

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 17 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Live Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2024-2025 – Final Version
Purpose of Report:	To ensure that Cabinet agree the future priorities for the Directorate of Social Services
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member, Social Care and Health.
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Social Services Management Team Live Well 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 Live Well Scrutiny Committee in May. Committee Members provided positive feedback. • A finalised version following feedback from partners is presented to Cabinet for approval. • The report contains several priorities which the Director of Social Services and Social Services senior management team has determined. These have been set in the context of significant increases in demand. Cabinet is asked to agree these improvement priorities. 	

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet considers the content of this report.
2. Approves the Director's Annual Report for 2024-25 (attached at Appendix 1).
3. Agrees the improvement priorities for Social Services as set out in the Director's Annual Report for 2024-25.

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 2024-25 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 format of the report has been set out as a requirement by Welsh Government through regulation. This guidance was changed in May 2024 and so this report format differs from previous reports. Most critically the 6 wellbeing outcomes have been replaced by 8 high-level quality standards, reported under 4 headings. The new guidance also allows for signposting to other relevant documents and so parts of the report now refer to issues already considered through local democratic reporting. Additional guidance was published by Welsh Government in March 2025 and so the report is required to fulfil both guidance documents.
- 1.3 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 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as evidence and to guide their inspection programme in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.4 The report reflects on progress over the last financial year.
- 1.5 The Corporate Plan sets the vision by identifying priorities that are aligned to well-being outcomes and objectives. The Corporate Planning process and the Directorate Plan have been used to set out our improvement agenda and to inform the development of the priorities 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 priorities for improvement.
- 2.2** The final report 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** Scrutiny Committee provided helpful comments regarding the challenge version. This included queries regarding how the Local Authority proposed to reduce the number of children looked after and how this self-assessment fits with the corporate self-assessment.
- 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 proforma 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. Delivering sustainable social services will require 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 direct result of this report.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The report is set out within the context of:

- Increasing demand for help and support;
- Managing the impact of finite budgets;
- Efforts to focus 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 contained in 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 to 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.

5.6 An update on Welsh language provision on how the Local Authority has engaged people (including children) in the production of the report.

6. Background Papers

Report to Live Well Scrutiny Committee – [27th May, 2025](#).

The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-05/director-of-social-services-annual-report-guidance.pdf>

2024/2025

Director's Report



Social Services
Vale of Glamorgan

Introduction

As the Director of Social Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2024-25.

Yet again this past year has been incredibly challenging for Social Services. Changing demographics continue to increase demand levels in all areas. This is in a context of limited finances and sustained staffing challenges in some areas.

We anticipate that the challenges will continue and so it isn't possible for us to continue as before. We are evolving and adapting our responses to these rapidly changing and uncertain times.

We are supporting more people than ever before, much faster than ever before and in ways that give them more control over their arrangements. None of that could have been achieved without the dedication and resilience of our staff. 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.

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. This report provides an overview of the performance of social care services over the past year. It highlights key achievements, challenges, and areas for future development. Our aim is to ensure high-quality, person-centred care that meets the needs of our community.

The report is in a new format following updated guidance from Welsh Government. The report also details the progress made against each of the priorities we said we would focus on over the past 12 months and these can be found in the 'performance assessment' section albeit placed under the new 'framework areas' rather than the previous 'wellbeing standards'.

Who We Are and What We Do

The Directorate comprises three key service areas:

- **Adults Services** – Supporting adults to live as independently as possible, focusing on their strengths, family, and community connections while meeting assessed eligible needs in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- **Children and Young People Services** – Promoting and safeguarding the well-being of children and young people, providing timely support to families, and ensuring high-quality alternative care when necessary.
- **Resource Management and Safeguarding** – Overseeing leadership, financial planning, workforce development, safeguarding, commissioning, performance management, and strategic planning to ensure the effective delivery of services.

Key Achievements

- **Improved Access to Services** – Quicker response times and more accessible support for individuals and families.
- **Enhanced Quality of Care** – Increased staff training and service improvements leading to higher satisfaction levels.
- **Strengthening Community-Based Support** – Stronger partnerships with local organisations to help individuals receive care within their communities.

- **Innovation in Service Delivery** – Implementation of digital tools for improved efficiency and accessibility.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- **Rising Demand** – Meeting the increasing needs of an aging population and those with complex requirements.
- **Workforce Pressures** – Recruitment and retention challenges, with ongoing efforts to develop and support staff.
- **Financial Constraints** – Managing budget pressures while maintaining high standards of care.

Looking Ahead

Our priorities for the coming year include enhancing preventative care, improving digital accessibility, and fostering stronger partnerships to create an integrated support network.

Context:**Leadership:**

Social Services in the Vale of Glamorgan are overseen through the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and given direction by the lead cabinet member. The Directorate operates with close connectivity to the other four directorates in the Council. This report is set in the context of a new Corporate Plan ([Vale 2030](#)). Vale 2030 was developed with insights gleaned from a Panel Performance Assessment and so the objectives set out have a clear evidence base. Social Services has a new [Directorate Plan](#) to help fulfil Vale 2030 and to support the various transformation programmes in the service. The coming years are likely to see some of the biggest changes in social care in the Vale. Notably the fulfilment of Welsh Government's 'Eliminate Profit' agenda will require significant work. Similarly the transition to a new social care IT record system represents substantial activity.

Over the past year, we have:

- Created/Introduced a Quality Assurance Framework to support service performance evaluation, ensuring effective, accountable, and evidence-based practice that drives improvement.
- Strengthened multi-agency collaboration, particularly in safeguarding, commissioning, and community-based care models, ensuring decisions are well-informed and transparent.

Workforce:

Our social care workforce is the foundation of delivering high-quality, person-centred services.

Over the past year, we have:

- Implemented a new supervision policy, ensuring consistent practice and professional development across all teams.
- Continued efforts to recruit, train, and retain staff, particularly in frontline social work and specialist care roles.
- Consulted with all staff within social services directorate to support our recruitment and retention priorities.

For the coming year, we will:

- Implement ADSSC recommendations for eliminating racism in social care and improving workforce recruitment and retention.
- Explore new office space for adult services, ensuring that staff have appropriate facilities to work effectively.

Financial Resources

Our financial management ensures that resources are allocated efficiently to support service delivery. That said the Directorate has significantly overspent this year. The overspend is predominantly attributed to the need to intervene, protect and support more children however the growing older population continues to require greater levels of care to live independently as well. In summary we are supporting more people than ever before, and this is impacting on our budget.

The Social Services Directorate's service delivery is supported by an estimated base budget of **£106.519 million** for 2025/26. This includes funding awarded for the Directorate's pay

cost pressures of **£410,000** and inflationary and other service cost pressures of **£13.635 million** for the same period.

Additionally, the directorate is committed to delivering **£3.624 million** worth of in-year savings identified for the period 2025/26.

For the foreseeable future, the Council is required to reduce budgetary spend significantly as we are unable to keep up with the cost pressures caused by growing demand and price rises. The Directorate will continue to undertake service reviews to identify areas where efficiencies can be realised leading to a reduction in expenditure or an increase in income generation as appropriate.

Over the past year, we have:

- Identified capital improvement and development projects in response to the Market Stability Report.
- Invested in digital transformation, preparing for the replacement of WCCIS to enhance data-sharing and service integration.
- Improved our income recovery processes

For the coming year, we will:

- Deliver our ambitious savings programme which includes the following.
 - Releasing time to care which aims to reduce double handed calls where safe to do so
 - Developing a reablement first model to ensure we maximise an individual's independence before commissioning longer term packages of care.
 - Improving debt recovery
 - Efficiently using residential accommodation for children
 - Supporting families to stay together and avoid the need for more costly intervention
 - Reducing use of agency staff

The social care budget is allocated across service areas as follows:

- Adult Services – £73.125 million (£65.177 million previous year)
- Children and Young People Services – £24.735 million (£22.508million previous year)
- Resource Management and Safeguarding – £8.659million (£8.642 million previous year)

Activity Data

– Number of contacts

Adult Services

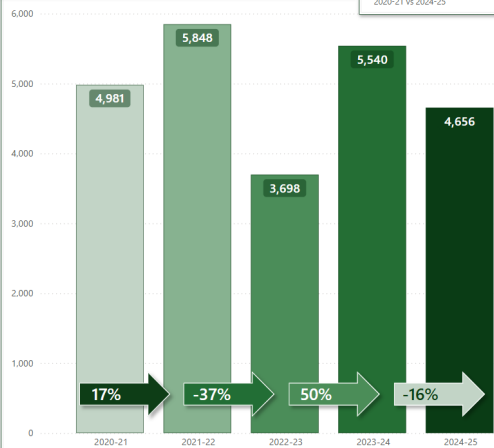
The number of contacts received for adults by statutory social services during the year. a. The total number of contacts

Percentage Change

-7%



Percent decrease based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



Children & Young People Services

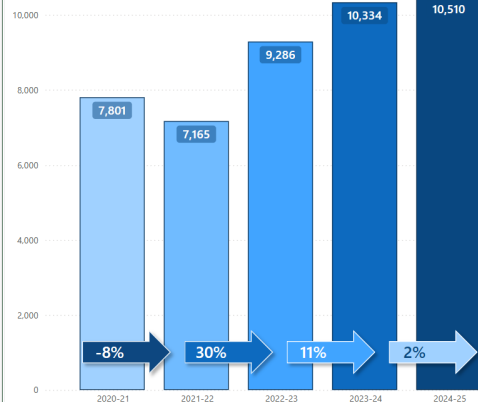
The number of contacts received for children by statutory social services during the year.

Percentage Change

35%



Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



provision of advice or assistance

Adult Services

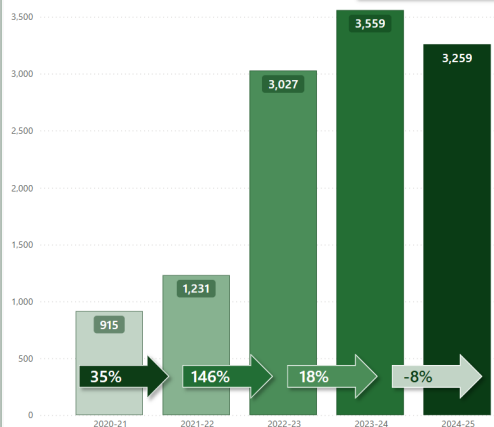
The number of new contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.

Percentage Change

256%



Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



Children & Young People Services

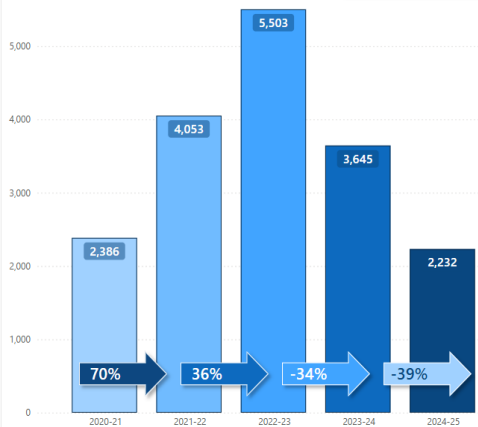
The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.

Percentage Change

-6%



Percent decrease based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



Assessments completed

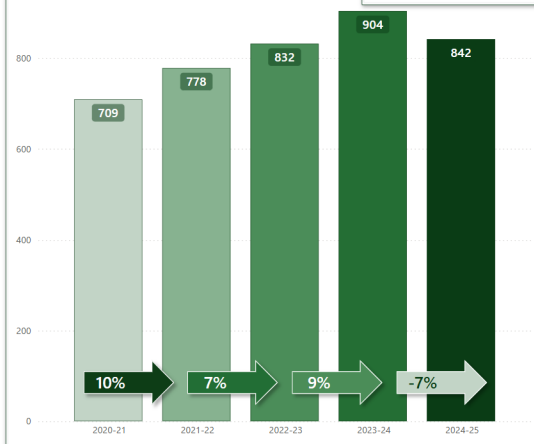
Adult Services

The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year.

Percentage Change

19%

Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



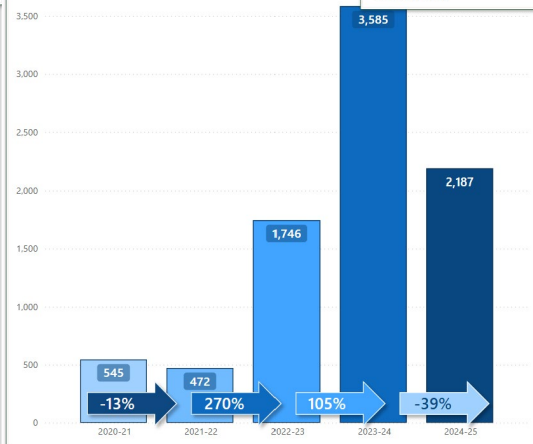
Children & Young People Services

The number of new assessments completed for children during the year.

Percentage Change

301%

Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



Care and support plans

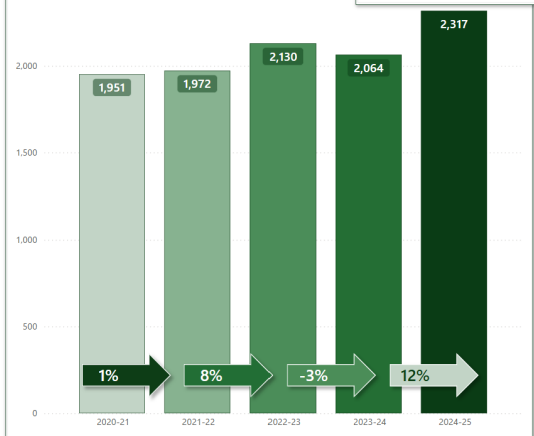
Adult Services

The number of adults with: a. A care and support plan on 31st March.

Percentage Change

19%

Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



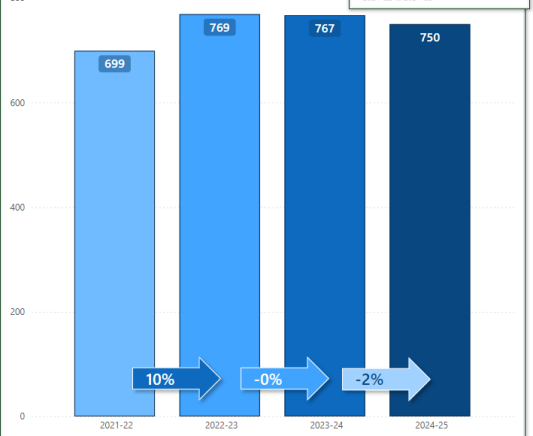
Children & Young People Services

The number of children with: a. A care and support plan on 31st March.

Percentage Change

7%

Percent increase based on figures during 2021-22 vs 2024-25



Activity Data – Current Year

Metric Ref	Metric name	2024-25
AD/001a	The number of contacts received for adults by statutory social services during the year. a. The total number of contacts	4656trrrg
AD/002	The number of new contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.	3259
AD/004	The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year.	842
AD/005a	The number of assessments completed for adults during the year where: a. Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan.	665
AD/012a	The number of adults with: a. A care and support plan on 31st March.	2317
AD/012b	The number of adults with: b. A care and support plan on 31st March and also a carer's support plan, where the adult has both their own care and support needs and responsibilities as a carer	17
CH/001	The number of contacts received for children by statutory social services during the year.	10510
CH/002	The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.	2232
CH/006	The number of new assessments completed for children during the year.	2187
CH/007a	The number of assessments completed for children during the year where: a. Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan.	251
CH/015a	The number of children with: a. A care and support plan on 31st March.	750
CH/015b	The number of children with: b. A care and support plan on 31st March and also a carer's support plan, where the child has both their own care and support needs and responsibilities as a young carer	0

Performance Assessment

This section provides a self-assessment of our performance across the four key quality standards: People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration, and Well-being. The assessment is based on operational data, feedback from service users and carers, staff engagement, and external evaluations.

1. People

The local authority remains committed to ensuring individuals are at the heart of their care and support. Over the past year, we have strengthened our quality assurance framework to enhance service performance evaluation. This framework supports evidence-based practice, ensuring that our interventions are effective, accountable, and continuously improving to meet people's needs.

We have also co-produced new service models that empower individuals by giving them greater voice, choice, and control over their care. These models help reduce dependency on statutory services by building on people's strengths and ensuring their care is shaped around what matters to them.

We have expanded advocacy and citizen engagement mechanisms to ensure that people can fully participate in decisions about their care.

We continue to embed co-production in service design by:

- Developing and implementing new service models that prioritise user feedback and self-determination.
- Strengthening community models of care, reducing unnecessary time spent in hospital and ensuring support is available in familiar, community-based settings.

Outcomes-Focused Support

Key developments in our outcomes-based approach include:

- Rolling out the Dementia-Friendly Communities Programme, ensuring that individuals with dementia and their carers receive appropriate support.
- Exploring new ways to support communities to support each other, helping individuals remain independent through stronger local connections.
- Working with partners to identify capital improvement and development projects that will help grow services in line with the Market Stability Report.
- Continued support delivered to Unpaid carers, that focusses on the individual needs of Unpaid Carers and provides a range of information, advice and assistance. You can read all about our services and commitments to Unpaid Carers here : [Annual Unpaid Carers Report 2024](#)

Ensuring High-Quality, Evidence-Based Practice

Our quality assurance framework has been embedded to drive consistency in practice, alongside a new supervision policy that ensures high standards across teams. The preparatory work for replacing WCCIS has also begun, ensuring future improvements in digital case management.

Welsh Language: Active Offer and More Than Just Words

We continue to build on the Active Offer by:

- Expanding Welsh-speaking advocacy services.
- Enhancing bilingual training for staff.
- Ensuring social care assessments and care planning are accessible in Welsh for those who need it.

How do we know?

- **Adult Day Service Consultation:**

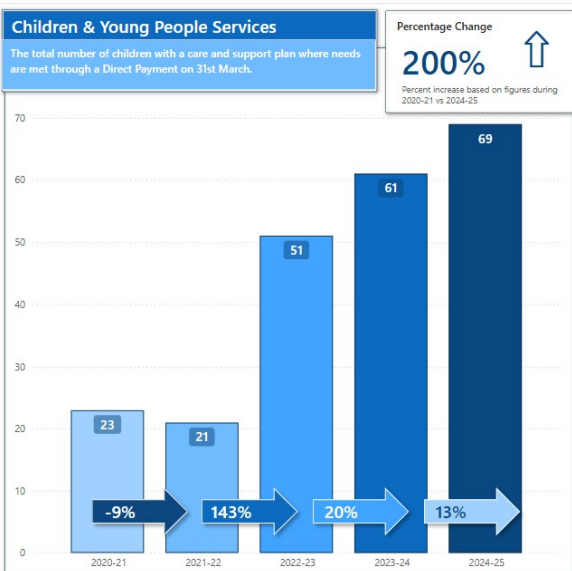
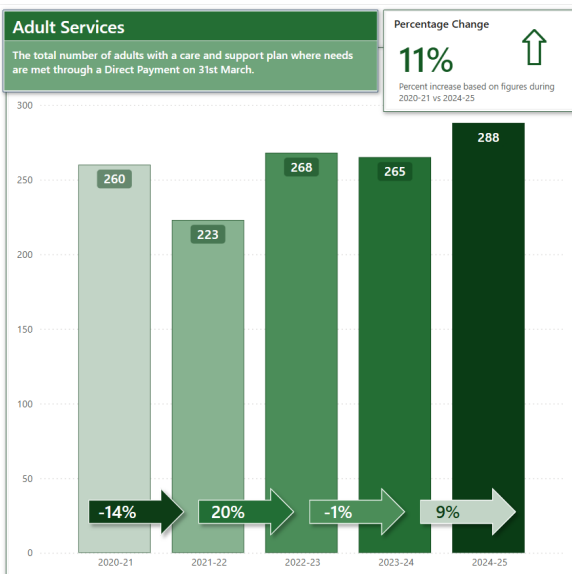
- The Vale of Glamorgan provides three Adult Day Service settings that support older adults, individuals with complex needs, and those with physical disabilities. These services aim to offer meaningful opportunities for individuals to build confidence, engage socially, form new friendships, feel valued, and enjoy themselves. This is accomplished through a variety of activities and resources designed to support their personal growth and well-being.
- We consulted with citizens and their relatives across our three adult day service facilities to gather feedback from both them and their families to evidence and ensure our interventions are effective and are meeting people's needs. The feedback highlighted:

Safety & Support		
Wellbeing perspective (average %)	Citizens (57)	Relatives (23)
They / their family member are safe when attending the day service	98%	100%
They / their family member are listened to & are happy with the care & support received	75%	100%
They / their family members independence has improved since attending the day service	57%	61%

- Both citizens and their relatives expressed that the day services provide a high standard of care, offer a variety of activities, ensure a safe environment, create opportunities to socialise, and maintain friendly, helpful staff who provide encouragement.
- **Flying Start Consultation:**
- Flying Start is a Welsh Government initiative designed to support families in giving children the best possible start in life. Flying Start settings offer free, high-quality childcare to families living within designated areas, with a strong focus on promoting improved outcomes for children.
- We consulted with 29 parents and caregivers, of whom 73% rated Flying Start childcare as 'Excellent' on average.
- '5 stars, amazing and friendly staff!'
- Parents offered valuable suggestions for improving the service, including encouraging greater parental involvement and organising more events and outings.

People Data:

People with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment



Current Year:

Metric Ref	Metric name	2024-25
AD/013	The total number of adults with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment on 31st March.	288
AD/032	The total number of adults during the year where the need for an independent professional advocate was identified.	42
AD/033	The total number of adults during the year where the need for an independent professional advocate was identified and an independent professional advocate was provided.	Data Not Available
CH/016	The total number of children with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment on 31st March.	69

CH/056	The total number of “Active Offers” of advocacy for children, aged five and over at the start of the collection year, during the year.	76
CH/057	The total number “Active Offers” of advocacy for children during the year where an Independent Professional Advocate was provided.	47

What progress did we make on last year’s priorities?

Over the past year, we have:

- Created a quality assurance framework to support service performance evaluation that drives effective, accountable, and evidence-based practice that informs service improvement
- Continued to co-produce new service models that offer the citizen voice and control and reduce dependency on statutory service provision.
- Maintained oversight of our referrals at the front door of Children Services to ensure we responded effectively to manage demand.
- Implemented a new supervision policy and ensured consistent practice is in place across the service
- Continued to focus on participation in the local authority reductions programme to manage demand for placements within Children and Young People Services.
- Engaged with citizens on a new Direct Payments policy.

For the coming year, we will:

- Develop local micro enterprises to support residents to have a wider choice of services
- Develop local not for profit accommodation to meet the needs of our children.
- Safely reduce our numbers of children looked after.
- Continue to support developments of our Information, Advice and Assistance to unpaid carers and young carers
- Review internal care home provision
- Establish a Corporate Parenting Panel Advisory group

2. Prevention

Prevention remains at the forefront of our approach to social care. Over the past year, we have worked with partners to promote community models of care, ensuring people receive the right support at the right time.

Additionally, we have made significant progress in:

- Rolling out our Dementia-Friendly Communities Programme, ensuring tailored support is available for those living with dementia.
- Supporting communities to support each other, strengthening local networks and reducing isolation.

We continue to develop integrated approaches to prevent the escalation of need. Key developments include:

- Working with health partners to minimise unnecessary hospital stays in line with the Welsh Government Frailty Standard.
- Strengthening front-door triage and early intervention, ensuring that people receive proportionate and timely support.

Prevention remains embedded across all levels of service delivery. Achievements include:

- Wider Population Measures:
 - Increased investment in falls prevention programs, reducing hospital admissions.
 - Public awareness campaigns on aging well and self-care.
- Targeted Interventions for Individuals:
 - Strengthened support for carers and at-risk individuals, ensuring early intervention.
 - Expanded direct payments and self-managed care, giving individuals more control over their support.

How do we know?

- Continued compliance with our targets in relation to timeliness of our adult safeguarding enquiries.
- Fewer children are becoming subject to child protection registration and plan, with our approach of right support at the right time ensuring there is appropriate escalation and de-escalation from child protection to care and support services based on individual need of children and their families.
- **Direct Payment Consultation:**
- Direct Payments can promote choice; voice, control and flexibility by enabling and empowering individuals to meet wellbeing outcomes as agreed in the Individual Assessment. The main objective is for individuals to be able to remain as independent, with or without support, to live in their own homes, be fully involved in family and community life, and to engage in work, education and leisure when and where possible to live the life they want to lead. At the end of April 2025, we currently have 361 individuals receiving Direct Payments. As an Authority we are committed to further expanding Direct Payments. We aim to increase the number of individuals accessing Direct Payments to recruit more Personal Assistants, and last year we

increased the Direct Payments hourly rate and the Personal Assistant hourly wage with the aim to enhance these during 26/27.

- We carried out consultations with staff who refer individuals for Direct Payments (20), people currently receiving them (104), and those who no longer do (23).

Key findings include:

- **72%** of current recipients found it easy to set up their Direct Payment.
- **93%** reported being satisfied with the service they receive.
- **97%** said that Direct Payments have improved their quality of life.
- Feedback also indicated that recipients would value **clearer guidance** on what Direct Payments can and cannot be used for.
- Among those who no longer receive Direct Payments, the main reasons for discontinuation were **difficulties in sourcing personal assistants** and **challenges related to increasing care needs**.
- From a staff perspective:
 - **65%** found the eligibility criteria clear.
 - However, **85%** reported receiving little to no training on Direct Payments, highlighting a gap in support and understanding.

Prevention Data:

Total number of new assessments

Children & Young People Services

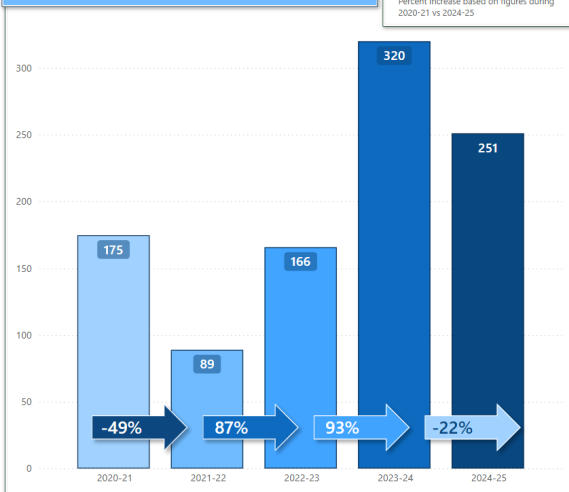
The number of assessments completed for children during the year where: a. Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan.

Percentage Change

43%



Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



Adult Services

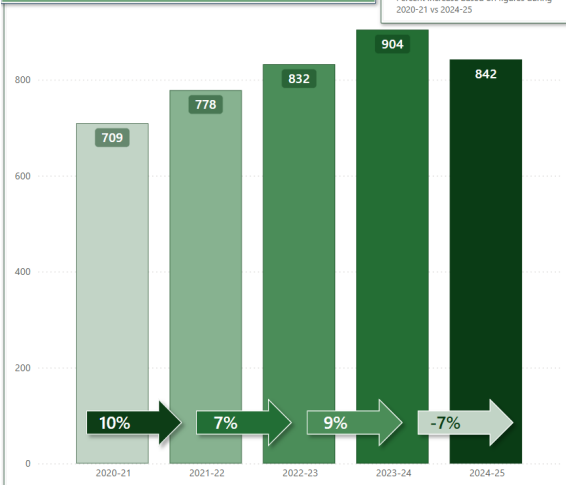
The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year.

Percentage Change

19%



Percent increase based on figures during 2020-21 vs 2024-25



Needs were able to be met by any other means

Children & Young People Services

The number of assessments completed for children during the year where: b. Needs were able to be met by any other means.

Percentage Change
2023-24 vs 2024-25

-33%



Adult Services

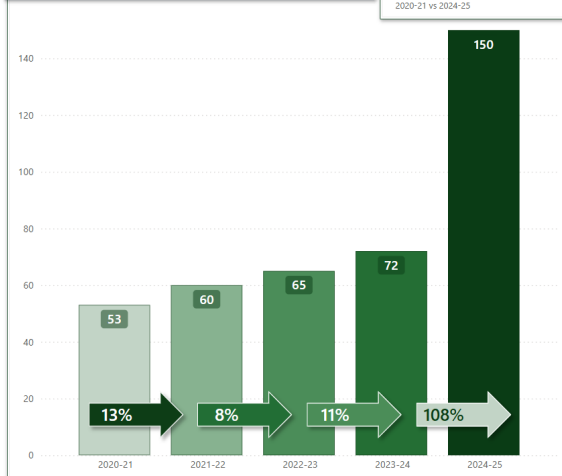
The number of assessments completed for adults during the year where: b. Needs were able to be met by any other means.

Percentage Change

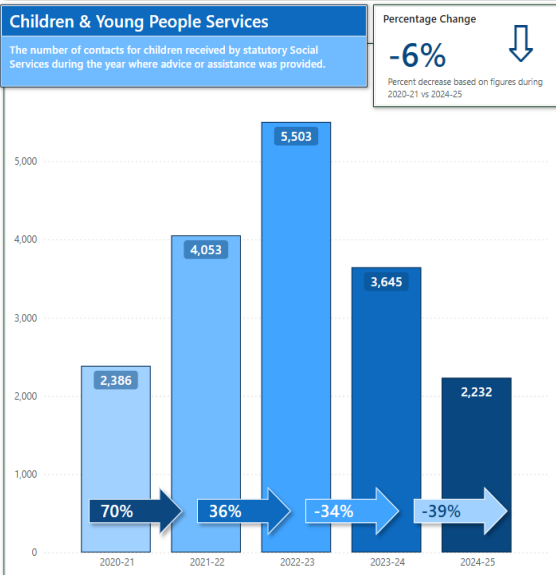
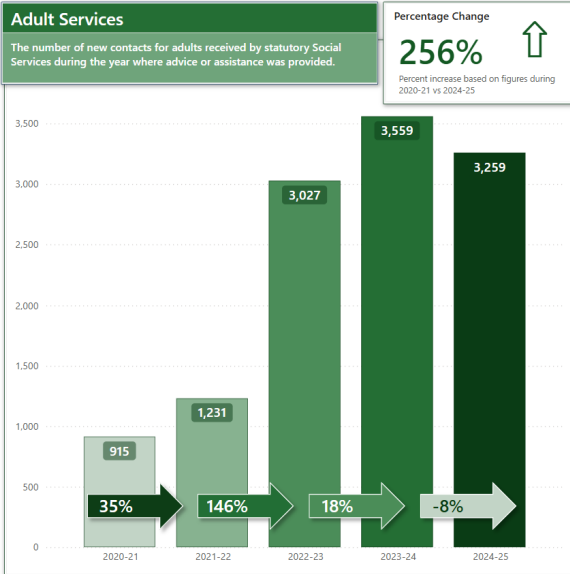
183%



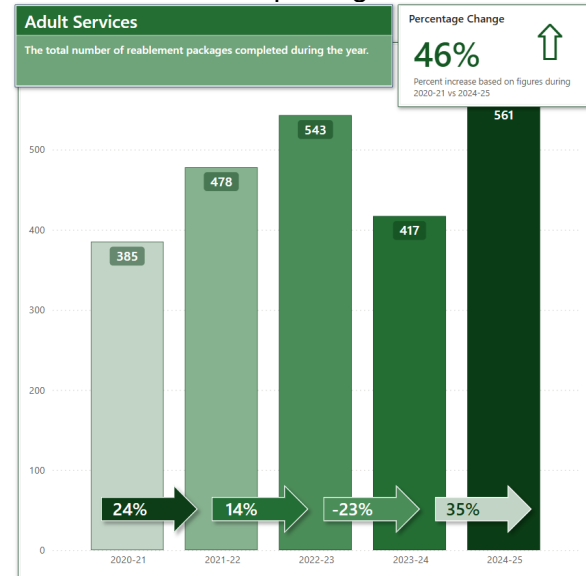
Percent increase based on figures during
2020-21 vs 2024-25



The number of new contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided



The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year



Current Year

Metric Ref	Metric name	2024-25
AD/002	The number of new contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.	3259
AD/004	The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year.	842
AD/005a	The number of assessments completed for adults during the year where: a. Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan.	665
AD/005b	The number of assessments completed for adults during the year where: b. Needs were able to be met by any other means.	150
AD/010	The total number of reablement packages completed during the year.	561
AD/011a	The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which: a. Reduced the need for support	62 (11% 62/561)
AD/011b	The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which: b. Maintained the need for support	6 (1% 6/561)
AD/011c	The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which: c. Mitigated the need for support	474 (85% 474/561)
AD/011d	The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year which: d. Neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support	19 (3% 19/561)
CH/002	The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.	2232

CH/007a	The number of assessments completed for children during the year where: a. Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan.	251
CH/007b	The number of assessments completed for children during the year where: b. Needs were able to be met by any other means.	1569

What progress did we make on last year's priorities?

Over the past year, we have:

- Rolled out our dementia friendly communities programme.
- Explored community-led solutions, strengthening social connections to reduce isolation and promote resilience.

For the coming year, we will:

- Expand Flying Start childcare for two-year-olds, targeting areas of deprivation.
- Develop an effective pre-birth pathway that mitigates risk at the earliest opportunity and maximises opportunities to reduce escalation.
- Increase the number of adults that we offer respite to within our internal care homes.

3. Partnerships and Integration

Collaboration for Integrated, High-Quality, and Sustainable Outcomes

The local authority remains committed to strong partnership working to ensure that people receive high-quality, sustainable, and fully integrated services. The Vale of Glamorgan has advanced integrated arrangements in place with an integrated management team covering adult community health and social care. Teams are integrated or at least co-located and managers have responsibility for both health and social care staff. This results in more seamless health and care arrangements and motivated staff who work well together to support our residents in the best way they can.

Over the past year, we have worked closely with our health boards, police, third-sector organisations, social enterprises, and other local authorities to develop and deliver services that meet the needs of our population.

In partnership with Cardiff and Vale Health board and regional partners, we continue to strengthen integrated population assessments, ensuring that service commissioning is evidence-based and aligned with local needs. A recent example of integrated service developments would be the new summary care record which allows staff from both organisations to share and see relevant records for our residents.

We have actively worked with partners to promote community-based models of care, ensuring that individuals receive the support they need in the right setting. This aligns with the Welsh Government Frailty Standard, ensuring that unnecessary hospital stays are minimized, and people receive timely, person-centred care. The Delayed Pathways of Care data for the Vale of Glamorgan shows that we are high performing in supporting fast and effective discharges from hospital.

By embedding collaborative, person-centred, and evidence-based approaches, we have strengthened our ability to deliver integrated, high-quality, and sustainable services. Moving forward, we will continue to build on our achievements, ensuring that partnership working remains central to how we shape and deliver social care in our communities.

We continue to meet our statutory duties and co-operation by having a consistent and engaged presence within multi-agency forums such as MAPPA, MARAC and the Regional Safeguarding Board. A key achievement has been our collaboration on preparatory work for a replacement system for WCCIS, ensuring that future care coordination is more efficient and supports integrated service delivery. We are doing this with Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend Councils.

How do we know?

- **Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS) consultation:**
- The Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS) is an integrated Health, Social Care and Third Sector Team based at Barry Hospital, working in collaboration with other services across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.
- The team work with individuals in their own homes to maximise functional independence in activities of daily living (ADL), thus reducing the need for admission into hospital and longer-term Social care services. They offer therapeutic intervention and reablement support to people following admission into hospital, so

that the return home can be as timely as possible. They aim to provide excellent individual-centred therapeutic intervention and support. VCRS work in partnership with the individual towards achieving goals that have been jointly identified.

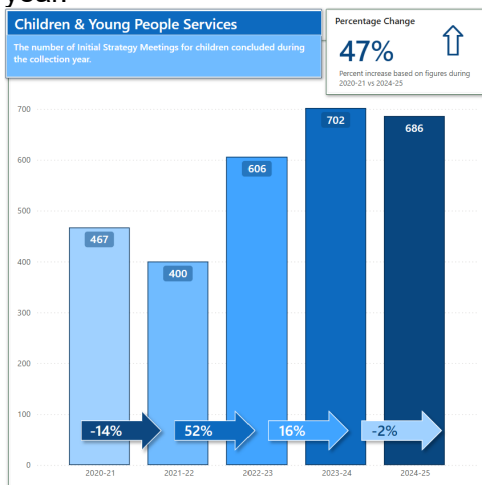
- The team includes Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists, Dieticians, Nurses, Care Co-ordinating staff and Reablement Support Workers (Home Carers). There are approximately 45 Reablement Support Workers who work with people in an enabling way to support the individual in achieving confidence and independence following an episode of ill health. The VCRS Social Workers work with individuals to establish ongoing support needs, linking in with care management teams within Social Services to set up ongoing packages of support if required.
- Individuals can receive therapeutic intervention and reablement support for up to 6 weeks. A client-centred therapeutic programme/service delivery plan is co-produced with the individual and reviewed throughout the intervention process.
- The VCRS operates 7 days per week 365/6 days per year.
- We consulted with 104 individuals who had received support from the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS). The engagement revealed that 76% of respondents felt the interventions had improved their independence, safety, and physical well-being.
- 84% of respondents also felt their care and support helped them be in control of their daily lives, enabling them to participate in what is important to them.

Vale Locality Mental Health Team (VLMHT) Consultation:

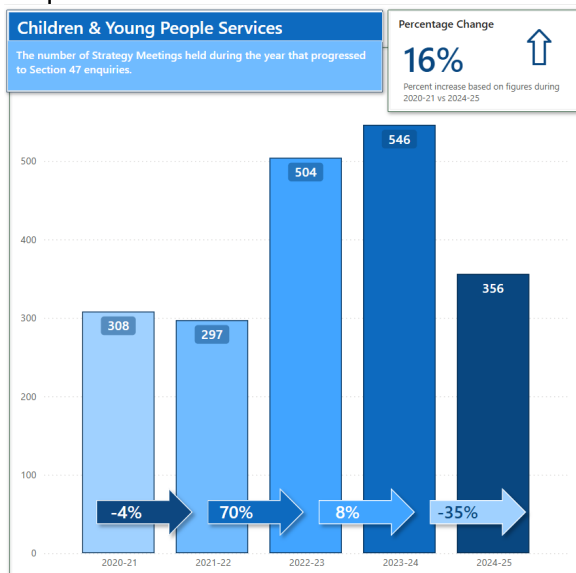
- The Vale Locality Mental Health work in partnership with Health and Social Services along with other voluntary sector providers. The Vale Locality Mental Health team provide care for working-age adults (18-65 years) who have moderate to severe, unstable mental health problems.
- Community Mental Health Teams aim to:
 - Promote health and recovery
 - Provide a local response to local people
 - Deliver individualised care based on a person's needs
 - Offer a variety of services including assessment, diagnosis and treatment
 - Utilise a range of therapies, techniques and social interventions
- We consulted with 74 individuals who receive one-to-one support, participate in group work, or reside at St. Michael's Gardens. Our engagement found that services across these three areas have contributed to improved mental health and emotional well-being for an average of 98% of participants. Additionally, 84% reported feeling fully listened to, and 90% stated that their confidence had either partially or fully improved.
- The areas of this service deemed to be most helpful to receive a service were social engagement and structure, encouragement and motivation, Non-judgemental communication and skill development.

Partnerships & Integration Data:

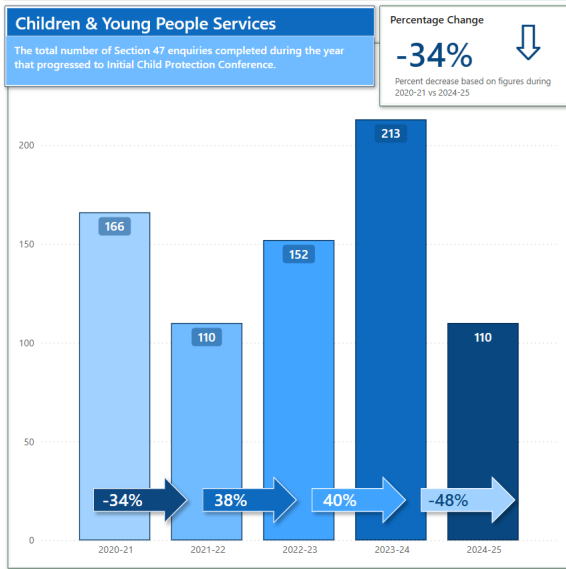
The number of Initial Strategy Meetings for children concluded during the collection year.



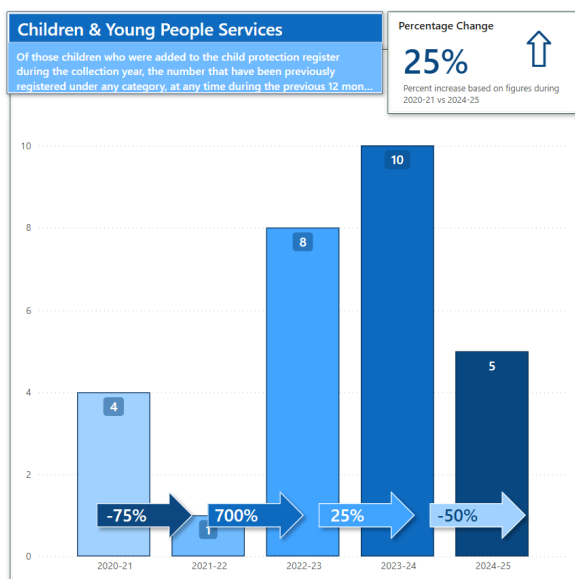
The number of Strategy Meetings held during the year that progressed to Section 47 enquiries.



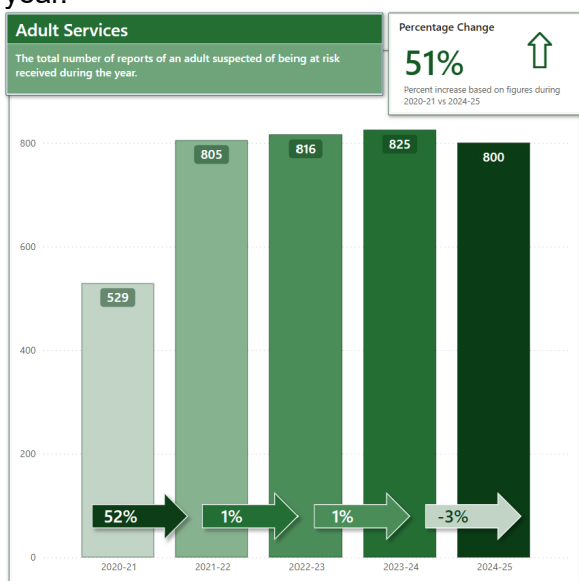
The total number of Section 47 enquiries completed during the year that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference.



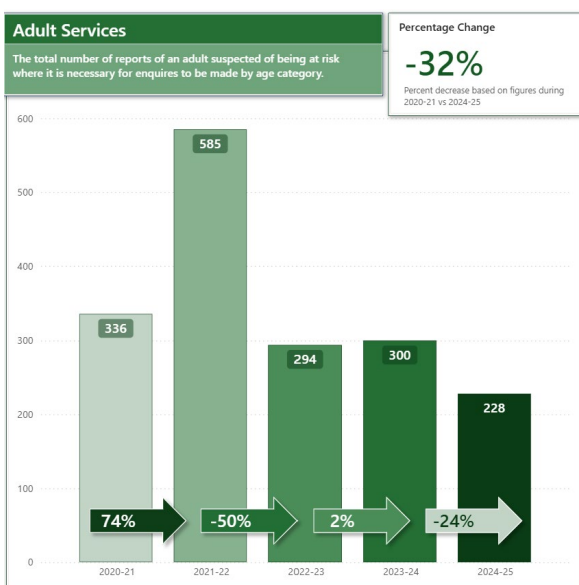
The number of children who were added to the child protection register during the collection year: all children – of those who were added the number that have previously registered at any time during the previous 12 months



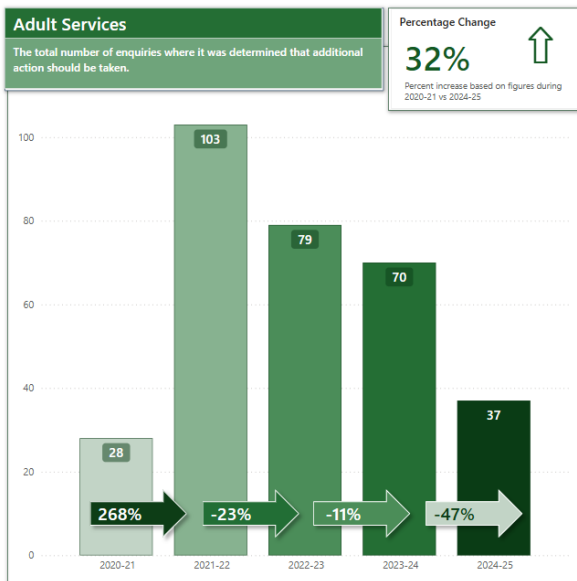
The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the year.



The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk where it is necessary for enquires to be made.



The total number of enquiries where it was determined that additional action should be taken.



Current Year:

Metric Ref	Metric name	2024-25
AD/020	The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the year.	800
AD/023	The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk where it is necessary for enquires to be made by age category.	228 29% (228/800)
AD/026	The total number of enquiries where it was determined that additional action should be taken.	37
CH/020	The number of Initial Strategy Meetings for children concluded during the collection year.	686
CH/021	The number of Strategy Meetings held during the year that progressed to Section 47 enquiries.	356
CH/022	The total number of Section 47 enquiries completed during the year that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference.	110
CH/024	Of those children who were added to the child protection register during the collection year, the number that have been previously registered under any category, at any time during the previous 12 months.	5

What progress did we make on last year's priorities?

Over the past year, we have:

- The implementation of the Section 16 Forum has been a major step in promoting social enterprises, co-operatives, and user-led services. This forum brings together partners from across the sector to co-produce and deliver sustainable preventative services.

- Worked with colleagues and partners to identify capital improvement and development projects to respond to the requirements to grow services in line with market stability report.

For the coming year, we will:

- Continue to develop the well-being matters service and GP Cluster Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs).
- Review internal care home provision.

4. Well-being

Ensuring People Are Protected and Safeguarded from Harm

The local authority is committed to protecting and safeguarding individuals from abuse, neglect, and other forms of harm. Over the past year, we have strengthened our safeguarding arrangements, ensuring that vulnerable adults and children receive the support they need while promoting independence and well-being.

A key focus has been on early intervention and preventative measures, reducing the risk of harm through timely and effective support. We have maintained robust oversight of referrals at the front door, ensuring that we manage demand effectively while providing the right level of support at the right time.

We continue to work closely with regional safeguarding boards, ensuring a multi-agency approach to child and adult protection. Where appropriate, further details on safeguarding arrangements can be found in [regional safeguarding board reports](#). In addition our Local Safeguarding Operational Group brings partners together at a local level to focus on safeguarding within the Vale of Glamorgan.

Supporting People to Actively Manage Their Well-Being

We are committed to ensuring that people have control over their own lives, supporting them to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible. Key developments include:

Strengthening Community-Based Support

We have worked with partners to promote community models of care, ensuring that people receive support in their own homes and communities, rather than in institutional settings.

Working with People to Develop Creative Solutions

The local authority is focused on building upon people's personal circumstances, strengths, and networks, ensuring that well-being support is tailored and person-centred. Over the past year, we have explored new ways to support communities to support each other, strengthening community connections to enhance social inclusion and well-being.

Putting Effective Safeguarding Arrangements in Place

We have taken a proactive approach to safeguarding, ensuring that individuals at risk of harm, including those experiencing self-neglect, receive the right interventions to prevent crisis situations. Key actions include:

- Implementing a new supervision policy to ensure consistent and effective safeguarding practice across social care teams.
- Strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, ensuring close coordination with health, housing, and police partners to protect vulnerable individuals.

What do we know about the quality and impact of what we are doing?

Our safeguarding measures continue to protect vulnerable individuals, and well-being initiatives have expanded access to mental health and community support. However, there are ongoing challenges in addressing inequalities in access to care.

How do we know?

- **Post-Wellbeing Consultation:**

- Ongoing consultations are being conducted with children, young people, and their families, as well as with adults, following the completion of a wellbeing assessment, care and support plan, or review. These consultations aim to ensure individuals have a voice, maintain control over their lives, and receive effective, person-centred support. To date, we have received feedback from 169 individuals, which has highlighted the following:
- 93% of respondents felt the assessor gave them the time and space to tell their story in their own way.
- 98% agreed that the assessor explained things clearly and kept them informed about what was happening and why.
- 100% agreed that they and their families felt comfortable talking to the assessor.

- **Residential Care Consultation:**

- Consultation and engagement has also been undertaken with residents and their families across all four of our local authority care homes, Cartref Porthceri, Ty Dewi Sant, Ty Dyfan and Southway.
- Collectively, each home:
- Offers long term and respite support to frail older people and older people with a dementia.
- Offers emergency respite accommodation and support
- Operates an integrated six bed reablement facility.
- The consultation focused on residents' well-being outcomes, as well as their own and their relatives' perceptions of the service received. A summary of our findings is provided below:

Safety & Support		
Wellbeing perspective (average %)	Residents (27)	Relatives (22)
They / their family member are safe & protected	84%	85%
They / their family member feel staff are supportive & respectful	84%	83%
They / their family member feel their needs are fully catered for	72%	69%

- On average, 81% of residents felt their overall wellbeing had improved since moving into our local authority homes.

- **Recruitment and Retention Consultation:**

- We also consulted with our social services staff around recruitment and retention. Staff were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, their feelings regarding job security, job satisfaction, and their experience working within Social Services. All three areas received an average score of 3 out of 5.

- The areas deemed to have the greatest impact on staff's workplace experience were: Peer support, supportive management & supervision, knowledge, advice and support from others, training and learning opportunities, and effective multi agency / partnership working
- **Supervision Key Information:**
- Since introducing the updated supervision policy, we've been able to better track and report key information about how supervision is being delivered. This matters because we understand how important it is for our staff to feel valued and supported in their roles.

Wellbeing Data:

Over the past year we have:

- Added 358 new resources to the Dewis Cymru online wellbeing directory dewis.wales for the Vale of Glamorgan. This includes services to support people in their own home such as gardeners, cleaners, domiciliary care providers, as well as social activities and support for people with learning difficulties.
- There are now over 1,200 resources published in the Vale of Glamorgan, a 13% increase from the previous year.
- Resource views in the Vale of Glamorgan averaged 25,000 per month, an increase of 16% from the previous year. (Data is unavailable for Dec 2024-March 2025).
- The Index for families of Children with Disabilities or Additional Needs continues to grow, with 166 new registrations in the past year. There are now 935 children and young people on the register, receiving regular information.
- The Index has produced a Guide to Education for Your Child with Additional Needs, supporting families to navigate their child's journey.
- The Index reached the finalist stage in the Inclusive Service Category, at the ThinkEDI Diversity and Inclusion Awards.
- The Family Information Service (FIS) has worked closely with employability partners including Job Centre Plus and Communities for Work Plus. The Outreach Officer attends 1 to 1 appointments with parents to explore childcare options and funding, supporting them back into employment.
- FIS organised 2 Christmas parties for families, free of charge. Over 500 people attended and 22 partner organisations supported the events.
- FIS responded to 1,289 enquiries over the year, for information to support families. The most common enquiry was about the Childcare Offer funding for 3 to 4 year olds, which accounted for 39% of enquiries. 46% of enquiries were about health, wellbeing and leisure information.

Data - Prevention / early help

Metric Ref	Metric name	2024-25
C01.1	Number of contacts received by Children's Services during the last month: FFAL	1529
C01.22	Number of contacts received by Children's Services during the last month: FIS	1289
C04.1	Percentage of new assessments are completed for children within statutory timescales (within 42 days from referral to assessment being completed): FFAL	98% (144/1173)
C04.11	Team Around the Family (TAF) waiting list	0
C04.12	Vale Parenting Service (VPS) waiting list	53

THE FRIDAY FOCUS

Your Weekly Dewis Spotlight

Dec 2nd 2024 | Vol. 1, No. 3

Visit us at: Dewis.Wales

MYROUNDERS: BRINGING SOCIAL SPORT TO SOUTH

MyRounders, a mixed adult rounders league, has united men and women aged 16 and up in a shared passion for this inclusive and accessible sport.

Initially attracting a handful of players, MyRounders has quickly grown into a vibrant community, with participants discovering not only a fun new hobby but also making lifelong friendships. Many have found their first-ever team sport, while others have enjoyed the positive benefits of improved mental and physical health.

Families have embraced the game, with parents playing alongside or against their children, strengthening community ties and encouraging multi-generational involvement.



My Rounders Team photo

Expanding rapidly, MyRounders offers a social league across South Wales. So if you're interested in playing there's a team near you. Find yours and join a friendly and supportive group of people. Whether you're taking it up again or playing for the first time. Consider MyRounders.

Written by:
Dewis Cymru Cardiff & Vale

Follow us @ [DewisCardiffVale](#) on Facebook
or [DewisCymruUK](#) on Instagram



What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is to do with your physical and mental health and your quality of life. It is about being happy, healthy, and comfortable with your life and what you do.



Parents Mental Health Infographic

Parenting can be both challenging and rewarding. Many parents/Carers experience mental health challenges while raising children.

Creating a positive cycle



Engaging in self-care activities and improving your own mental health can in turn, provide better support and care to your children.

Joy in Parenthood

A survey by the Peanut app revealed that 91% of mothers find more joy in parenting than they anticipated.

91%

According to the CDC, nearly 4 out of 5 children aged 6 months to 5 years exhibit all four indicators of flourishing



This often mirrors the mental well-being of their parents.

Dewis.Wales

KICKSTART THE NEW YEAR WITH

Take a break from alcohol this month and discover the benefits of going dry. For many January offers the opportunity to go dry and enjoy the benefits associated.



Whether you're resetting after the holidays, focusing on health, or just curious about how you'll feel, Dry January is a great way to embrace positive change. Expect better sleep, clearer skin, and improved energy.

Ready to join the challenge? Share your goals, tips, or go-to alcohol-free drinks below, we're in this together.



#DryJanuary
#HealthyHabits

What progress did we make on last year's priorities?

Over the past year, we have:

- Collaborated on undertaking preparatory work for a replacement system for WCCIS
- Worked with partners to promote community models of care, and to minimise any unnecessary time spent in hospital in line with the Welsh Government Frailty Standard

For the coming year, we will:

- Implement safeguarding tools, ensuring effective protection against abuse, neglect, and self-neglect.
- Develop further our assisted technology/ telecare offer
- Work on implementing the Mosaic Social Care records system.



Other information section

- **Anti Racist Wales Action Plan:**
- During 2024/25 ADSSC published two reports regarding racism. One focussed on recruitment and retention. A number of recommendations have been made in the reports which require a whole council response. Both reports have been considered by the Council's Strategic Leadership team and actions have been developed to deliver the recommendations. These actions will be monitored through our Social Services Reshaping tracker.
- Initial analysis indicates that the workforce population from the global majority appears to reflect the population pattern in the Vale of Glamorgan. However, people from the global majority are less represented in management roles and so actions are being developed to support us to become more representative of the population at all levels of seniority. This is likely to take time to become fully achieved.
- **Commissioning:**



[National framework for commissioning care and support: code of practice](#)

The National framework for the commissioning care and support: code of practice was introduced in 2024 as an addition to the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014.

The code of practice sets out a unified vision for consistent, ethical and outcome focused principles and standards for commissioning across Wales.

The Code establishes these core principles and standards designed to:

- reducing complexity in commissioning systems
- facilitating national consistency of and quality commissioning practices
- rebalancing commissioning to focus on quality and outcomes, value and fair work.

The Vale of Glamorgan Social Services Commissioning Team has been working closely with the National Commissioning Team to support phased implementation of the code and share learning during the National Implementation Phase. To support this, officers have been exploring the use of resources from the National Toolkit and

working through the National Self-Assessment. Officers have been using the self-assessment toolkit to review the delivery of Your Choice within the Domiciliary support services for adults. This has supported wider engagement from providers of care, people receiving care and officers who commission the care to develop an improved commissioning approach to delivery of outcomes focussed care and support. This work will continue through 2025/26 and inform the shape of new contracts.

The Commissioning team is committed to not only implementing the Framework locally but also contributing to learning through participation in regional and all-Wales for a, helping to shape emerging models of ethical and outcomes-based commissioning. This learning will inform the development of new contracts.

Inspections and reviews

- Social Services in the Vale was subject to a Performance Evaluation in 2023. The report was positive and an action plan was developed to respond to the areas identified for improvement. All of these [actions](#) have been completed.
- All four of our Residential care homes for Adults received positive inspections from CIW and were inspected by Environmental Health and maintained their level 5 food hygiene score.
- [Rapid Review of Child Protection Arrangements](#) (CIW) - Published final report in 2024. Review looked at the extent the current structures and processes in Wales ensure children's names are appropriately placed on and removed from the child protection register (CPR). A local and regional action plan via our Regional Safeguarding Board was developed in response to the recommendations made.
- Joint [Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements; Overview Report 2019-2024](#) (CIW)- Joint Inspection of multi-agency response to abuse and neglect of children in each of the six regional boards were undertaken between 2019-2024. Our regional partner Cardiff and agencies with a regional footprint were inspected in 2024. We have considered the findings and recommendations and where required a regional response has been undertaken.
- **Older Persons Commissioner National Action Plan to Prevent Abuse & Neglect of Older People** – We contributed to the development and consultation of this national action plan. Implementing changes to practice to support the action plan.
- [Are we caring for our carers? - Ombudsman Wales 2024](#), An own initiative investigation into the administration of carers' needs assessments in Wales – 4 LAs were included in the investigation (VoG not included). Findings were published and recommendations were made nationally. In response the Vale of Glamorgan have made changes to areas of practice linked to carers' needs assessments and the understanding of carers about assessments; rights and entitlements; having an individual person focussed what matters conversations and outcomes. There has also been development of regional action plan via our regional partnership board.

Complaints and representations

- **Compliments**

Compliments play a vital part in understanding what we are doing well and enable us 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 2024-25 Social Services received a total of **184** compliments. The compliments related to a range of services and support citizens received. The compliments often named specific staff where they felt the individual had gone over and above what was expected of them.

By having a better understanding of what our citizens 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 of pride in our work.

Outlined below is a breakdown of all compliments by Division.

Service area	Number of compliments
Children and Young People Services	84
Adult Services	65
Resource Management & Safeguarding	35
Total number of Compliments	184

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

RMS- Ty Dewi Sant *I just wanted to say how happy I am with the care my father is receiving. The staff have been incredible, and it means so much to see how well he is looked after. I'm also really impressed by all the activities that take place in the home – I follow the Facebook page regularly and love seeing the updates. As a small way to give back, I'd love to arrange a volunteering day through my employer, EE, who support staff in taking part in community projects. I'd really like to organise one of these days to take place at TDS.*

CYPS-Family Support 1 *Just to say you have managed this family and all the complexities really well and all the children are safe and thriving because of the work you have done with them. On times some families will always remain in our thoughts, my guess is due to the care, attention and relentless work you have completed on all the children these will be one of those.*

AS- Long Term Care Service *I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all the support you have given myself ,and all the family during what a very stressful time for all of us. You have worked tirelessly during this time and have kept us updated every step of the way. I also realise how hard this must have been for you , as you haven't been in the Vale very long. I know we still have a way to go but wanted to let you know how much we as a family appreciate your hard work.*

- **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, learn lessons and consider areas for improvements.

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 their concern equates to a formal complaint. Support and actions are taken at this early stage which consequently do not always progress on to becoming a complaint. These are captured and recorded as a contact.

During 2024-22025 a total of contacts **117** 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 of the 31st of March 2025, a total of **77** complaints was received, **9** of which were discontinued during the year (either through no further contact or the complaint was considered not able to be considered within the complaints process).

Of these 68 remaining complaints, 33 (**49%**) complaints were resolved within the designated timescales, 25 (**36%**) were resolved outside of timescales and 10 (15 %) complaints remained open at end of year, so continued forward into 2025-26.

The complaints and compliments team are required to work within statutory timescales for acknowledging and responding to complaints. Designated timescales are as below:

- Responding to Stage 1 complaints 10 working days and a further 5 working days to confirm the outcome of the discussion.
- Stage 2 complaints, 25 working days.

The Complaints Team hold weekly meetings with Operational Manager and Team Managers to support timely and effective oversight and response to complaints.

The table overleaf provides a full breakdown of all Contacts and Complaints received during 2024-25.

Service division	Contacts	Complaints Stage 1	Complaints Stage 2	Ombudsman	Responded to in timescales	Complaints discontinued	Total Complaints and Contacts received
Adult Services	25	28	0	1	20	0	53
Resource Management & Safeguarding	21	7	0	2	2	2	28
Children and Young People Service	71	37	5	9	11	7	113
Total	117	72	5	12	33	9	

1 - Please note that the Ombudsman's complaints are recorded separately to the rest of the complaints data.

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

Nature of Complaint by Division	Adult Services	Resource Management & Safeguarding	Children and Young People Service	Total
Quality of communication	5	3	27	35
Rude or discourteous staff	6	2	18	26
Unhappy with timescales	3	0	2	5
Availability of services	6	2	1	9
Poor quality of service	25	15	47	87
Incorrect information given	0	1	2	3
Serious allegations including: Assault, Theft, Neglect, Abuse & Safeguarding	2	1	6	9
Unhappy with costs of services/financial support	7	5	1	13
Data protection failures	0	0	5	5
Discrimination	0	0	2	2

Lessons Learnt

During 2024-2025 , a summary of key lessons learnt have been captured below:

Contacts

Lack of timely communication from practitioners.

- The Quality Assurance Team will be delivering briefing sessions around the importance of timely response and the importance of our citizens being kept up to date at each stage.

Stage 1 Complaints

Quality of communication.

- The Vale of Glamorgan recognises the importance of communication with our citizens and aims to develop a Customer Charter. As part of this workstream it aims to align communication and understand how we can improve customer experiences with input into continuous improvement projects.

Unhappy with costs of services/financial support

- We have seen a noticeable increase in the number of complaints related to the outcomes of financial assessments. In response, we have worked collaboratively with the appropriate service areas to develop a clear and robust appeals process. This has involved aligning all relevant policies to ensure greater consistency, transparency, and fairness in how appeals are handled.

Stage 2 Complaints

As part of our commitment to Quality Assurance, we have developed a Stage 2 Investigation Recommendation Action Tracker. This tool is used to monitor and follow up on recommendations made by external investigators. Regular meetings are held with relevant service area managers to review these recommendations, agree on action plans, and set clear completion dates. This process ensures that all recommendations aimed at improving our services are not only implemented but also properly tracked. It reinforces our commitment to continuous improvement and accountability.

Stage 2 Recommendations

- The service is currently reviewing its local and operational policies, procedures and processes within the scheme. This includes updating our Direct Payment Policy which was an action from a Stage 2 complaint.

Conclusion

A number of key improvements have been made to the service this year resulting in improved responsiveness and increased levels of assurance. Additionally Social Services are supporting more people than ever before. This is in the context of continued rises in demand and costs. As a result of finite financial resources this growth is not sustainable and significant service change will be required in the future.