities to learn from this to identify areas for future service improvement.

During 2021/22, we continued to focus on our rolling programme of consultations that has helped us to evaluate our services and shape future service delivery. In this section of the report, we outline what we have done, what we have learnt and what we intend to improve or change. During the year, we conducted 12 service specific consultations that included: the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS), Cardiff and Vale Strategy for Adult Advocacy, Adult Placement Service/Shared Lives, Residential Services, Day Services, Vale Alcohol and Drug Team (Newlands), Fostering Service, Adoption Service, Children Looked After, Flying Start Service, Families First Advice Line and Child Health and Disability and Leaving Care.

Outlined below is a summary of the key findings arising from this work.

Adult Services

During 2021/22, consultations were conducted in relation to the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS), Adult Placement Service/Shared Lives, Day Services and Vale Alcohol and Drug Team (Newlands).

Outlined below is a summary of the key findings and outcomes and identified areas of improvement arising from this work.

Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS) (provides reablement and support to enable adults to regain independence)

The purpose of this consultation was to ensure people in receipt of care and support receive high standards of service to enable them to improve and maintain independence following discharge from hospital.

Outcomes and areas of improvement:

- Identified that the service continues to maintain a high quality standard of care and support for citizens.
- The findings from the engagement exercise were used to inform changes made to processes and procedures, such as the Standard Operating Procedure, PPE arrangements and disposal of PPE.
- Enhanced our learning and development opportunities for staff to undertake specialist training i.e. Catheter Management to support people at home with care and support needs.
- Enhanced collaborative working with Health Teams such as the District Nurses and Primary Care (GPs).
- Ongoing review of practices undertaken regularly by Social Services Policy in collaboration with the Quality Officer and VCRS Quality and Compliance Manager.



Respondents felt that care workers and the service were reliable and helped to improve their wellbeing.



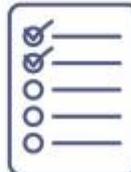
The support they received helped citizens to do the things that are important to them and the service made them feel safe.



Most respondents felt involved with their care and listened to by the team. They also felt that they were treated with dignity and respect.



Not all respondents knew where their personal care plans were kept. But all care workers nearly always carried out all the tasks identified in their care plan. Lack of time was cited as an issue



Adult Placement Service (Adult Placement, also known as Shared Lives, is a model of care whereby vulnerable adults receive support and / or accommodation within a family environment provided by approved Adult Placement Hosts)

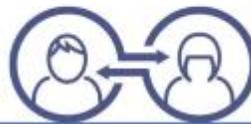
The focus of this consultation is to engage with hosts, people using the service and their families to evaluate their experience of the service to inform future service developments. The main focus was to explore their experience of the matching process, and their involvement in the 'About Me' Plan as well as participation in family life/integration with hosts' family and identifying effectiveness of communication during Covid.

Outcomes and areas for improvement:

- Information provided for citizens is a core focus and the service will continue to ensure that citizens remain happy with the activities that they do with their host families as well as explore additional opportunities where appropriate.
- Arising from the findings of this consultation work, the service is reviewing and developing a more comprehensive training programme by working with the Social Service and Training and Development unit and will be doing this in collaboration with Bridgend. It's anticipated that this will ensure more effective monitoring of quality and compliance.
- The need to continue to focus on effective communication with hosts and citizens.
- The 'About Me' plan will continue to be reviewed and updated regularly with the citizens able to reflect any progression and changes.
- Identified the need for our service users to be more involved in the development of the 'About Me' plan. Ensuring our service users with a learning disability are fully engaged and involved in the plan and involve services users to inform the development of activities. There will also be the continued focus on ensuring that these plans are regularly reviewed in a timely way.



Citizens- Citizens were happy with the introductions to host families and felt the match was appropriate.



Citizens- Enjoyed the activities they do and high level of satisfaction with the help and support from the Adult Placement Service.



Hosts- Satisfied with information they receive.

Communication via telephone/email during pandemic. Hosts would prefer a hybrid approach that includes face to face going forward.



Hosts- Felt supported and involved in visits, reviews and issues relating to care.

Mostly satisfied with training to become a host but some areas of improvement identified.



Hosts- Felt 'About Me' plan needs to be reviewed and updated regularly with citizen.



Hosts- Mostly satisfied with support if placement issues arise. Hosts have a good understanding of their role in relation to supporting money management and living skills.



Day Services (Provides opportunities for people to engage in a variety of activities including leisure and volunteering in the community).

The purpose of this consultation was to explore citizens' levels of satisfaction with the range of day services, what their experience has been of the service during the pandemic and to explore the views of citizens regarding the development of day services as part of our recovery from Covid-19.

Outcomes and areas for improvement:

- As restrictions have eased it has become more achievable to review activities available to citizens and in particular provide activities that have a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

- The engagement exercise identified the need for enhancing communication and information provided to families regarding provision of activities.
- Identified the need to review timing and availability of day services provision.
- The engagement exercise highlighted the individual needs/preferences of service users and this information will be used to inform a a review of food provision.
- Use of digital means such as Zoom and the use of the 'Insight' app has helped to support people who hadn't yet returned to the Day Centre to engage in activities. The need was identified to continue with this digital offering.

Citizens- Most were happy with communication and staff kept levels of contact. Citizens attending day services felt safe and supported



Citizens- Satisfied with activities and would like to be able to attend on a weekend.



Families- Most happy with advice, care and support and communication. Families feel service promotes citizen's wellbeing.



Families- Felt that they were made to feel welcome and the citizens were made to feel safe. Some had a preference for longer days at the centre. Some would like food provided at the centre.



Vale Alcohol and Drug Team (Newlands) (Provides social care support to those with substance misuse difficulties).

The purpose of the engagement exercise was to assess satisfaction with citizens involvement with their care planning, contact with social workers and the support they received.

Outcomes and areas for improvement:

- The need to review how we taper support for service users to enable them to live more independently and support newer referrals.
- The service recently increased its staffing capacity which will enable the service to focus on how it can continue to enhance services on offer.

Respondents felt that they receive helpful information and advice when they needed it from the service.



Respondents felt there was frequent contact with key workers and people liked face to face contact. All felt that the support had a positive impact on their wellbeing.



Children and Young People

During 2021/22, consultations were conducted in relation to Fostering, Adoption, Children Looked After, Flying Start, Families First Advice Line, Child Health and Disability and Leaving Care.

Outlined below is a summary of the key findings and outcomes and identified areas of improvement arising from this work.

Fostering Service (Assesses, approves and supports foster carers for Vale of Glamorgan children).

We surveyed foster carers to establish their satisfaction with the support, training and information they received to carry out their role.

Outcomes and areas for improvement:

- Identified improvements to training provision where specific elements in questionnaire asked to identify training needs.
- Ensuring that the methods of communication are effective at making Foster Carers feel part of the service. Communications plan put in place for 2022-23.
- Continue to ensure young people are involved in the fostering process and feel listened to.





Adoption (supporting individuals through the adoption process)

To understand individual's experiences of the adoption process and the support they receive both pre and post adoption.

Outcomes and areas for improvement:

- The need to raise awareness amongst citizens of how to access post placement support via enhanced communication mechanisms.
- Ensuring consistency of communication between Social Workers and the adopters.
- Continue to ensure requests for support and information are addressed in a timely way and the service continues to demonstrate that it is listening to adopters and involving them in decision making.
- Need for ongoing transition worker involvement and support from social workers.
- Continue to offer support and advice when needed including the signposting to appropriate support services.

Matching and introductions-

Respondents satisfied with information they received and the adoption support plan. Some issues with timescales for matching process.



Post Therapeutic Education and Support Services in Adoption (TESSA)-

Most felt support offered stability.

Post placement support-

Adopters were satisfied with their support. Some were unaware of how to access post placement support.



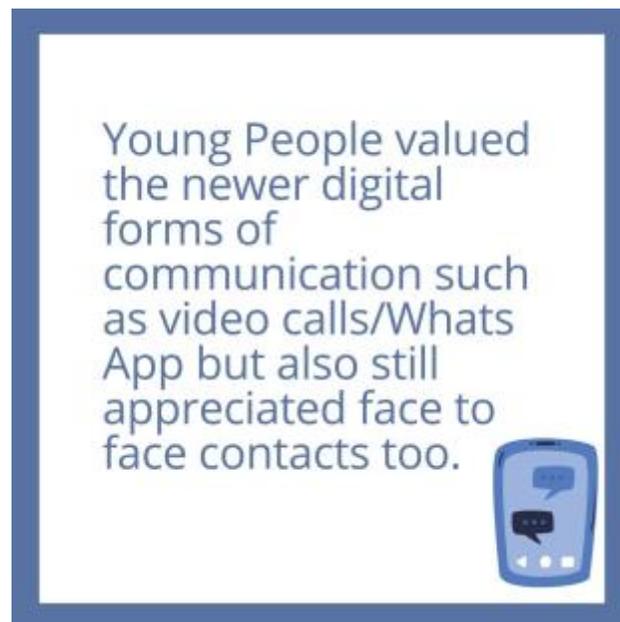
Children Looked After (CLA) (Supports children and young people voluntarily accommodated or subject of Care Orders).

To understand young person's experience and involvement with care planning and understand levels of contact with Social Workers and ongoing support from Social Work team and other services.

Outcomes and areas for improvement:

- Identified the need for involvement of young person and parents in development of child-centred plans.

- Ensuring consistency of communication between Social Workers and Children Looked After (CLA) and their families to ensure they feel involved and listened to.
- Continue to ensure contact with Social Workers is regular and informative.
- Continue to support alternative digital forms of communication that young people find more engaging e.g Whats App, Zoom etc and a focus on the development of Young People Participation Groups.



Flying Start (to support children and their families to have a better start in life).

Parents accessing Flying Start services were asked about their satisfaction with all aspects of the service and the support they received during the pandemic.

Outcomes and areas of improvement:

- Continue to focus on maintaining good standards of communication with families and providing the information they need.
- Continue to maintain good levels of support for parents accessing the service.
- Maintaining levels of engagement with families and ensure that contact is informative and explanations are provided where the service is unable to assist.

Respondents felt Flying Start team had a good understanding of their family and their needs and many felt listened to. Most felt they received the support they needed.



Families felt advice met most people's expectations and Flying Start involvement had positive impact on their family relationships and emotional wellbeing.



Families First Advice Line (Vale Families First Advice Line provides advice and support for families and professionals living in the Vale of Glamorgan).

The purpose of this engagement exercise was to assess levels of satisfaction with the quality of initial advice, support from staff (including signposting) as well as the quality of communication.

Outcomes and areas of improvement:

- The need to ensure that during the initial contact stage that communication by staff is both effective and supportive at all times.
- Continue to focus on the quality of information provision and the need to maintain levels of good quality support. Clear explanations provided where the service is unable to assist any further, but signposted appropriately to any potential further support.





Child Health and Disability (Provide services to children and young people who are disabled).

This engagement exercise sought to assess the experience of disabled children and their families in terms of their care and support, involvement in decision making and quality of communication.

Outcomes and areas of improvement:

- Further enhance provision of information for available support and services where appropriate.
- Ensure that families are kept up to date and aware of information regarding their child's care and support.
- Continue to strengthen communication channels, so that parents feel more involved in decision making.

Most found it easy to speak to a Social Worker. Some felt that they didn't receive enough information. Some families liked the option of communicating via video calls, whilst others preferred face to face.



Most parents felt they were treated with respect and could access the support they needed. Parents felt involved with the development of care and support plans for their children.



Leaving Care

The purpose of this engagement exercise was to establish the care leavers experience in terms of their involvement in planning, levels of support with Social Workers as well as support available from other services.

Outcomes and areas of improvement:

- The need to continue to focus on consistency and quality of contacts made by Social Workers and Young Person Advisors (for those over 18).
- Continue to focus on exploring opportunities for wider engagement via social media e.g. Whats App and Instagram.

- Continue to develop the Care Leavers Forum to enhance engagement and consultation.
- Focusing on ensuring support is relevant to individual needs e.g. housing advice, independent living etc.

Most care leavers found it easy to contact Social Worker team. Some used Whats App and video calls to communicate, but most preferred via text/phone.



Most care leavers felt involved with their future care planning and all felt they had been listened to. Some felt the service had helped to prepare them for adulthood.



Resource Management and Safeguarding

During 2021/22, an engagement exercise was undertaken in our residential care settings .

Outlined below is a summary of the key findings and outcomes and identified areas of improvement arising from this work.

Residential Care (Residential and respite services).

Residents, relatives and staff were asked their views and opinions regarding the quality of care and support provided by our residential care homes that included: Cartref Porthceri, Southway, Ty Dyfan and Ty Dewi Sant.

Outcomes and areas of improvement:

- Continue to develop opportunities for how relatives and potential residents can be given introductions/visits to residential care homes.
- Build further resilience by enhancing support available to residential care staff teams such as supervision, wellbeing support to them and continue to focus on the targeted recruitment campaigns.
- Work with staff to identify ways in which we can enhance capacity to give staff more quality time with residents.
- With the easing of restrictions continue to offer a range of activities to residents to enhance their wellbeing.



Residents- Felt safe and supported, and most were able to take part in activities of interest. Staff were liked and appreciated.



Staff- Most felt introduction service was helpful. Staff felt valued by residents and relatives, but they felt staffing shortages impacted on the time they could spend with residents.



Compliments and Complaints

Compliments

Compliments play a vital part in understanding what we are do well and enable us to be able to share this experience across the breadth of our services. It also provides a means through which we can celebrate and praise the efforts and dedication of our staff.

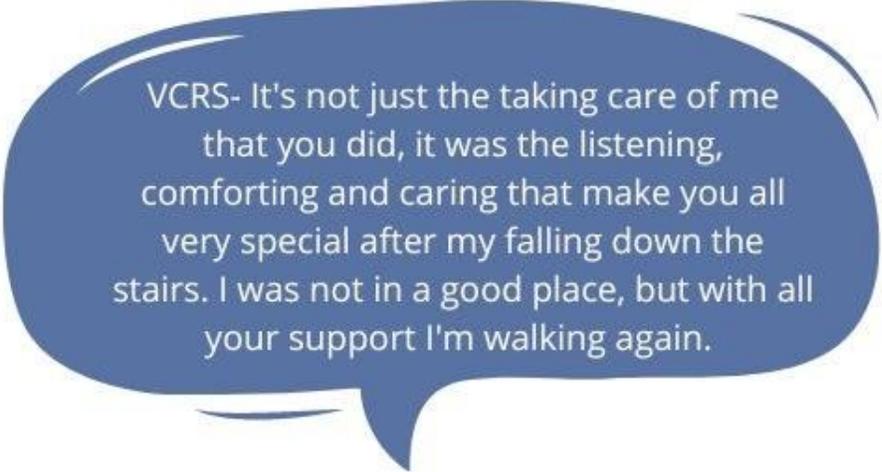
During 2021/22, Social Services received a total of 91 compliments. The compliments predominately related to a range of services and support citizens received and the compliments would often name specific staff where they felt the individual had gone over and above what was expected of them.

The service intends to develop the compliments function through enabling and encouraging service users to let us know about their positive experiences with confidence and ease. Better understanding the service user experience in relation to what they value and what matters most to them, will not only enable us to build a better picture of how our services are performing, but will help to reinforce a sense pride in our work.

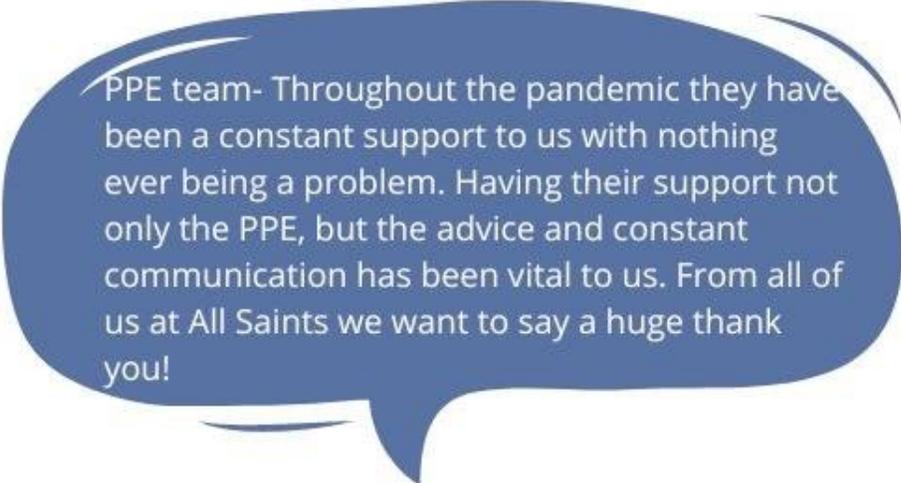
Outlined below is a breakdown of all compliments by Division.

	Number of compliments
Children and Young People Services	17
Adult Services	71
Resource Management & Safeguarding	3
Total number of compliments	91

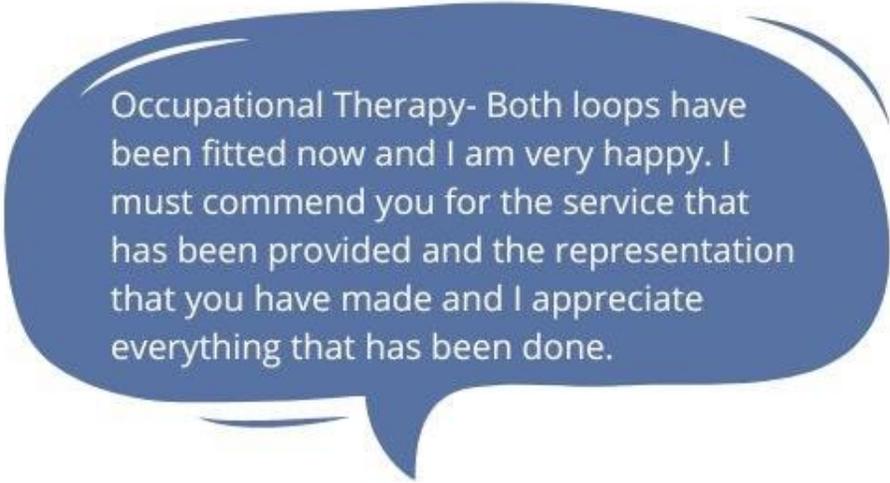
Outlined below is a snapshot of some of the compliments we have received over this past year.



VCRS- It's not just the taking care of me that you did, it was the listening, comforting and caring that make you all very special after my falling down the stairs. I was not in a good place, but with all your support I'm walking again.



PPE team- Throughout the pandemic they have been a constant support to us with nothing ever being a problem. Having their support not only the PPE, but the advice and constant communication has been vital to us. From all of us at All Saints we want to say a huge thank you!



Occupational Therapy- Both loops have been fitted now and I am very happy. I must commend you for the service that has been provided and the representation that you have made and I appreciate everything that has been done.



CYPS- Felt so supported by the [Social Worker] throughout the process and post placement. Always had full confidence in her as she is so proactive, organised and reliable. She was a real advocate for us and guided us through brilliantly.

Complaints

Through our complaints handling process we have continued to focus on maintaining a person-centred approach to how we deal with complaints. By taking this approach it enables us to fully understand the issues from the citizen's perspective and puts us in a stronger position to be able to find an agreeable resolution and it enables us to learn lessons from any mistakes.

The Complaints Officer takes a proactive approach to preventing and mediating issues before they have the potential to escalate into a complaint. Sometimes, citizens may contact Social Services unsure whether or not their concern equates to a formal complaint. Where this is the case, these are defined as enquiries, which consequently don't always progress on to becoming a complaint. As at the 31st March a total of 90 enquiries were received across all three divisions of Social Services. This data shows, that speaking with an individual who has raised a concern is an effective and invaluable way of reaching an early resolution and preventing concerns escalating into complaints.

As at the 31st March 2021, a total of 50 complaints were received, 8 of which were discontinued during the course of the year (either through no further contact or if the complaint was considered not relevant to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's remit). Only one complaint was received during the year via the Ombudsman which did not pass through either Stage 1 or 2 of our complaints process. Of these 42 remaining complaints, over half (54.8%) of complaints (23) were resolved within the designated timescales, 28.6% (12) were resolved outside of timescales and 16.7% (7) of complaints remained open

at end of year, so continued forward into 2022/23. Designated timescales for responding to stage 1 complaints are 10 working days and a further 5 working days to confirm the outcome of the discussion. For stage 2 complaints, the timescales is 25 working days. Meeting the designated timescales for responding to complaints is increasingly more challenging and this has been particularly so during the pandemic, as many service areas have been under enormous pressure to deliver continuity of care and support. We also acknowledge that the nature of complaints have become increasingly more complex and as a consequence this can impact on our timeliness of response. Although just over half of complaints were resolved within the designated timescales, in all instances an extension to the response times is mutually agreed with complainants. To ensure that timeliness of response remains at the forefront, the Complaints Officer undertakes weekly monitoring of complaints that is circulated to Senior Management to flag complaints that require follow up. This proves to be an effective escalation tool to remind managers of the importance of responding to complaints within the required timescales.

The table below provides a full breakdown of all enquiries and complaints received during 2021/22.



Service Division	Enquiries	Complaints Stage 1	Complaints Stage 2	Ombuds man	Responded to in timescales	Complaints discontinued	Total complaints and enquiries received
Adult Services	26	20	0	0	13	1	46
Children and Young People Services	61	27	1	1	9	9	89
Resource Management & Safeguarding	3	2	0	0	1	0	5

2 - Please note that the Ombudsman complaint was recorded separately to the rest of the complaints data.

The vast majority of complaints received during 2021/22 were in relation to quality of service (9) and the second highest were in relation to members of staff (8). The other areas of complaint related to charges for services, lack of response, quality of care, communications or other.

The table below provides a breakdown of the nature of stage 1 complaints by division.

Type of Complaint	Adult Services	Children and Young People Services	Resource Management & Safeguarding	Total complaints by nature of complaint
Charges for services	1	0	0	1
Lack of response	0	0	0	0
Quality/level of service	8	5	0	13
Staff complaint	3	10	0	13
Unhappy with care	5	4	0	9
Communication	0	4	0	4
Other	3	6	1	10

Lessons Learnt

During 2021/22, a summary of key lessons learnt include:

Need for clear and ongoing contact with service users and families to keep them updated. Reminding staff to respond swiftly and appropriately where errors, complaints or concerns are raised.



Setting clear expectations of service delivery with clear outlines of costs, timescales and what level of service can be provided in challenging times.



The need to record more specific data about complaints and enquiries to give a more detailed understanding of areas for improvement.



The need to streamline the reporting of compliments and complaints and encourage the sharing of positive stories.



Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help



3 - Care home residents who recently went on a day trip to Ogmere by Sea.

This section of the report sets out our performance in promoting and improving the key aspects of well-being of people in the Vale of Glamorgan who need care and support and carers who need support in relation to the six well-being standards.

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



What Did We Say We Would Do Last Year?

Priority 1: Develop more online services and improve the responsiveness of services including the use of assistive technology that includes exploring the use of technology to support payment for certain services.



We believe that developing our use of digital solutions and technology will create more responsive services and improve the quality and efficiency of the care and support services. Central to this is ensuring that we can enhance the overall experience of our citizens. Utilising digital solutions and technology will enable us to ensure that we can provide advice, care and support at the right time, in the right way. It also enables us to work more efficiently to meet growing demand for our services to where possible provide care closer to home, enable more people to live independently and have more choice and control over the care and support they receive that meets their own personal outcomes. However, we recognise for some embracing technologies can be challenging and so we will ensure that we continue to work in ways that enable as many people as possible to have access to our services.

The pandemic has continued to provide us with an opportunity to learn and explore how we could further expand and enhance our use of digital technology in new ways.

During 2021/22 we have:

- Continued to increase uptake of Direct Payment recipients who receive social care funding. This enables our citizens in receipt of care and support to have more flexibility, control and choice over how they arrange and access care and support to best meet their needs. As at the 31st March 2022, a total of 308 people were in receipt of support via Direct Payments. The majority of which were adults (236) and some children (76). Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Direct Payments Team received 123 new referrals, of which 36 packages were commenced, 52 were still in progress and 35 did not proceed.
- Work has commenced on developing a pilot establishing pre-paid cards for the financial administration of Direct Payments. This pilot will look to set up recipients on a prepaid card account moving away from transferring Direct Payments to personal bank accounts on a 4 weekly basis, which is administratively more demanding.
- Work has progressed with the development of our integrated Single Point of Access. The purpose of this work is to provide a single point of contact for adults living in the Vale of

Glamorgan to access information, advice and assistance to help them to make informed choices about how to support their wellbeing, independence and safety. This Single Point of Access service hosted within C1V (Council's Contact Centre) will be launched as the 'Wellbeing Matters' Service. Work is underway to ensure that through the C1V platform as well as accessing information, advice and signposting to services, individuals will be able to purchase Telecare and/or some other low-level equipment to enable them to maintain their independence and safety.

- Reviewed all our Telecare Service product lines which will enable our residents to purchase tailored packages of Telecare to meet their needs. The new Single Point of Access platform will be implemented in June 2022, which will enable us to revise packages of care that people can purchase, to give them more control and flexibility over their care and support needs.



Key Successes/Challenges:



Direct Payments-

- Business case developed setting out the proposals for piloting this work.
- Successfully consulted with Direct Payment recipients to identify their willingness to participate in the pilot.



Single Point of Access- Wellbeing Matters Service-

- Secured additional capacity in the form of a Service Development Manager.
- Work plan has progressed and this includes developing an independent living component to support access to equipment. Seeking additional grant funding to further this work in 2022/23



Telecare Services-

- Progressed the implementation of the Telecare services action plan and the associated work with developing a new platform.
- This will include the offering of a fall response service. Enabling our citizens to purchase Telecare packages/services online without assessment/contact with social care staff.



Challenges



- Staff absences and capacity have impacted on our ability to progress aspects of project work.



- The procurement of a new Customer Relationship Management software has delayed progression of some web-based development.
- The key focus has been on the migration of existing information and systems/processes to the new software. This has impacted on our ability to develop access to our services and in particular the purchasing of services online.



- The complete review of Telecare services was essential to inform the identification of our product lines.
- There was also the need for a complete review of adaptations and equipment before any project work could be moved forward.



Priority 2: Recommence respite services to support resident's physical and mental health.



Informal and family carers provide the majority of care and support to those in need in our society. Without these informal care arrangements, many more people would be reliant on health and social care services. This would put our existing health and social care services under significant pressure and would be unsustainable.

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to assess and meet the needs of all carers in need of support, which includes respite support. Respite support gives carers much needed breaks from their caring role, so they have the time to look after their own wellbeing. By offering respite to carers, this gives them the break they need to be able to continue to provide care and support for their loved ones. In assessing the needs of carers we work with them closely to ensure they are central to defining and co-producing what wellbeing outcomes they want to achieve and respite care provides them the opportunity to take time out for themselves and focus on their wellbeing goals.

During 2021/22 we have:

- Supported 15 people to have respite in a nursing home and 41 people were supported to have respite in a residential care home.
- Despite some Covid restrictions, day time respite continued to be provided to carers with up to 30 places available per day across the Vale of Glamorgan Day Services.

Successes



- Case managers were able to continue to support people to have respite despite the ever changing Covid-related restrictions placed on care homes and day centres.



- The Carers Gateway provided support to carers and Case Managers undertook 219 Carers Assessments during the period.



- Throughout the pandemic, residential respite at the Willows was available to carers of adults with learning disabilities who were in need of respite.



Challenges



- National Covid restrictions meant that people receiving respite in care homes were required to isolate from other residents in the care home for a period of time, which impacted on people's experience of respite.

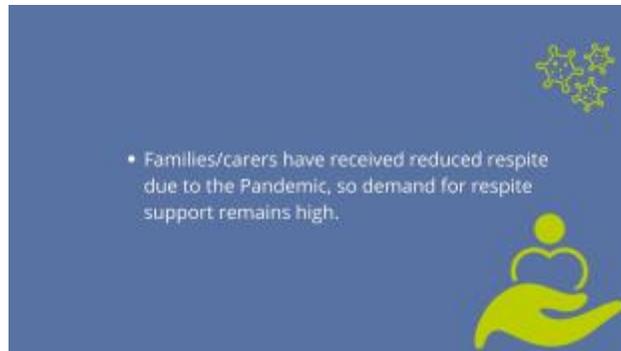


- The necessary isolation from other residents not only impacted on the resident's wellbeing, but also on their carers, as they were worried about their loved ones during respite.



- Adult respite capacity remains a challenge in the Adult Placement Service.





Priority 3: Expand the 'Your Choice' programme to enable people to have greater control over their care and support.



Despite the Pandemic, the 'Your Choice' scheme has continued to go from strength to strength. A defining feature of 'Your Choice' is the freedom and choice it gives to individuals to increase their wellbeing, and levels of independence in ways that matter to them. This person-centred approach enables our citizens to determine what care and support they need to get over the barriers to their wellbeing and independence where the emphasis is on effective co-ordination of outcomes that matter most to our citizens.

This way of working places a strong emphasis on effective partnership working, as Social Workers, Social Work Managers, care agency brokerage staff, Commissioners and domiciliary care agencies work together with the citizen to define their personal outcomes and care and support. By people taking control of their own care and support, citizens have reported feeling a greater sense of self-worth and wellbeing and take pride in organising their care in ways that matter to them. Care staff have reported that 'Your Choice' encourages equal relationships with the people they support and in turn makes their roles feel more fulfilling. This co-productive approach not only enhances integration and collaboration between Social Workers and Domiciliary Care agencies, but it also puts the person in receipt of care front and centre of all discussions in terms of meeting their care and support needs to enable them to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes.

During 2021/22 we have:

- Focused on service continuity throughout the pandemic by working with existing service providers to support individuals in their own homes.

- A further 5 domiciliary agencies were added to the 'Your Choice' scheme during 2021/22.
- We have identified named case managers to support citizen's transition from time and task based domiciliary care to 'Your Choice' outcome focused care at home through individual reviews and partnership meetings.
- Continued to support individuals to remain safe in their own homes. We have focused on delivering flexible packages of outcome-focused care that meets the assessed needs of our services users which has given them greater choice and control over their services wherever possible.

SUCCESSES



- Effective engagement with providers and their willingness to work with us to make the expansion of 'Your Choice' successful in providing a flexible and outcome focused service to citizens in the Vale.



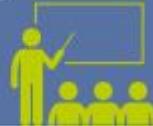
- Agreed a 'Your Choice' blended rate that domiciliary care providers have found sufficient to be able to join the scheme and provide outcome focussed care and support



- Professional and competent domiciliary care sector in the Vale of Glamorgan supported by social work teams and contract support/quality assurance processes have enabled us to deliver an effective outcome-based service to citizens.



- Ongoing training and supervision of social work/case managers to ensure staff have the skills and confidence in sharing responsibility for care and support planning with citizens and care agencies.



Challenges



- Increasing demand for domiciliary care and the increasing expectations of citizens and care planners provides ongoing challenges for the domiciliary care sector.



- Resource pressures associated with the ongoing administration of Welsh Government Covid funding schemes has impacted 'Your Choice' delivery.
- Staff pivotal to its delivery were also supporting our emergency response to the pandemic.



- The sharing of control for the day to day planning of care at home with the person receiving care and the care agency is an ongoing challenge for case management staff.



Shown below are two service user stories that evidences the difference that our outcome-based service delivery model 'Your Choice' has had on the lives of our service users in empowering them to define and co-produce their own personal well-being outcomes.

Well-being Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote physical, mental and emotional well-being.



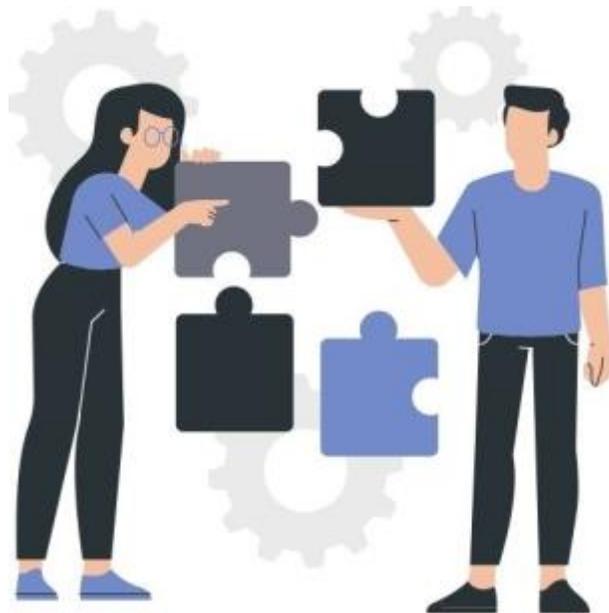


What did we say we would do last year?

Priority 4: Progress the work of the Alliance Model through the extension of transformation funding by 12 months.

An 'Alliance Model' is a new service model where the emphasis is on achieving better joined up outcomes for our citizens. Establishing an 'Alliance Model' in the Vale will enable health and social care partners to work together more effectively to improve how health and social care services are delivered in a more integrated way for adult services.

It is also hoped that by establishing an Alliance Model, that this would further streamline and join up processes across the organisational boundaries of health and social care in order to minimise duplication, enhance autonomy and increase morale of our workforce.



During 2021/22 we have:

- Consistently focused on embedding the understanding of what the Alliance is and its overarching vision and purpose and a project group has been established to take the Alliance Model developments forward.

- Obtained agreement from Vale of Glamorgan Council and Cardiff and Vale Health Board to progress the development of a partnership agreement between the two organisations. In order to progress this, legal resource has been secured to support this task.
- Advertised additional roles to support the capacity within the integrated management team, that will include a Locality Manager and an additional senior Nurse.

SUCCESSSES



- Successfully secured additional transformation funding for the next financial year 2022/23.



- Secured additional project capacity in the form of a Project Manager to support implementation and have back filled Head of Service in the form of a Service Development Manager.
- This has enhanced our capacity to develop the 'Alliance' and the social care elements of work.



Challenges



- Capacity of key stakeholders to engage and support the development of the 'Alliance Model' has been challenged due to the pandemic.
- In particular, the capacity of key experts has been compromised due to ongoing nature of the pandemic.



- Changes in leadership positions impacted on progression of the Alliance Model.
- Redeployment of staff also stalled progress with the Alliance.



Priority 5: Determine our preferred operating model in terms of service delivery to inform future building/space requirements.



The purpose of this priority is to utilise our learning from the pandemic to determine a new operating model for Social Services delivery which in turn will inform how we mobilise our workforce and use our physical assets and embrace technology. In determining our preferred operating model this has required us to work in partnership with our workforce and our citizens and take into account what we have learnt, what we need in order to deliver our services more effectively.

Developing more flexible ways of working will enable our services to operate more sustainably in terms of reducing our carbon footprint. When flexible/home working is balanced effectively, we are able to offer our workforce a better work-life balance.

Outlined below is the progress we have made, in the context of the pandemic, of operating more sustainable working practices in the future.

During 2021/22 we have:

- Engaged our Divisions in conversations to identify their needs and preferences for a future hybrid working model, that will see a mixture of office and remote based working where possible. Interim arrangements have been put in place to support and sustain service delivery.
- Contributed to the development of a Hybrid Working Policy to ensure that all service needs are met and residents continue to receive appropriate levels of care and support.
- Consulted and engaged our NHS partners on our preferred operating model intentions, so this way of working can be reflected in our integrated services, workforce and to support the identification of current and future needs.
- Embedded policies to ensure that Covid guidance was adhered to across our teams, including our integrated services to ensure that we were consistently applying the most cautious risk assessments for our citizens and workforce.
- Supported the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS) to return to their accommodation within Barry Hospital to ensure integrated service delivery.
- Commenced a review of our Day Services with consultation planned with service users, which will help to inform the development of a future service model and the required building/accommodation to support future service delivery.



- Gained greater clarity of our shared intention for the development of a hybrid model of working.
- Maintained business continuity of services during challenging times.



- Flexible working arrangements already in place have enabled staff to achieve a better work/life balance without it compromising service delivery.



- Ongoing engagement with our health partners on how we can effectively combine our assets to support integrated service delivery.



Challenges



- Evolving nature of the pandemic and the continuation of restrictions has required us to continuously adapt our ways of working.
- This hampered our ability to fully determine and implement a new operating model.



- A full hybrid working approach could not be consistently implemented across all integrated teams due to differences in working environments between the Council and our NHS partners.
- Council staff were swiftly supported to access IT equipment to enable them to work from home, whilst NHS staff were expected to maintain an office presence.



- Workforce challenges from within our Divisions, as not all roles can operate by a hybrid model.
- Some of our workforce have been enabled work from home, whilst front line roles were unable to do this. Managing expectations around this have been challenging.



Priority 6: Continue to support mechanisms to ensure care settings are following the latest prevention control processes in line with Track, Trace and Protect requirements.



4 - A care home residents who participated in a Covid project.

As the year progressed, some Covid restrictions started to ease and our focus began to shift towards recovery. Despite this easing it was vital that we continued to follow the latest prevention control processes within our care settings to ensure we could keep both our residents and staff safe. The purpose of this priority is to ensure that our residential homes operated an effective testing regime for visitors to enable our residents to reconnect with their friends and family after long periods of lockdown and isolation. The testing regime also enabled the re-introduction of group activities with entertainers invited back to our residential care homes.

Outlined below is the progress we have made over the last year, in applying Covid protocols/practices in order for us to safely operate and in some cases recommence services within our residential care settings.

During 2021/22 we have:

- Established safeguards to protect our residents which involved weekly PCR testing in each care home and additional lateral flow testing in line with changing guidance. Over the past year over 12,000 staff PCR tests were processed and over the last two financial years, 153 positive staff results were recorded.

- Ensured all Covid test results were uploaded to the Government's website and data was shared with Public Health Wales and our Shared Regulatory Services colleagues were informed so that appropriate action could be taken when a residential care setting experienced a Covid outbreak (resulting in a temporary lock down on visits). The provision of data to Welsh Government in some instances secured financial support.
- Visitor protocols were introduced which also incorporated testing requirements, which were reviewed and updated regularly to ensure that they were in line with Welsh Government guidance. These protocols and guidance were also shared with our external providers to ensure there was consistency across the sector. Visitors were required to complete a questionnaire and undertake a lateral flow test with results uploaded to government website prior to visiting.
- Recommended social work reviews, new referrals were received and hospital discharges and long term placements could once again be facilitated.
- Recommended our respite provision. During the year, a total of 62 weeks of respite were provided.



5 - Some care home residents participating in gardening/potting session.

SUCCESSES



- Protocols have provided much needed clarity for visiting professionals e.g. Social Workers, medical professionals to ensure timely and appropriate reviews and medical support could be provided to residents.



- Testing regime enabled us to accommodate long-term admissions and facilitate hospital discharges and provide respite services to primary carers.



- Robust testing regime enabled contractors to continue to carry out essential maintenance and progress the Dementia friendly building refurbishment work.
- Successful completion of both Ty Dyfan and Southway residential care settings.
- Refurbishments will ensure our facilities are 'future proof' where reablement, respite, emergency/long term and specialist care can be delivered safely to frail older people and those living with Dementia.



- Successful re-introduction of entertainment and group activities such as gardening clubs and resident parties have supported and enhanced the health, wellbeing and quality of life of our residents.



- Facilitated a total of 1,636 visits across four residential care homes, enabling our residents to re-engage and connect with family and friends



Challenges



- Significant staff shortages due to recruitment difficulties, isolation requirements and sickness impacted on service delivery.



- In a rapidly changing environment, implementing the latest Welsh Government care home guidance has been challenging.



- The pandemic and its associated restrictions have had a significant impact on the wellbeing and resilience of care home staff.



Well-being Standard 3: Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm.



What did we say we would do last year?

Priority 7: Implement a Strengths-Based Approach (SBA) for working co-productively with children and their families.

Developing a strengths-based model focuses on working co-productively with children and their families to identify their strengths and assets, as well as needs and difficulties, to enable them to achieve outcomes and enhance their well-being. This involves moving away from the traditional needs-based assessments to a focus on strengths-based conversations.

The holistic implementation of a strengths-based approach 'Building on Strengths' is a long term (2 years +) Development Plan in Children and Young People Services which aims to develop the workforce and systems, leading to better outcomes for children and young people, and to manage risk confidently.

There is a significant programme of activities designed to embed and sustain the evolution of practice, continuing to build a stable and confident workforce. These activities have four strands of development, each with specific activities to enhance the functioning at each systemic layer:

1. **Strategic development (organisational culture)**- delivered through quarterly workshops.
2. **Systems development (organisational process and practice)**- this element is linked to our Performance Champions work stream of the Reshaping Social Service Programme where the focus is on systems development.
3. **Individual development of practice** - progressed through monthly workshops with supervisors within Children and Young People Services and reflective workshops for workers across the Division.
4. **Colleague and partner development**- achieved through regular briefings with the dual purpose of informing, listening and relationship building.



During 2021/22 we have:

- Commenced implementation of Strengths-Based Approach (SBA) across Children and Young People Services, where the four strands of the development are monitored via an Implementation Plan.
- Delivered a series of workshops through phase 1 of its implementation to our staff to engage them in the development and implementation of SBA.
- Distributed 'Kit Bags' to all our staff, designed to support our workforce in having strengths-based conversations with children and young people. The principles of communication and emotional literacy that the Kit Bag represents will be spread throughout the entirety of our

service development work. Staff have been invited to attend workshops that reflect on how to use these kit bags in conjunction with SBA.

- Progressed development of a evaluation framework to assess process and outcomes from SBA work, which is closely linked with Performance Champions work.



SUCCESSSES



- We have begun to develop a shared language and have named the approach 'Building on Strengths'.
- This will enable us to embed consistency in applying the Strengths Based approach and language across our workforce.



- By clearly articulating what 'Building on Strengths' means, this has enabled us to develop phase 2 of the programme.
- Phase 2 will look to further develop a shared language, understanding and 'golden thread' in order to describe our approach to supporting children, young people and their families.



- The development of a practice framework and Strengths-Based Approach puts relationships at the heart of our work and will remain an ongoing long-term objective within Children and Young People Services.
- This framework enables our workforce to deliver consistent and proportionate interventions to support children and young people and their families to achieve their own agreed outcomes.



- Research and evidence underpinning the Strengths-Based Approach indicates that citizens experience positive outcomes, where strengths are recognised and risk is managed confidently.



Challenges



- The pandemic has significantly impacted and increased demand for services within the Children and Young People's division.
- During this past year our primary focus has been on dealing with this increased demand, whilst still in the midst of the pandemic, ensuring continuity of care and support to our vulnerable children and young people and their families.
- Consequently, less progress has been made on implementation of the SBA model.



- Our capacity to review systems and paperwork to support 'Building on Strengths' was challenging at the start of the year.
- Good progress has been made since, and is now moving in line with our Performance Champions work stream.



- Recruitment and retention challenges in some teams within Children and Young People Services has impacted on the values of strengths-based working being embedded.

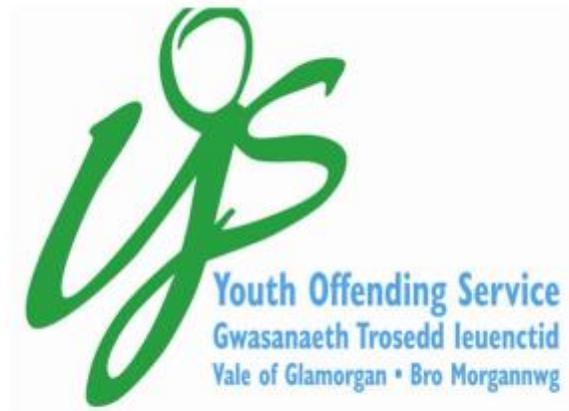


Priority 8: Work with partners to implement the Youth Offending Service recovery to enhance young people's outcomes.

The Pandemic challenged all services' ability to maintain continuity at a time of uncertainty. In the case of the Youth Offending Service, although there were significant operational challenges the service was quickly able to adapt to the changing landscape and ensure service continuity for children and young people in the youth justice system.

The focus of our work over this past has shifted from core service continuity to an emphasis on recovery and learning. Although, the pandemic presented a series of challenges to our service and operations, it also provided us with an opportunity to learn from our shared experiences in order to not only put in place service recovery but to also enhance our service development.

Outlined below is a summary of key recovery developments over the past year:



During 2021/22 we have:

- Made effective use of hybrid working arrangements and utilising digital means by which to maintain contact and engage with our young people to effectively deliver our services.
- Maintained regular and effective communication with partners to enhance our understanding of service delivery mechanisms and to ensure we can effectively collaborate with our partners to best meet the needs of our young people.
- Used our experience from the Pandemic to inform the identification and development of service delivery options going forward.
- Significantly reduced children entering Youth Justice System and increased our focus on preventative and diversionary work in order to promote the best possible outcomes for children and young people and to ensure they can lead happy, healthy and positive lives.
- Worked closely in partnership with the Youth Offending Service Board members to develop our services that have contributed to developing safer, more resilient communities, enhanced social mobility, community cohesion and safeguarded children from violence and exploitation.



- Focused on taking a trauma informed approach to our services which gives us greater opportunities to mitigate the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
- Successfully piloted Prevention Case Meetings, that take a child friendly, young person and family focused and relationship-based approach with working with children and young people at risk of offending.
- Focused on delivering reparation work in communities with young people in the Youth Justice System such as the St Athan project. (See further details below)
- Completed a pilot for the Prevention Outreach Service, where we worked alongside partners such as South Wales Police, the Community Safety Partnership and Vale of Glamorgan Youth Service.
- Developed an Antisocial Prevention Programme, working with the Community Safety Partnership to identify and support those identified at risk of increased anti-social behaviour at an earlier stage and providing a specific programme to address underlying needs and concerns.



SUCCESSES



- Achieved a 48.5% reduction in 'first time entrants' into the Criminal Justice System.
- Currently 90% of the current Youth Offending Service caseload is reflected in preventative and diversionary interventions.



Prevention Case Meetings-

- Pilot resulted in increased engagement in plans, a better understanding of the service and greater participation and engagement with targeted prevention interventions by children, young people and their families.



Prevention Outreach Service-

- Pilot enabled us to undertake a more contextual and proactive approach to safeguarding and addressing the needs, risks and safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children at risk of committing anti-social behaviour in the community.
- This was done through targeted interventions at peak times such as Halloween and Bonfire night.



Antisocial behaviour (Early Prevention Programme)-

- The whole of Year 9 at St Cyres Comprehensive School, Penarth participated in the programme
- In addition there were targeted individual sessions to address emerging concerns around peer groups and violence reduction.



Trauma Informed Approach-

- Two experienced practitioners have attended intensive training to lead on this work, which will include consultation with a Forensic Child Psychologist, and to promote increased partnership working.
- A new post as a specialist Mental Health Nurse has been developed that will provide consultation and direct work when required.



- Successfully utilised additional funding streams to expand the skill base of the Youth Offending Service.
- For example, specialist training in relation to AIM assessment and intervention training.
- Training was undertaken by YOS practitioners, seconded partners, Children and Young People Services Social Workers.
- Training will enable us to enhance our services and interventions with children around relationships, consent and harmful sexual behaviour.



Challenges



- Ongoing nature of the Pandemic and its associated restrictions required us to move between virtual and in person models, which was sometimes difficult and disruptive for our young people.



- Covid and its restrictions significantly impacted on our workforce in terms of staffing levels, wellbeing and the availability of volunteers



Spotlight on Youth Offending Service reparation project work-

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) looks to promote community values with the young people that it works with. Over the past year, the YOS has actively encouraged young people they work with to give back to their local community through reparation projects. This sees participants carrying out a range of

community reparation tasks such as graffiti cleaning, litter picking, beach and footpath clearing. More recently the YOS worked with young people in St Athan, the highlights of which are shown below.

The young people and YOS team worked to clear an area of St Athan village centre that had become overgrown and had been a problem for several years.



The team left the site looking much tidier and cleaner and members of the community have reached out to thank them for their hard work.



After the project's success, the YOS is already in talks about carrying out further work in the St Athan area and getting involved with the community council.



6 - Image shows a before and after picture of an area in St Athan that was cleared by the YOS and its young people as part of its community reparation work.



Young Person's Story: Case Study 1

Background to young person:

- Young person is Child Looked After (CLA) residing with grandparents and not adhering to boundaries.
- Associating with negative influences in local community.
- Getting into conflicts with peers in the community and school.
- Using cannabis.
- Participating in Antisocial Behaviour in the community.



Intervention:

- Completed the ASB awareness programme.
- Engaged in work around widening understanding of Cannabis use, impact on mental health and harm reduction.
- Participated in restorative work to repair the relationship with a young person where regular fights and arguments took place.
- Conversations to reinforce grandparent's boundaries at home around curfew times.
- Worked with young person to identify positive/negative peer influences.
- Intervention was young person and family led through the Prevention Case Meetings structure.



Young Person's Story: Case Study 2

Background to young person:

- Drug taking and possession of drugs in school.
- Associating with negative influences in local community.
- Aggressive verbally and physically.
- Antisocial and criminal behaviour.
- Understood consequences but lacked care.



Intervention:

- Communication specifically with parent (mum).
- Worked with young person on their mental health and coping with lockdown.
- Anger management work (to address underlying emotions).
- Worked with young person to raise awareness of Antisocial Behaviour and crime and its consequences.
- Supported young person to address substance misuse issue that also contributed to his mental health.
- Intervention was led by young person and family in a strengths and relationship-based approach via Prevention Case Meetings.



Well-being Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society.



What did we say we would do last year?

Priority 9: Implement the learning from the pandemic in relation to the delivery of services to children and families.

Over this past year Children and Young People Services have seen a significant rise in demand for our services at the same time we are tackling capacity challenges. The capacity and demand challenges we face are not just in the context of volume of cases, but is also in relation to severity and complexity of need. The pandemic has only served to further fuel this growth in demand for children and young people services. The pandemic put additional pressure on family relationships/tensions and it also created opportunities for abuse/neglect to occur as many of the traditional face to face contacts with statutory services such as teachers, health care professionals, which help mitigate and respond to any

emerging risks had been reduced. Consequently, we are now seeing the impact of this through the rising demand for our services.

Although the pandemic and its associated restrictions presented a number of operational challenges it also provided us with opportunity to learn from the experience and to better understand how the pandemic has impacted those we support. This learning not only informed how we adapted our services in response to the pandemic, but it also enabled us to consider and develop new ways of working to enhance how we safeguard and meet the needs of children, young people and their families.

Outlined below is an overview of the progress we have made over the past year in using this learning to enhance service delivery:

During 2021/22 we have:

- Developed flexibility and contingencies in the context of Covid, to adapt quickly to the changing landscape where restrictions were either introduced or eased. Having these flexible contingencies enabled us to sustain service delivery effectively.
- Deployed a range of mechanisms to support our workforce to deliver services both virtually and in person as required.
- Expanded the workforce to enhance opportunities to improve the experience of the children, young people and families we support as well as address wellbeing/capacity issues within our workforce.
- Enhanced how we engage with children, young people and families through our creative use of digital tools. For example, we have a dedicated Facebook page for the Vale of Glamorgan Flying Start and the creation of YouTube video content to support Flying Start families during the pandemic.
- Continued to use a hybrid model of service delivery and where restrictions have allowed we have used both in person and virtual means to engage with children, young people and their families.



Successes



- Our passionate and committed workforce have effectively and creatively maintained service delivery, despite the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and rising levels of demand.



- Established new practices that take account of the lessons learnt from the pandemic.
- Moved towards ways of working that gives children, families and workers more choice and control.



- Care Inspectorate Wales recognised that good progress had been made on acting on areas of improvement/recommendations.



- Building on our momentum from the previous year, we successfully embedded paper lite systems across the Division.



- Enhanced engagement with our Early Help and Prevention services through increasing our virtual presence.
- We maximised our use of digital platforms such as Facebook and YouTube.



Challenges



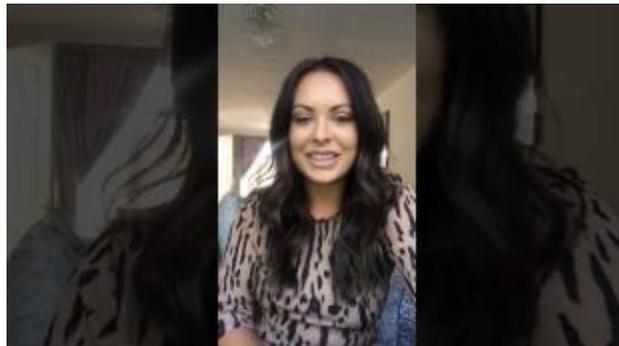
- Managing and responding to the evolving nature of the pandemic and its associated restriction/easements in the context of rising demand and complexity of need was challenging.





Flying Start has developed a strong social media presence. Through its dedicated Facebook Page, families eligible for Flying Start services can access information about the service, find out more about Flying Start services in terms of intensive health visiting, language and play, speech and language and parenting service as well as information about our Flying Start childcare settings. The Facebook page also promotes other events, training, activities and signposting to other groups that may be of interest to our Flying Start parents. See link to Flying Start Facebook ²page for more information.

The videos below are from the Vale Flying Start YouTube ³channel. These videos were developed by our Flying Start Practitioners over the course of the pandemic in order to continue to support and engage with our Flying Start families.



<https://youtu.be/YaIGa0ZSlvg>

²https://www.facebook.com/valeflyingstart/?ref=page_internal

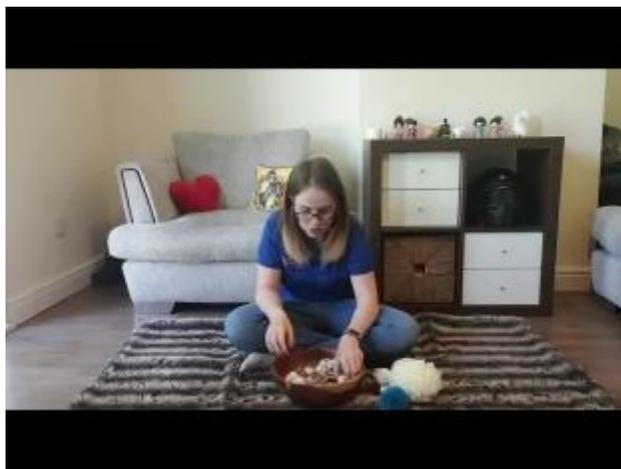
³https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQit2jGdElQ0_yqGQ5i72dQ/featured



<https://youtu.be/mkl4NkR3KJM>

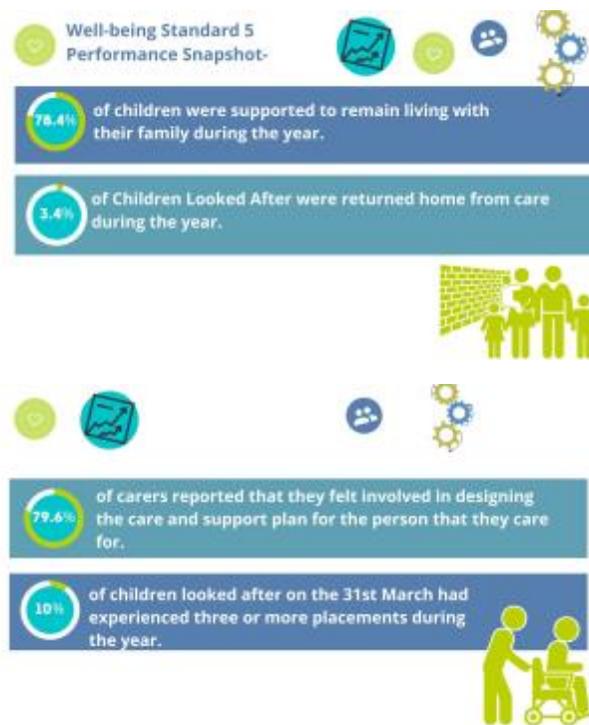


<https://youtu.be/jeU8QzEwsQY>



<https://youtu.be/rzqHsQpyC5U>

Well-being Standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.



What did we say we would do last year?

Priority 10: Enhance and strengthen our regional approach to recruitment and retention of foster carers.

Recruiting and retaining Foster Carers is key area of focus for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, as it remains an ongoing challenge at the local, regional and national level. Over a number of years there has been a decline in Foster Carers, which is in keeping with the national picture. This loss/decline in Foster Carers not only impacts on choice and availability of placements, but can also have an impact on existing placement stability. By focusing on driving up the number of local authority foster carers also gives us greater capacity to minimise our use of more costly foster care placements.

Placement stability is a key to giving children and young people greater sense of certainty, reliability and continuity that is vital to the lives of vulnerable young people. For this reason, we remain committed to recruiting more in-house Foster Carers and to supporting the work of the National Fostering Framework which has been developed across Wales to address the national shortage of mainstream Foster Carers. At the heart of this strategy is the recruitment and retention of Foster Carers that are highly skilled and equipped to meet the needs of children and young people in their care.

Operating across a regional footprint, has provided us with opportunities to further enhance and strengthen our recruitment and retention of foster carers. Working collaboratively across the region has enabled us to share knowledge and expertise to increase the number and variety Foster Carers through effective joint campaigns and to better match foster placements with children whilst where possible focus on place children within their own locality.



7 - Foster Carer Nicky Howard-Kemp attends launch event along with Social Work staff.

During 2021/22 we have:

- Worked collaboratively with the region to launch the Foster Wales website.
- Worked with the region to develop and launch national branding and marketing campaign to attract potential Foster Carers. Alongside this has been the development of paid social media campaigns.
- Produced a series of press releases on local success stories to promote the role of foster caring.
- Improved resources available to foster care applicants that has included the delivery of the Skills to Foster initiative. The Skills to Foster ⁴is a pre-approval course in order to train and assess prospective foster carers. It is designed to prepare new applicants for the challenge of fostering and acts as a resource to support carers to take on the variety of placements.
- Continued to focus on recruitment campaigns, training and assessment of new Foster Carers.

⁴<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/training-consultancy/skills-foster>

"If you can change the life of just one young person for the better you will make a positive difference – and there really is no greater feeling than that."

**Nicky ,
Vale of Glamorgan**



8 - Quote from Nicky one of our Foster Carers.

Successes



- Received 62 enquiries regarding foster caring, up 15 from the previous year.
- 21% conversion rate from enquiry to approval. This is 9.3% higher than the Welsh average.



- 13 new mainstream approvals, compared to 8 in the previous year.



- There were 27 new Kinship approvals, compare to 10 in the previous year.



- Two new parent and child foster carers approved. This is a first for the Vale of Glamorgan.



Challenges



- Challenges around adapting ways of working to fit with regional and national colleagues.
- Covid-19 impacted on service delivery.



- Delivering resources in short time frames to meet desired launch timescales for Welsh Government was challenging.



Shown below is one of our Foster Carers Sharon Thomas who received an MBE for her dedication to foster care services in the Vale of Glamorgan. Sharon is passionate and committed to her foster care role, and it's these qualities that ensure that our Foster Carers can give children and young people the best possible life chances and outcomes whilst in their care.



9 - Sharon Thomas, a Foster Carer receiving her MBE .

The video shown below was produced in conjunction with Foster Care Wales to promote the role of foster caring as part of its wider publicity campaign to attract new foster carers across Wales. The video features one of our Vale of Glamorgan Foster Carers, Sally O'Sullivan who meets with Julie Morgan MS (Deputy Minister for Social Services).



<https://youtu.be/euBF8UiHSFY>

10 - Foster Carer, Sally O'Sullivan meeting with Julie Morgan MS (Deputy Minister for Social Services).

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



What did we say we would do last year?

Priority 11: Investigate opportunities to improve provision and access to care and support services via digital means.

Utilising technology to support care co-ordination has the potential to transform the social care landscape and enhance care and support experienced by our citizens. Maximising our use of technology to co-ordinate and deliver care will enable us to deliver more proactive and personalised care and support. Embedding technology into care co-ordination enables us to communicate more effectively between staff and external agencies/partners, enhance quality assurance and that our citizens receive a seamless integration of care and support. This will not only support service efficiencies, but will enhance the service user experience and improve their health and well-being outcomes. Using technology for care co-ordination will further contribute to embedding a more person-centred approach, that will empower individuals to be involved in decisions about their care and support to shape and enhance their health and well-being.



During 2021/22 we have:

- Enhanced WiFi and connectivity across our residential care homes by renewing cabling. Cabling work was completed in Southway and Ty Dyfan. Recabling work continues to be progressed in Cartref and Ty Dewi Sant.
- Agreed a contractual arrangement with Boots to implement a digital medication administration system in our residential care homes. It is anticipated that a new digital system will enable us to streamline our workflows and processes, assist in minimising risk of medication errors, enhance care quality and staff capacity and will strengthen communication between care homes and pharmacies.
- We have worked closely with our partner Pharmacy to identify a suitable Electronic Medication Administration Record System.



Successes/Challenges

Successes



- Implementing an Electronic Medication Administration Record (EMAR) system has increased our efficiency and has enabled us to introduce a paperless operation.



- Previously there were challenges associated with safety, quality and accountability in medicine administration and record keeping, which posed a serious risk to vulnerable patients in our care homes.
- The introduction of an EMAR system enables pharmacists to make proactive and consistent interventions, which has positive effects on resident safety.



- The Omnicell EMAR (Electronic Medication Administration Record) system was successfully launched in Ty Dyfan in January 2022.
- Ty Dyfan staff have been successfully trained on the Omnicell EMAR administration.



- Recabling work at our residential care settings has improved our digital connectivity and has enhanced the wellbeing of our residents who during the pandemic became reliant on virtual contact with relatives, friends and professionals.



Challenges



- Challenges were initially around IT integration with Vale of Glamorgan IT systems.
- Firewall protection prevented system communicating.



- Covid-19 impacted on project delivery.
- Active Covid cases at times prevented ICT staff from undertaking visits to care settings as part of implementation work.



- Active Covid cases delayed some staff training.
- Some staff were initially not confident in using ICT, but following training felt more proficient in using the EMAR system.



Priority 12: Enable safe discharges from hospital through models of care which provide choice and control for service users.

Adopting models of care that enable safe discharges from hospital are vital to a person's recovery and wellbeing both in the short and longer term. Taking an innovative approach to enable safe hospital discharges, reduces unnecessary and lengthy stays in hospital, reduces exposure to risks such as hospital-acquired infections, as well as falls, the loss of physical and cognitive function and enhances their wellbeing and enables people to regain/maximise their independence as soon as possible. Effective discharge mechanisms also support patient flow through the health setting and enables hospitals to maximise their bed capacity to meet growing demand.

Effectively operating a safe discharge model requires the commitment of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to work together. Within the Vale of Glamorgan, the Integrated Discharge Service takes the lead role in overseeing the timely assessment of patients who are considered ready for discharge. This integrated service works in partnership with health care professionals, Social Workers, care

providers and the voluntary sector to put in place an appropriate package of care and support to enable them to return home safely to continue with their recovery and reablement.

This model provides the opportunity to improve the patient experience and their by developing a person-centred, strengths based approach that empowers individuals and gives them greater choice and control over their care and support they receive.



During 2021/22 we have:

- Continued to respond in a timely way to assess patients for discharge from hospital through the Integrated Discharge Service.
- Effective promotion of the VCRS team to support people's reablement and recovery following discharge from hospital.
- Undertaken weekly 'Call to Action' meetings to monitor demand for care and to manage the domiciliary care position.
- Developed an action plan to address shortages in domiciliary care that includes the development of the Fast Track to Care programme and have facilitated additional payments to care staff to enhance recruitment and retention.
- Explored the development of micro-enterprises and Accelerated Cluster development. Community Micro-Enterprises are small social businesses that provide care and support in diverse ways.
- The Accelerated Cluster Model focuses on provision of primary care services over a geographical locality. It enables better co-ordination of health and care services over a locality footprint in order to promote the health and wellbeing of its residents. It is anticipated that the exploration of accelerated cluster development will support the design and development of

future cluster-based programmes of work and will enable us to further expand its development to include a wider care community.



11 - A member of staff supporting reablement of a service user.

Successes/Challenges



- Successfully commissioned interim care home placements for patients awaiting domiciliary care packages. This reduced the need for longer stays in hospital, whilst care packages were being arranged.



- Worked closely with council departments to plan other accommodation facilities such as Extra Care e.g. the Penarth Complex Care Facility.



Challenges



- Impact of Covid on the availability of care home placements (due to staffing/incidents).
- Closure of care homes, placed additional pressure on the system.





- Availability of domiciliary care delayed arranging packages of care.
- Vale Community Resource Service- capacity was used to support domiciliary care set up, but this led to capacity issues for step down and reablement work.



- Our residential reablement unit- Ty Dyfan was repurposed in the pandemic for isolation, reducing our reablement capacity.
- Increased complexity of needs presented by individuals and in some cases patients required longer stays in hospital despite our best efforts to support discharge.



How do we do what we do?



12 - A member of staff from our Day Services.

This section of the report sets out how through our skilled and dedicated workforce, effective partnership working and robust financial management we have been able to overcome many of the challenges our services have faced over the past year whether it be due to the pandemic or the growth in demand for our services we have remained focused on meeting the care and support needs of our citizens.

Our workforce

Our workforce is our greatest asset and their dedication has enabled us to effectively navigate our way through several challenges over this past year.

In keeping with the national picture, the Vale of Glamorgan's Social Services is experiencing higher staff turnover/shortages and difficulties within recruiting and retaining some staff. This is being felt acutely across both Adult and Children and Young People Services.

Positive progress has been made in ensuring that the Directorate focuses in the long term on how we manage our workforce. To address the workforce pressures in relation to Social Services, a Capacity Planning Group has been established for Social Services that is being led by a Principal HR Business Partner. To address these workforce challenges significant work has been undertaken by the Directorate to ensure that we have the right structures within teams and have developed bespoke/targeted recruitment campaigns for 'hard to recruit' positions.

Despite the growth in demand for social care services, we have continued to look at developing more preventative approaches to how we can effectively manage these pressures. We have continued to maintain a positive focus on retention by devising approaches to mitigate attrition of our workforce.

We have continued to support and promote a range of corporate workforce initiatives that enhance engagement and recognition of our staff. For example, the Chief Executive disseminates weekly messages to staff to share 'good news' stories and thank yous to staff who have gone that 'extra mile'.



13 - Staff supporting the 'stay safe' message.

The pandemic and working more remotely has prompted us to have more of a focus on the wellbeing of our staff. We promote wellbeing by offering staff a range of online fitness classes, wellbeing sessions, walks and where possible encourage staff to work hours more flexibly. Wellbeing is an ongoing discussion within teams and it remains a core focus within supervision to enable individuals to highlight any specific wellbeing issues/concerns.

A culture of wellbeing and showing care and compassion for others is embedded into our teams. Staff were recently moved by the horrifying scenes the world is witnessing in Ukraine. To raise funds for Ukraine, a team within Social Services devised the 'Miles for Ukraine' campaign, that challenged colleagues to walk, run or cycle (or knit) their way to completing a virtual journey to Ukraine (1,775 miles). The campaign proved so popular that other Council departments joined in raising a total to date

of £1,584, and this initial target was extended to a return virtual journey back to Barry. Shown below are some pictures of our inspirational staff undertaking their 'Miles for Ukraine' challenge. This not only raised funds for a worthy cause, but it also encouraged staff to come together, to undertake some physical activity and to enhance their wellbeing.



14 - PPE team undertaking voluntary work at PorthKerry Park.





15 - Social Services staff undertaking their 'Miles for Ukraine' walk.

Outlined in the slides below is a summary of some of our key workforce related developments over the past year and an overview of our workforce priorities we intend to take forward during 2022/23.



Children and Young People Services-

- We have invested resources to increase our capacity at the 'front door' to improve the timeliness of assessments of need and risk and enabled appropriate signposting to other services.
- This has been an effective way of preventing the escalation of issues by seeking to support families at the lowest tier.



Adult and Resource Management & Safeguarding-

- To enhance recruitment of domiciliary and care home staff we have also developed a fast-track recruitment programme to recruit and train new starters, so that they become work ready quicker.
- The scheme will recruit and train staff for more than 20 care providers operating in the Vale, as well as for roles with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.



- Establishment of an in-house Social Services Training Unit. The unit has 3 Development Officers who support the identification of training needs across the Directorate.
- These Development Officers have been instrumental in the creation and implementation of a bespoke learning and development plan for our staff.



Children and Young People Services-

- Established and recruited Social Care Officer posts. This will enhance our ability to 'grow our own' by building resilience and enhancing retention in key areas.
- We are also looking at succession opportunities for our Social Care Officers to undertake Social Work qualification whilst working.



Adult Services-

- To address the capacity challenges around Approved Mental Health Practitioners we have identified individuals to undertake Approved Mental Health Professionals training to support retention and succession planning.



Workforce Priorities 2022/23



Organise for Progress - The Way of Dorset Council



- Further develop our leadership in the future to develop the skills sets of our workforce to be resourceful and resilient in a changing climate.
- The next stage is to look further down into our structures to ensure we have in place effective succession plans within all teams.



Children and Young People Services-

- Utilise our resources to respond to capacity challenges within the division to support a proportionate level of reorganisation to put us in a stronger position to address growing demand going forward.



Adults and Resource Management & Safeguarding-

- Renew our actions for increasing the number of care workers across the sector as a whole.
- Review and embed the effectiveness of the 'Fast Track to Care' programme.



- Continue to develop our local training team and facilitate care staff to undertake the necessary training.



Financial resources

The Social Services budget is carefully monitored throughout the year. There is robust and effective monitoring of the budget via the Budget Programme Board that provides a high level of oversight of how we are managing our financial resources. Regular monitoring enables us to take action where areas of concern emerge.

Detailed commitment reports are reported to this group, which project forward for a whole year. We have good oversight from this reporting where any changes/developments are considered every month. Commitment monitoring includes analysis of trends to identify where demand services is changing and in terms of changes in usage of different types of social care.

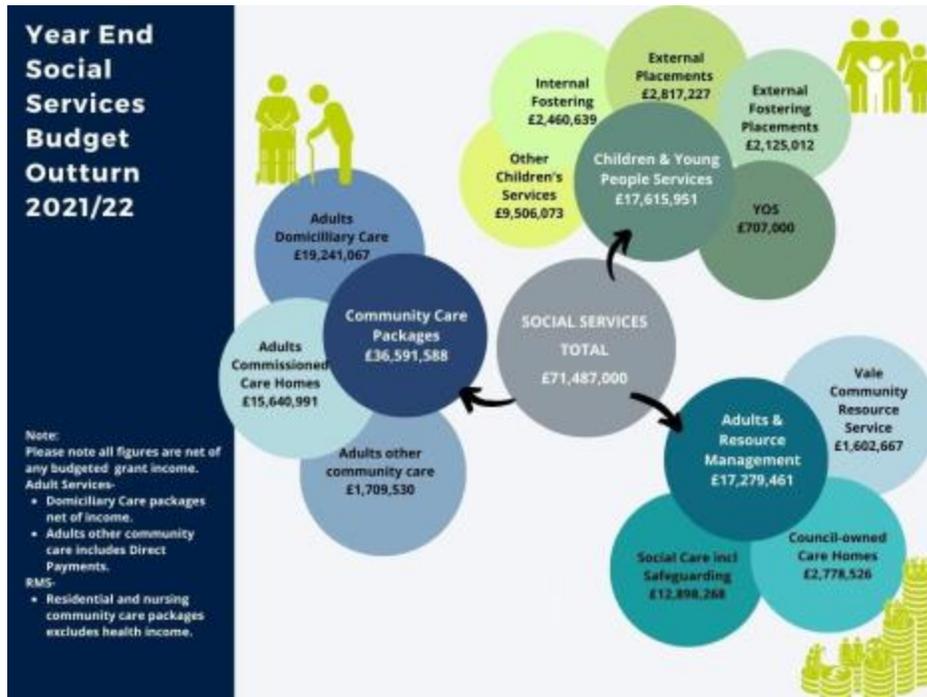
Commitment monitoring also informs costs pressures, which are kept under ongoing review. The work of the Budget Programme Board also receives regular updates on progress being made against savings targets. Alongside this individual savings schemes and cost pressures are also considered by the Council's Cabinet at appropriate intervals throughout the year.

Budget planning is aligned to our Reshaping Programme (improvement programme) and our Service Plan actions are aligned to this Reshaping programme. These interfaces enable us to effectively knit together our commitments in terms of delivery of our key priorities and our budgetary spend.

Vale of Glamorgan Social Services have also continued to benefit from grant funding to support the delivery of regional workstreams through a wide range of funding streams from the Welsh Government.



The diagram below illustrates how the budget is deployed across the three divisions of Social Services.



Our partnership working, Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability.

We remain committed to working collaboratively both at the local and regional level in order to improve the quality of care and support we provide to our citizens and to support us in delivering services more effectively.

The Pandemic has taught us the importance of working together in order to co-ordinate our response effectively to emerging challenges. The Pandemic has left its mark on not only society but also on how we operate our services both now and in the future. This is in the context of increased budgetary pressures associated with Covid and the significant rise in demand for services. Therefore, it is now more important than ever that we have robust leadership, governance and accountability to enable our Directorate to have a clear vision of how we navigate ourselves through the aftermath of the pandemic and the challenges it presents. It is therefore, vital that any lessons learnt from our pandemic experience are implemented to enhance the quality of our services going forward. Partnership working remains a central feature in addressing some of these challenges and will enable us to redefine services into the longer term with a preventative focus, where service design is focused on integration and service user involvement and delivered where possible through collaborative means.

Leadership and Governance

The Social Services Well-being Wales (Act) 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act changed the way we view, plan and deliver our services for our citizens. There is now a much greater focus on delivering a citizen-centred approach to working that enhances the well-being of our citizens.

Social Services is not just driven by the need to fulfill statutory functions as defined by legislation, but by the desire to explore opportunities to further streamline and integrate our services so that we can continuously improve the quality of care and support we provide and ultimately the outcomes for our citizens.

The Corporate Plan 2020-25, is the Council's key policy document that set out our vision 'Working Together for a Brighter Future'. This plan outlines an ambitious plan of activity for the next 5 years that will enable us to deliver our four Wellbeing Objectives and contribute to the delivery of the seven national Well-being Goals (as outlined in the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFGA)). Aligned to the Corporate Plan is an Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) that is produced annually to reflect what specific actions the Council will progress during the year to deliver the commitments outlined in the Corporate Plan. This year the Annual Delivery Plan contains a wide range of priorities that service areas will all be working towards, some of which will reflect our pivot towards implementing a new operating model as part of our recovery from the pandemic. Annually, within Social Services, the Reshaping Service Board priorities are aligned to our ADP priorities to ensure that we contribute to the Corporate Plan commitments and delivery of the Annual Delivery Plan.

The main channel through which we do this is via our Service Plans and the Reshaping Services Board. Within Social Services there are three Service Plans that reflect the divisions of Adult Services, Children and Young People Services and Resource Management and Safeguarding. Producing annual Service Plans ensures that our priorities remain relevant to the Corporate Plan, are realistic within our budgetary means and enable us to comply with our legislative requirements and our statutory Social

Services functions. We monitor delivery of our Service Plan activities on a quarterly basis through our Reshaping Board and via performance reports that are presented to our Senior Leadership Team, Scrutiny and Cabinet. This provides an opportunity to discuss resource and budget issues as well as flag any emerging performance issues and challenges that require consideration by Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The priorities associated with the Wellbeing Standards outlined in this report are aligned to the Corporate Plan for 2020-25 and the associated Annual Delivery Plan. The identification of new priorities aligned to the Wellbeing Standards for 2022-23 have been informed by the ADP for 2022-23, our Service Plans and the Reshaping Services Board and are outlined in the final section of this report.

What does our regulator say about us?

Each year the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) evaluates the Council's performance in conducting its statutory functions that is presented in the form of an annual performance review. During 2021-22, CIW reinstated a work programme of activity that included an inspection of Children and Young People Services⁵ and a performance evaluation assurance check⁶.

The last annual performance review letter was received from CIW in August 2020, relating to the period 2019/20. The letter⁷ summarises CIW's review of the Vale of Glamorgan Council's performance (that includes Adults and Children's services) in conducting its statutory Social Services functions for the period April 2019 - March 2020.

CIW continue to undertake regular performance and 'check in' meetings with the Director and Heads of Service. The purpose of these meetings was to review and discuss the Council's progress and in particular our recovery in relation Covid-19. The areas of recovery have also been incorporated as part of our recovery priorities that have been integrated into the Council's Annual Delivery Plan for 2021/22⁸.

Promoting Welsh Language and Access to Services

More than Just Words and the Welsh Language Services in Health, Social Services and Social Care aims to strengthen Welsh Language Services in health and social care and is driven by the need to ensure Welsh speakers can access and receive services through the medium of Welsh.

Summarised in the slides below is the progress we have made during 2020/21 in further promoting the Welsh Language and access to services.

⁵<https://careinspectorate.wales/local-authority-monitoring-activity-letter-vale-glamorgan-council-2022>

⁶<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2021-11/211104-vale-of-glamorgan-en.pdf>

⁷<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2020-07/200803-vale-of-glamorgan-en.pdf>

⁸https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Committee_Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Draft-VoG-ADP.pdf



Welsh Language Services Update 2021/22



A proposal to pilot the introduction of Welsh language skills within Social Services is pending to:

- agree Welsh language skills minimum requirements for all staff;
- identify the level of Welsh language required for individual posts and skill levels as either essential or desirable.

During 2021/22, two posts were advertised within the Resource Management and Safeguarding Division that required Welsh Language skills at Level 1/willingness to improve skills to level 1.



- We continue to offer 'Welsh Chat' peer support for Social Services staff who are Welsh learners.
- This gives staff opportunities to practice their Welsh with other learners in between lessons.



- Participate in the Regional More than Just Words Forum every month.
- A draft Regional Action Plan has been developed to meet the aims of the 'More than Just Words' evaluation in anticipation of a revised framework/targets.



- We have continued to offer and promote Welsh language courses and taster sessions to our social care staff and enable staff to attend courses within their working hours.



Our partnership working and collaboration

Through pursuing a progressive collaborative agenda with our health and social care partners we have been able to enhance how we integrate services. At a regional level, we remain committed to developing initiatives as part of the Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (RPB). Through the RPB we have been able to maximise our use of funding to invest in the priorities identified in the RPB's Plan.

The 2020/21 Annual Report of the RPB is available on the Partnership's website⁹ and provides a useful summary of key achievements over the previous year. The RPB's Annual Report for 2021/22 was not published at the time of writing this report.

We also work well with our Third Sector partners and have in place a number of agreements which provide funding to enable them to support our residents.

⁹<https://cvihsc.co.uk/about/what-we-do/rpb-annual-report/>

Looking forward



Despite the challenges, I hope this report has demonstrated that we have delivered the best possible care and support to our citizens and enabled them to enhance their wellbeing outcomes in ways that matter to them most. It is only through the dedication and resilience of our staff we that we have managed to achieve this success.

We continue to learn from our challenges and we are well positioned to adapt swiftly to the changing landscape we find ourselves in. It is through this learning we have been able to shape our services in new ways to ensure our services are fit for the future.

The learning from this experience has been invaluable and continues to be used to inform the development of future models of care and support. By embracing these new models, we are confident it will enhance our capacity to deliver high quality care and support, which will also enable us to further embed a strengths-based and person-centred approach to service delivery. This will enable us to empower our citizens to define and co-produce their own outcomes and to enhance their well-being.

Drawing on the events from this past year and our insight for the way forward, we intend to progress the following priorities into 2022/23.

Our priorities 2022/23



Well-being Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce wellbeing outcomes that people wish to achieve.

1. Continue with the roll out of the 'Your Choice' model in co-ordination with other services including the identification of new providers as part of this phased approach.

2. Implement Year 2 of the Strengths Based Approach, 'Building on Strengths', working co-productively with children and their families to improve outcomes and enhance wellbeing.



Well-being Standard 2: Working with people/partners to protect and promote physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

3. Develop the Vale Integrated Fall Service to provide a rapid response to people who have fallen and access to specialist interventions.

4. Progress the work of the 'Alliance Model' to deliver more integrated health and social care services.



Well-being Standard 3: Safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm.

5. Embed the new Escalating Concerns Procedures.

6. Work with partners to implement the Youth Offending Service Plan to enhance young people's outcomes.





Well-being Standard 4: Safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm.

7. Review and enhance the information on DEWIS and the public facing website to ensure that safeguarding information is easily accessible.

8. Complete a review of key elements of Children and Young People Services paperwork to ensure it is accessible and child friendly (includes assessments and Care Plans).



Well-being Standard 6: Working with people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation.

11. Expand the development of SMART houses and review the outcomes of them in terms of impact for citizens in supporting independent living and enhancing their wellbeing.



Further Information and Key Documents

This report has provided an overview of how we have performed over the past year by outlining key successes and challenges we have faced whilst focusing on improving the well-being of those who need our help and support.

There is a significant amount of background information that sits behind this report and provides additional details of what we do and how we do it.

Further information is available via the following documents:

- Vale of Glamorgan Council's Corporate Plan 2020-25¹⁰

¹⁰https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/achieving_our_vision/Corporate-Plan.aspx

- Vale of Glamorgan Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2021/22¹¹
- Service Plans ¹²for Children and Young People Services, Adult Services and Resource Management, Safeguarding and Performance.
- Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership¹³
- Public Service Board's Well-being Assessment¹⁴
- Cardiff and Vale Population Needs Assessment¹⁵

¹¹https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee_Reports/Cabinet/2021/21-03-08/Draft-VoG-ADP.pdf

¹²https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/achieving_our_vision/Service-Plans.aspx

¹³<https://cvihsc.co.uk/>

¹⁴https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee_Reports/Cabinet/2022/22-03-14/VoG-PSB-Draft-Wellbeing-Assessment.pdf

¹⁵<https://cvihsc.co.uk/about/what-we-do/population-needs-assessment/>