

Meeting of:	Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 11 July 2023
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2022-2023 – Challenge Version
Purpose of Report:	To ensure that Elected Members received a copy of the Director’s Annual Report, contribute to the challenge process and agree the future priorities for the service
Report Owner:	Director of Social Services
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Social Services Management Team
Policy Framework:	This report is consistent with the Policy Framework and Budget
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This challenge version of the Director’s report allows members and stakeholders an opportunity to comment and inform a future final draft which will be considered by Cabinet. 	

Recommendations

1. That Scrutiny Committee considers the content of this report.
2. Considers the improvement priorities for Social Services as set out in the Director's Annual Report for 2022-2023 – Challenge Version.
3. Contributes proposals for any changes to the Director's Annual Report as part of the challenge process.

Reason for Recommendations

- 1-3** To provide Elected Members with an opportunity to contribute to the challenge process for the Director's Annual Report 2022-2023.

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of 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 the plans for improvement. This gives the Director an opportunity to provide people in the Vale 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 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as evidence and to guide their inspection programme in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.3 In planning how we will deliver services over the coming years, we have put in place a Service Plan to cover the period up until 2024 which provides an overview of the Directorate's improvement work.
- 1.4 The report reflects on progress over the last financial year and links to objectives in the Corporate Plan which reflect the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

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. A challenge version of the Director's report is found at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The format of the report has been set out as a requirement by Welsh Government through regulation from 2017/18. The directorate brought the

Director's Report into closer alignment with the Council's Corporate and Service Planning mechanisms to reduce duplication.

- 2.3 The report represents the views of the Director and other managers in Social Services and is not Council policy at this stage.
- 2.4 A further separate self-assessment is also required in order for the council to fulfil its requirements under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This inevitably has led to a significant amount of duplication. The Director's report contains greater levels of detail and the self-assessment parameters are different to those required in the corporate self-assessment.
- 2.5 Service users and carers have not yet had any opportunities to contribute to the report however it will be shared widely during the challenge phase. Service users and carers have been engaged with the services throughout and the Director has endeavoured to ensure the priorities have been informed through this process.
- 2.6 Circulating a challenge version is intended to allow key stakeholders opportunities to comment and make observations before the report is finalised, ensuring that it accurately reflects the position of social services. Attached at Appendix 2 is the Challenge Feedback Form.
- 2.7 As part of the challenge process, the report is 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.
- 2.8 Scrutiny Committee reduced its work plan in the statutory context of the requirement to produce the Director's Report to avoid duplication. For example Scrutiny Committee monitors issues like complaints and compliments, and service user feedback through this report rather than a series of separate reports throughout the year.
- 2.9 The final report will be presented to Cabinet for approval of the priority objectives in September and then circulated widely. It 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 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 direct implications as a 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 SSWEB 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

The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance:

https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/The_Local_Authority_Annual_Social_Services_Reports_Guidance.pdf

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Social Services: Director's Annual Report 2022-2023

Foreword

As the Director of Social Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2022/23.

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 and beyond.

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 legacy of lock downs and the pandemic, coupled with a cost-of-living crisis is resulting in rising demand. This is in a context of sustained 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. 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.



1 – Care home residents enjoying entertainment.

Director's Summary of Performance

Summary of Performance



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.

In January 2023 Care Inspectorate Wales completed a Performance Evaluation Inspection of Social Services. Their assessment and report were overwhelmingly positive which is a real credit to our hard-working staff. A good report doesn't mean that the work that we do is easy or that there aren't issues for us to tackle. Social Services in the Vale are experiencing a number of

challenges, which are reflected across Wales, such as difficulties in sufficiency of domiciliary care and responding swiftly.

During 2022/23 some of our key performance achievements have included continuing to enable where possible children to remain with families or to return home to families after a period of care 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. Whilst there has been some improvement in the last year, this is still an area we want to continue to improve in the coming year. 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.

One area we will be focusing on is improving our recording of protected characteristics such as race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief to help us gain a better understanding of the diversity of our communities, their needs, any disparities or inequalities in the provision of care and support and to enable us to assess whether we are meeting the needs of different groups and identify areas for improvement. It will help us understand what barriers need to be removed to ensure inclusivity and how we can tailor support and services to provide personalised and culturally appropriate care leading to better outcomes and experiences for individuals.

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 Wales](#) 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.

Social Services Performance Snapshot
HIGHLIGHTS
7% increase in the number of new assessments completed for adults during the year
8% increase in the number of adults with a care and support plan on 31 March
20% increase in the total number of adults with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment at 31 March
10% increase in the number of children with a care and support plan on 31 March
The number of children with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment at 31 March more than doubled
68% of visits to children on the child protection register were completed within statutory timescales

Social Services Performance Snapshot

IMPROVEMENT AREAS

Increase the total number of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 working days

Improve the recording of the protected characteristics of adults, children and young people

The number of people we are able to support with Reablement Services continues to increase

Continue to improve the timeliness of assessments and the review of care and support plans

Our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Three 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.

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



Over 40 million items of PPE distributed since the Pandemic began	Over 6 million items of PPE distributed during the last year
Online requests for PPE and Test Kits received during the year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 from schools • 181 from other council teams • 414 from Care Providers • 214 from users of the Direct Payments Scheme • 32 from third sector partners 	61,124 tests distributed to the social care workforce during the year
	41,580 asymptomatic tests distributed during the year

The Wales Care Awards are an annual event run by Care Forum Wales to showcase best practice across the care sector. The 2022 Awards took place on Friday 21 October 2022 and the Vale of Glamorgan Council won the Covid Heroes Gold Award for Best Local Authority Supporting Care Homes. As part of the award we received the following accolade:

“This is a real honour, and it is great to see recognition of the hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment you all showed to supporting our colleagues on the front line. I have no doubt your excellent work helped limit the dangers presented by the pandemic and kept some of the most vulnerable people in our communities safe during this very difficult and challenging time”



Challenges

Summarised 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.

Children and Young People Services: Overview of service challenges

- The Division has continued to experience significant increases in demand for care and support across all areas of key activity, reflected both in numbers and complexity.
- 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, particularly independent fostering agency placements where availability has also visibly decreased.
- In some areas, waiting lists for services have developed or a requirement to implement alternative mechanisms for service delivery.

Our own staff have been understandably impacted and levels of sickness have increased for a variety of reasons. This has impacted capacity across the Division.

Adult Services: Overview of service challenges

- We continue to note the trend, where people entering statutory services are presenting with more complex needs, reducing our opportunity to interact at an earlier stage and signposting to preventative services.
- The last year has been very challenging for people waiting longer to access care at home and therefore, remain on Social Work caseloads for longer, placing significant strain on unpaid carers. I am pleased to say that this situation has improved in recent months, but this remains challenging.
- Our reablement service is compromised because it is being used to provide packages of care to people in the community instead of focussing on reablement. This has the potential to mean people are not enabled to live as independently as possible and that care packages are larger than they need to be.
- 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.
- 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.

Resource Management and Safeguarding Services: Overview of service challenges

- 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. This has recently improved but work is required to improve the terms and conditions of care workers to ensure we attract people in a competitive employment environment.
- Recruitment and retention in care roles has been challenging since the pandemic and we are observing increased staff turnover in these jobs. This in turn creates additional pressure for the remaining staff.
- 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.
- Monitoring the quality assurance of our externally commissioned service providers is increasingly challenging due to the capacity and resources required to undertake this work.
- Timescales for adhering to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) continues to place significant pressure on the Division.

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.
- Outlined below is a summary of the key findings arising from this work.
- We aimed to provide a variety of methods to enable citizens and their families to participate, using surveys (electronic and paper), semi structured interviews, telephone calls and focus groups.

Adult Services

- During 2022/33, consultations were conducted in relation to the Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS), Adult Placement Service/Shared Lives, Day Services and the Vale Alcohol and Drug Team (Newlands).
- Outlined below is a summary of the key findings, and identified areas of improvement arising from this work.

Vale Community Resource Service (VCRS). This service provides reablement and support to enable adults to regain independence. We explored citizens' experiences of the VCRS, support from care staff, communication and involvement in service planning.

VCRS Consultation findings:

- Citizens felt that useful information and advice was available at the start of the service and also as and when it was required.
- Respondents felt that care workers and the service were reliable and were very respectful to them.
- The service and the support it provided made a very positive difference to wellbeing.
- Citizens felt safer both physically and emotionally as a result of the service.
- Many felt involved in the planning of the service and also felt they could make changes if required.
- Individuals sometimes experienced delays or changes in call times, but were advised in good time, and also delays were fully explained.

Areas for action:

- This service continues to provide a high-quality standard of care and support for individuals and is a reassurance for families and carers.
- The findings from the engagement exercise were used to inform changes made to processes and procedures, such as more varied information provision and leaflet design.
- The outcomes will enhance collaborative working with Health Teams such as the District Nurses and Primary Care (GPs), particularly in relation to medication support.
- Regular and ongoing auditing and review to be undertaken regularly in collaboration with the Quality Officer and VCRS Quality and Compliance Manager.

Adult Placement Service (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)

- This consultation incorporated engagement with hosts, individuals and their families to evaluate their experience of the service. The work explored experiences of the matching process, their involvement in the 'About Me' Plan and participation in family life/ integration with hosts' family and the local community.

Adult Placement Service consultation findings:

- Individuals felt happy with information they received and prefer speaking to people about the new service.

- Individuals felt involved in writing their “about me” plan and felt it reflected what matters to them.
- Individuals feel safe where they live and enjoy the activities they do. This helps them to feel part of the family they live with.
- Hosts are satisfied with information they received to become a host and feel positive about the introductions process. Most feel informed of any service developments/ changes and that documents reflect discussions held with all parties.
- Hosts felt mostly supported and involved in visits, reviews and issues relating to care. Mostly satisfied with training and they feel it prepares them to become a host.
- Hosts feel consulted and included during planning meetings. They feel they receive guidance to provide care and support that is appropriate to the individual.
- Hosts are satisfied with support from the service if placement issues arise. Hosts have a good understanding of their role in relation to supporting money management and living skills.
- Hosts are very pleased with the support from their project workers and feel they can approach them in relation to issues they face.

Areas for action:

- Information for individuals and hosts continues to be a focus and alternative methods will continue to be explored particularly now restrictions have been lifted. a film is in development showcasing the work of the host and the benefits of the support they offer to individuals.
- Involvement in care planning is a key focus and the 'About Me' plan will continue to be reviewed and updated regularly.
- The service will continue to ensure that individuals remain happy with the activities and feel fulfilled with the opportunities they are offered.
- The service has recently reviewed and developed its training programme and will continue to monitor this.

Day Opportunities: This service provides opportunities for people to engage in a variety of supported activities including leisure and volunteering in the community).

- The purpose of this consultation was to explore individuals' levels of satisfaction with the range of day service activities, staff support and achievement of personal outcomes. This was carried out across our learning disability day service, day service for elderly individuals and New Horizons, our day service for individuals with physical disabilities.

Day Opportunities consultation findings:

- Individuals – Most were happy with communication with staff and highlighted the importance of social interaction with others. Individuals across day services felt safe and supported and had developed more social confidence.
- Individuals feel able to stay independent but are particularly satisfied with the time staff are able to spend with them helping with activities and supporting with some tasks.
- Individuals – Satisfied with activities and would like to be able to attend on a weekend.
- Families – Most feel happy with advice, care and support and communication. Families feel the service promotes citizen's wellbeing especially if they might be isolated at home.
- Families felt that although resources are scarce, individuals feel safe and part of a group.
- Families feel the service is effective especially in relation to activities and increasing self-confidence to do more activities tailored to the individuals' needs.

Areas for action:

- There will be further focus on improving activities available to individuals especially those that help support mental health and wellbeing.
- The service will continue to communicate well with families and ensure it meets individuals' needs. Those in the learning disabilities day service like the face-to-face contact with support workers and being able to interact with others whilst feeling safe in the day service environment.
- This work will inform further exploration into how we engage with individuals in the Day Service so that we are able to ensure everyone has a voice and feel supported to provide their views.

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 the service in relation to support, advice and care planning.

VADT consultation findings:

- Key workers were in frequent contact and stayed consistent, so individuals were able to build trust.
- Respondents felt the service had had a very positive impact on their wellbeing. Some feel they owe their life to the service.
- Individuals feel they are a priority for the service and not judged.
- Individuals felt that they receive information and advice at times helpful to them, regardless of time of day.

- The support has met (and exceeded) individuals' expectations.

Areas for action:

- To build upon the existing communication mechanisms to facilitate engagement and feedback at the end of the service.
- Ensure that the service continues to be easily accessible as many do not know about the support from the VADT.

Vale Locality Mental Health Community Support Service: This service supports individuals to access social and living support after being referred for support for their mental health.

Vale Locality Mental Health Service: consultation findings:

- All felt welcome when they first attended and were reassured, they could be supported to reintegrate with the community and also feel they belong in a group.
- Individuals felt that they were provided with enough information about how the service can help.
- Most feel that they have received the support they needed from the service. They have noticed significant improvements in their wellbeing since accessing the support.
- The social groups have helped individuals to develop confidence to interact in smaller groups and to spend time with others in an informal setting.

Areas for Action:

- The supported housing overseen by the Community Support Workers is being improved.
- The support workers will continue to provide as much information as the individuals need at a time appropriate for them, to ensure they are not overwhelmed.
- The support of an occupational therapist will be enlisted to provide further support for everyday tasks.
- Consider setting up a buddy system for when new people join the group, as other members who have experienced the support can provide initial information on an informal basis.
- Maintain transparency about what the service can and can't provide support with so that expectations continue to be managed.

Carers Services - This service actively supports and works in partnership with unpaid carers, to get the best outcomes for both them and the person for whom they care.

Carers Consultation outcomes:

- Most carers received enough information about support for unpaid carers but not all were aware of their right to an assessment of need for a carer
- Most had received an unpaid carers assessment, and many were satisfied with the assessment process.
- Carers appreciated the understanding and concern demonstrated by the service and from the assessors.
- Most carers were satisfied with any support or services they have received as a result of their needs assessment.

Areas for action:

- Communication will remain a focus so that unpaid carers remain aware of any developments and of the Carer's Gateway.
- The service will continue to ensure information is available about assessment and support for unpaid carers.
- The service will continue to ensure carers feel they are listened to and understood.
- The strong links with other services will be maintained to enable working in partnership to support our unpaid carers.
- We will continue to explore the carers needs assessment process to ensure it is helpful and effective
- Engagement mechanisms will continue to develop to ensure we are giving unpaid carers a voice and facilitate further improvement in the support we provide.

Children and Young People Services

- During 2022/23, we explored the views and experiences of children, young people, parents and carers in relation to our Placements Team, Flying Start, 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.

Placements Team (Assesses, approves, and supports foster carers for Vale of Glamorgan children in conjunction with our Fostering Panel).

- We explored the views of foster carers to establish their satisfaction with the support, training and development they receive to carry out their role.

Placements Team Outcomes:

- Foster carers felt positive about the annual review process. Most feel they have been supported through changes in the service.
- Foster carers feel satisfied with the communication and support their supervising social worker has provided, and from the fostering service overall. Foster carers also feel that the informal groups a valuable resource to raise any concerns or suggest improvements.

Areas for action:

- Ensuring that the methods of communication with foster carers are effective and that formal and informal groups continue to be supported.
- Maintain good levels of ongoing support for new foster carers and direct them to sources of support
- Ensure that all foster carers have a learning and development plan and that it meets their individual needs,
- Ensure foster carers are supported to reflect on their learning and also to put it into practice.

Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) brings together the adoption services of the Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councils. The service supports individuals through the adoption process and provision of support post adoption)

- To understand experiences of the adoption process and the support they receive both pre and post adoption.

VVC Outcomes:

- Adopters were pleased with information given with the initial response **from the service**.
- Most respondents had engaged with other services offered to them by TESSA (e.g., webinars, well-being activities), and are interested in further similar services.
- Most felt support offered stability for their families.
- Respondents had been easily able to contact professionals when required.
- They appreciate the practical advice and support from the service

- Adopters were satisfied with the content of the Adoption Support Plan and the explanation of the processes associated with the adoption panel.
- Respondents were satisfied with information they received and the content of the adoption support plan. Some issues were raised in relation to timescales for the matching process.
- Some adopters were unaware of how to access post placement support.

Areas for action:

- To ensure that consistency of communication is maintained between social workers and adopters.
- Ensure that quality and comprehensive information is provided about the child prior to the matching process.
- 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 proactively including signposting to appropriate support services.

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.

Flying Start Service Outcomes:

- Parents receive updates about a variety of elements of the support from the nursery.
- The service has been understanding towards families' needs and this is appreciated by parents.
- Nursery was initially very good at updating the social media page and this needs to be maintained along with other forms of updates.
- Families felt advice met most people's expectations and Flying Start involvement had positive impact on their family relationships and emotional wellbeing.
- "Learning Journey Booklets" are being provided which covers many of the areas and parents can take home to keep.

Areas for action:

- Continue to focus on maintaining good standards of communication with families and providing relevant and concise information.
- More information needed for parents about general day time routines and general wellbeing.
- Also felt that more detail was needed about their child's social interaction, for example whether they were playing more on their own or with a group of other children.
- Maintaining levels of engagement with families and ensure that contact is informative, and explanations are provided where the service is unable to assist.
- Service has signed up to a new information sharing app so parents will be able to access this and obtain information as and when they would like to.

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.

Child Health and Disability Team Outcomes:

- Most parents were able to obtain information about how the team could support them and were able to speak to their child's social worker if and when they have needed to.
- Most parents felt they were treated with respect and felt they could access the support they needed.
- The support received has helped parents and their children to feel safe.
- Young people were also supported to feel safe and were able to participate in activities they enjoyed at school.
- Young people were happy with the help they had and were able to ask their social worker or key worker if they had any questions about the help they have both at school and at home.
- Parents felt involved with the development of care and support plans for their children.

Areas for action:

- Further enhance provision of information for available support and services where appropriate.
- Ensure that families remain involved and participate in planning for their child's care and support.
- Ensure that families receive enough information/support regarding the process of transition.

- Ensuring that children and young people are listened to by their social worker in relation to what help they feel they need.

14 Plus Team

- The purpose of this engagement exercise was to engage young people who are involved with our 14 plus team and gather their views in relation to care planning, provision of support for leaving care and signposting of support to other agencies and services.

14 Plus Team Outcomes:

- Care leavers were able to contact their young person's advisor easily, and if they were not available, they know that they would come back to them as soon as they could.
- Care leavers feel their young person's advisor has been able to help them with their questions and concerns and treated them with courtesy and respect.
- Young people said that the service had helped them to feel safe.
- Most feel the service had helped to prepare them for adulthood but did feel that they would need further lighter touch support after this stage.

Areas for action:

- Continue to focus on exploring opportunities for wider engagement via social media e.g. What's App and Instagram.
- Continue to involve young people in engagement and consultation opportunities to ensure they have a strong voice in service development.
- Focusing on ensuring that the team is able to tailor support to individual needs e.g., housing advice, wellbeing, independent living etc.
- Most care leavers felt involved with their future care planning and all felt they had been listened to.
- The service aims to continue to focus on consistency and quality of contacts made by Social Workers and Young Person Advisors (for those over 18).

Resource Management and Safeguarding

- During 2022/23, an engagement exercise was undertaken across 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. Focus groups with residents and their relatives were arranged so that relatives could come in to the home and participate with the residents.

Residential Care Outcomes:

Relatives – Relatives were pleased with the care and support provided for residents across the homes, and Families were happy with the choices and opportunities for residents but did provide suggestions for enhancing activities and tailoring them to the residents' interests.

Relatives feel residents' needs have been catered for appropriately by the service and generally very happy with the support provided to the resident. They felt very reassured that the residents were being kept safe.

Residents – Felt safe and very strongly supported, and most were able to take part in activities of interest. Staff were liked and appreciated. Residents felt safe in the homes and able to participate in activities of their choice. Residents appreciated the variety and quality of the food provided and their wellbeing had improved considerably since living in the home as they felt safe, and supported while maintaining some independence.

Staff – Most felt introduction service was helpful for all involved. They felt involved in initial visits and able to provide information to potential residents and their families. Staff felt valued by residents and relatives, but they felt staffing shortages impacted on the time they could spend with residents. Staff do feel supported in their roles but in some cases.

Areas for action:

- Build further resilience by enhancing support available to residential care staff teams such as supervision, training opportunities within their working time, and encourage participation in the corporate wellbeing sessions.
- To continue to work with staff to aim to identify ways in which we can enhance capacity to give staff more quality time with residents.
- To ensure that the homes continue to offer a range of activities to residents to enhance their wellbeing.
- Ensure that residents, relatives, and staff continue to have opportunities to provide their views about the service.

Compliments and Complaints

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 2022/23 Social Services received a total of **103** 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.

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.

Service area	Number of compliments
Children and Young People Services	24
Adult Services	76
Resource Management & Safeguarding	3
Total number of compliments	103

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

- **Occupational Therapy** – *Thank you so much for all the advice and support you have given not just for the people we support but myself. You are all amazing and make a difference to some special people's lives. Thanks for always coming to the rescue and making sure all our equipment is working and replacing anything that has broken. I wish you the best*
- **CYPS** – *The SW has been super. I did express to the SW that it is evident how hard she has worked, and it shines through how well she has gotten to know the children in the plans that she has produced!*
- **Adult Services** – *I would like to formally thank all those involved in delivering day to day care for my mum & others, including care/domestic/catering/management staff.*
- **VCRS** – *how happy she was with the level of care she has been receiving, she stated she could not manage without at the moment, and they brighten her day and cheer her up. Everyone has been so lovely and as a family they are very reassured and happy to.*

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. Where this is the case, these are defined as enquiries, which consequently do not always progress on to becoming a complaint.

As of the 31st of March, a total of **47** 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 of the 31st of March 2023, a total of 51 complaints was received, 26 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 25 remaining complaints, 89.2% of complaints were resolved within the designated timescales, 9.5% were resolved outside of timescales and 1.3 (3) of complaints remained open at end of year, so continued forward into 2023/24.

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 below provides a full breakdown of all enquiries and complaints received during 2022/23.

Service division	Enquiries	Complaints Stage 1	Complaints Stage 2	Ombudsman	Responded to in timescales	Complaints discontinued	Total complaints and enquires received
Adult Services	12	20	2	0	11	6	32
Children and Young People Service	29	29	1	3	12	16	58
Resource Management & Safeguarding	6	2	0	0	2	4	8
Total	47	51	3	3	25	26	98

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

Please note the stage 2 complaints are also recorded in the Stage 1's total.

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

Type of Complaint	Adult Services	Children and Young People Services	Resource Management and Safeguarding	Total complaints by nature of complaint
Charges for services	1	2	1	4
Lack of response	13	21	1	35
Quality/level of service	17	18	1	39
Staff complaint	8	6	1	15
Unhappy with care	19	30	5	54
Communication	8	18	3	29
Other	22	54	11	87

Please note there may be more than one reason why a complaint is received. For example, one complaint was related to a lack of response, the quality of services provided and also charges for service.

Lessons Learnt

During 2022/23, 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.
- To support timely and effective communication with those using our services
- Ensure teams and individual workers identify their contact emails, telephone numbers to support appropriate communication.

Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help



2 - Care home resident visits.

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.

Wellbeing Standard 1: Performance Snapshot
96% of people reported that they received the right information and advice when they needed it.
99% of people reported that they were treated with dignity and respect.
89% of people reported that they felt involved in any decisions made about their care.
93% of people felt satisfied with the care and support they received.
74% of assessments for children completed within timescales.

Priority 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.

During 2022/23 we have:

- Through strong partnership working between case managers, domiciliary care brokerage team, domiciliary care providers and people who use/draw on care at home, we have made significant strides in our transition to a fully 'Your Choice' outcome focused domiciliary care council.
- So far, we have transitioned eleven domiciliary care agencies to Your Choice, meaning a total of 235 citizens are supported by 3700 hours of outcome focussed care and support at home each week.

Key Successes:

- Positive outcomes for individuals using the Your Choice model have been achieved, for example:
 - An individual visited a dementia café run by an agency, he decided he wanted to go for walk as it was a nice day so the carer took them along to a shopping centre. The user noticed a barbers and mentioned that he would like his hair cut, but due to him needing an appointment was unable to do it that day. The agency worked with the user to flex the hours and took him for a haircut the following week.
 - An individual enjoys visiting the cinema and the agency has worked with the user to bank hours allowing them the additional time once a month to take them to the cinema.
 - An individual has joined Your Choice and the agency has worked with him to move all the hours around to accommodate his wishes, banking hours during the week to have a 2hr visit, with the rest of the visits being reduced to 30 mins. This is because the user has said his flat is cold. With these longer visits they can now take him to utilise a warm space.
 - An individual's husband passed away and she wanted a new outfit for the funeral. With the agency working with the user and flexing the care package they were able to take her to Marks and Spencer's to buy something new to wear.
 - An individual would like to access the community by visiting the church in the mornings, this has been hard to accommodate due to her only having a 1/2hr call each morning. The agency is now working with her to move around her hours, so they are able to accommodate her visiting the church.

- Worked with providers who were unsure of the benefits of the scheme, for them to realise the positive impact on their staff and citizens they support.
- Recruited to the Your Choice Officer post to ensure timely support to providers and regularly reconciliation of Your Choice funding.

Challenges:

- As more citizens transfer to the Your Choice Scheme, the business support required to ensure ongoing success is increasing.
- Availability of social care staff remains a challenge for domiciliary care providers, which could undermine the success of the scheme.

Priority 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.

During 2022/23 we have:

- Initiated a 'Developing Services Together' group to ensure that the families we support are included and valued in service development, mirroring and modelling the 'Building on Strengths' values.
- Delivered on a range of workstreams across all areas., developing shared language and shared goals across the Division.

Key Successes:

- Continued to develop CYPS understanding of Building on Strengths as a framework and approach, and built a consistent narrative across all teams, enabling workers to relate this to their practice and work to support children, young people and families. Progress recognised by CIW.

Challenges

- Implementing and embedding a consistent narrative across the entire workforce where there are areas that are challenging (recruitment/retention/sickness).

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

Wellbeing Standard 2: Performance Snapshot
14% increase in the number of packages of reablement completed during the year.
13% of adults that completed a period of reablement and had a reduced package of care and support after 6 months.
84% of adults who completed a period of reablement did not need a package of care after 6 months.
82 years average age of adults entering residential care homes.

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

During 2022/23 we have:

- Implemented a 24/7 Falls Response Service available to all Vale residents through the Vale Telecare scheme.
- Commissioned St John's Ambulance to provide the 24/7 Falls Response Service, linked to all Vale Telecare customers.
- Since the scheme started in October 2022, we have:
 - Responded to over 500 falls since inception of the service to end March 2023.
 - With an average response time from initial alert to responder being on scene of 25minutes and 29 seconds.
 - Increased the number of Telecare customers by over 300, including people that previously paid for a private Telecare service converting to the Vale Telecare scheme.

Key Successes:

- The Telecare 24/7 Falls Response Service has developed direct links to the Locality Falls Team to ensure that people responded to by the Service are rapidly referred for further assessment and therapeutic intervention as appropriate to reduce risk of further falls.
- The Falls Service has reduced the number of attendances to Accident & Emergency by 440 with an estimated saving to the health board of £547,026, using TEC Cymru calculations.

Challenges:

- The timely sharing of information from the 24/7 Telecare Responder Service to the Locality Falls Service to enable rapid follow up following a fall. The challenge of sharing quality information in a timely manner is being resolved through the creation and

implementation of a mobile application that will enable Responders to create and send records in real-time.

- The value of the 24/7 Falls Response Service is now well established, but the service is only funded for a one-year pilot. The challenge for next year is to secure ongoing funding for the service.

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

The Vale Alliance aims to integrate health and wellbeing services across the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Cardiff and Vale Health Board to provide seamless access to health, social care and wellbeing support for all adult Vale citizens.

During 2022/23 we have:

- The Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet and Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee and the Cardiff and Vale UHB Board have agreed, in principle, to pursue the formulation of the Vale Alliance.
- Governance structure of the Vale Alliance has been developed and agreed to enable a focus on three pilot areas for development:
 - Vale Community Resource Service
 - Wellbeing Matters Service
 - Third Sector Contracts

Key Successes:

- Successful recruitment of the Vale Locality Manager
- The Vale Alliance Delivery Group reinstalled to improve local communication and governance
- Wellbeing Matters Service is developing working protocols to share information and expertise to ensure a seamless delivery of health, social care and wellbeing responses to people accessing the service.

Challenges:

- National priorities for Local Health Boards have redirected strategic support for the Vale Alliance post pandemic which has slowed progress of the Alliance integration and priorities.



Care Home resident and staff enjoying new garden project

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

Wellbeing Standard 3: Performance Snapshot
0.03 % were re-registrations of children on the local authority Child Protection Register.
262 days average days spent on Child Protection Register during the year.
69 % of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales.
94% of people reported that they feel safe.

Priority 5: Embed the new Escalating Concerns Procedures.

During 2022/23 we have:

- Agreed the final document 'Quality Services: Delivering What Matters' which details the escalating concerns processes for our region.
- Held monthly Joint Quality Management Meetings to ensure sharing of information and a regional approach to quality concerns regarding providers
- Undertaken information sessions with providers for them to understand the changes to the process and provide opportunities for feedback.

Key Successes:

- Regional partners are using the new procedure to ensure consistency in dealing with provider performance issues.
- Gained the support of providers in the use of the procedure.

Challenges:

- To ensure that the procedure is kept under review and fit for purpose, with any lessons learned being reflected in the document.

Priority 6: Work with partners to implement the Youth Offending Service (YOS) Plan to enhance young people's outcomes.

During 2022/23 we have:

- Focussed on further developing the reach of prevention and diversion support in order to promote children and young people's safe, happy and healthy life chances.
- Consolidated re-establishing face-to-face contact with children, young people and their families as we emerged from the pandemic.
- Continued to incorporate the use of digital communication promoted during the pandemic to maintain more efficient links with professionals and other partners, as well as with families, to promote increased availability.
- Started the process of bringing the specific post for diversionary work in-house.
- Continued to embed the Trauma Informed approach into practice, so allowing increased support for those experiencing trauma and who have Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) to lead safer, offence free and positive lives. This includes identifying two lead practitioners in the Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach, which involves trauma-informed intervention with support from a Child-Psychologist.
- Following the HMIP Inspection rating of 'Good', the YOS have developed a more active role for the Management Board, particularly in developing the work-streams identified within the inspection report.
- Continued delivery of reparation work within the community. This has included working with children and young people preparing the garden and growing vegetables, with plans to donate produce locally.
- Increasing the use of the YOS kitchen to help develop life skills, promote positive relationships and as a medium for intervention work.
- Continued to work with victims of offences through the YOS Victim officers, including supporting participation in the restorative process.

- Worked with partners to provide activities for children and young people during the school holidays.

Key Successes:

- Recruited a practitioner using the 'Turnaround' funding to increase the diversionary support for young people identified by the Police.
- Increased information sharing between the Police and the YOS to promote support for young people.
- Children and young people are benefiting from increased CAMHS support through a Specialist CAMHS Nurse with dedicated time for those receiving support from the YOS.
- Further increasing the percentage of children and young people benefitting from preventive and diversionary work, including through Turnaround. 94% of all support has been through preventative/diversion work, with an increase of 32% of children receiving this support. This helps to promote the best possible outcomes for children to lead happy, healthy, positive lives.
- Continued to significantly reduce the numbers of children entering the formal Youth Justice System, with a reduction in First Time Entrants (children receiving a Youth Caution or higher outcome for the first time) of 36%.
- A 37% reduction in reoffending.

Challenges:

- Working without a Parenting Officer over the last year – plans are in progress to recruit to this vacancy.
- The Prevention Service working with reduced personnel for significant periods of the year, while increasing the Prevention/Diversion support.

REASONS BEHIND WHAT WE DO

Reparation is a structured activity which is organised by the Youth Offending Service with the primary aim of repairing the effects of crime and harm on victims and communities.

It allows a young person aged between 10 - 18 years, to make a positive contribution to their communities and repair the harm that's been caused.

Reparation is a fundamental part of most Court orders imposed by a Youth Court and a key element of every out of Court disposal. Whenever possible reparation should be based on the victims wishes, but we offer and undertake a variety of work all over the Vale of Glamorgan.

WHAT REPARATION WE OFFER

Environmental reparation, this includes beach cleaning and litter picking throughout the vale of Glamorgan.

Gardening Project, which takes place in the YOS garden, also clearing overgrown areas throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.

Craft project, Making cards and other small craft items.

Graffiti removal and painting, throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.

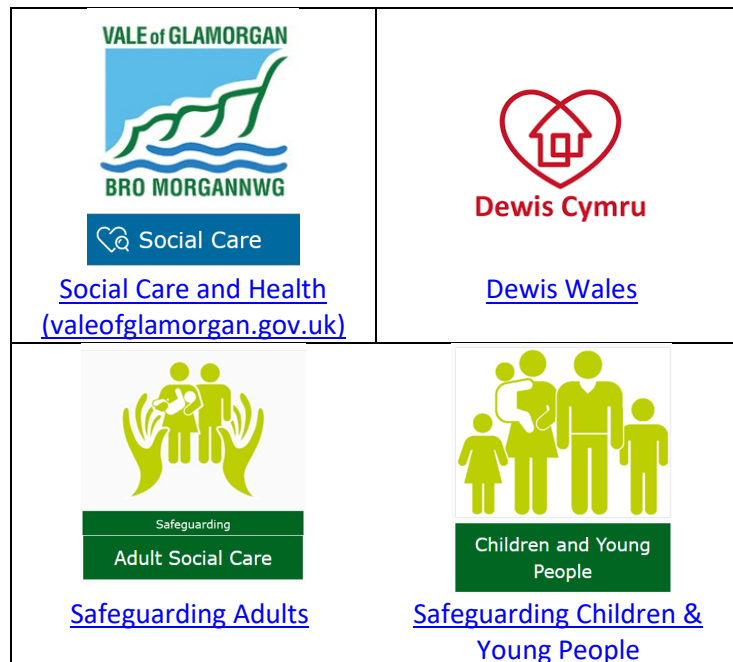


Youth Offending Service – examples of Reparation

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

Wellbeing Standard 4: Performance Snapshot
69% of young people reported they had advice, help and support to prepare them for adulthood.
90% of people reported that they can do what matters to them.
93% of people reported that they feel satisfied with their social networks.
8% of Children Looked After during the year (to 31 st March) experienced one or more changes in school during periods of being looked after that were not due to transitional arrangements.
89% of people reported that they feel part of their community.

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



During 2022/23 we have:

- Reviewed information on the website for Adult Social Care, ensuring the public can access information about safeguarding and to support their wellbeing [Adult Services \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](#)
- Worked with the Healthy Living Team to create a Summer of Fun Holiday Activities Programme. This was produced online in June 2022 and contained information on over 147 free activities for children and young people aged 0-25yrs during the school summer holidays and beyond. The scheme was funded by Welsh Government and aimed to support the social, mental, and physical wellbeing of children and young people and support families with the costs of activities during the summer holidays. The programme received over 28,000 views.
- The 30 Hour Childcare Offer for Wales's new National Digital Service launched in January 2023. The Vale Childcare Offer website pages were revamped to ensure parents could apply for childcare funding for their 3-4yr old using the new service: www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/childcareoffer
- Training programme commenced to ensure staff throughout the directorate can update information about their service area on both Staffnet and the website. A working group and plan will follow.

- The Dewis Cymru website had a new release in 2022/23 incorporating a number of updates to both the Core Dewis Cymru Health and Wellbeing website and also the Care Homes vacancy module. This release included a number of enhancements to the search functionality of the website, making it much easier for citizens and professionals to find the specific service or information they are looking for.

Key Successes:

- Information about safeguarding is easily accessible on our public facing website.
- Health and wellbeing services in The Vale of Glamorgan have received over quarter of a million detailed views on Dewis Cymru in 2022/23 (253,194 views in total), this is up by 26.6% from 2021/22.
- The number of Health and wellbeing resources in the Vale of Glamorgan published on Dewis Cymru has increased by 10% from 2021/22. This is encouraging especially as a number of services stopped running following the pandemic and therefore expired on Dewis Cymru.

Challenges:

- Ensuring there are enough staff trained to update the website and Staffnet, so that information is accurate, continually monitored and there are no gaps in information
- The Summer of Fun Holiday Activities Programme had to be turned around in a very short timescale. This posed several challenges including taking staff away from their day-to-day roles within a very small team. Some services couldn't meet the deadline and the team had to continually update the programme with changes and new information.
- Moving to the new Childcare Offer national digital system has been very resource intensive and has required the team to introduce a new national telephony system, as well as maintain the Family Information Service helpline. There were ICT connection issues for a number of weeks, but these have now been resolved.
- Updating and republishing Dewis Cymru resources following the Covid-19 pandemic has been an added workload. Some services were no longer operating, and many had changes to the way they provide the service. This meant a larger number of resources on Dewis Cymru expiring and many needing updates.
- Although Service providers new to Dewis Cymru are often very keen for their information to be added to the health and wellbeing services directory, it has been challenging to get service providers to add their information and set up a profile themselves. As a team we have tried to make this process as simple as possible and will always provide help and guidance however often quite a bit of encouragement and assistance is needed which can be time consuming.

Priority 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)

During 2022/23 we have:

- Started to map processes across the Division to ensure that paperwork is streamlined and accessible.
- Continued to work toward quality assurance tools that support best practice and deliver 'organisational containment' for the workforce.
- Fortnightly task and finish group established to take this work forward at a pace.
- A number of new forms have been introduced to facilitate the recording and reporting of data

Key Successes:

- Created explicit 'Recording Principles' with the Divisional Management Team to deliver consistency in expectations regarding recording, with the child and family at the forefront of any paperwork.

Challenges:

- Developing systems cross-Directorate (performance data and streamlined paperwork) that supports the approach

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

Wellbeing Standard 5: Performance Snapshot
88% of children were supported to remain living with their family during the year.
19% of Children Looked After were returned home from care during the year
91% % of carers reported that they felt involved in designing the care and support plan for the person that they care for.
8% of children looked after on 31 st March had experienced 3 or more placements during the year.

Priority 9: Deliver and implement the regional strategy for unpaid carers and associated services.

During 2022/23 we have:

- Launched the Regional Unpaid Carers Charter.
- Commenced developing the priority action and delivery plan to support the commitments of the charter.

Key Successes:

- Development of unpaid carers charter that outlines our commitments to carers across the region.
- Supported the identification of priority actions for unpaid carers within the population needs assessment and area plan.
- Strengthened the Vale of Glamorgan Unpaid Carers Services and Development team with the creation of a new service and development manager post.
- Delivered events for unpaid carers with a range of support agencies that also encompassed a welfare rights, benefit entitlement session.
- Revised our pathways for young carer and parent carer assessment to ensure timely information advice and assistance.
- Delivered the unpaid carers fund to over 1200 across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Provided alternative respite support via days out and voucher schemes to unpaid carers.

Challenges:

- Timely delivery of services that take account of the individual needs of unpaid carers.
- Ability to provide carers assessments in a timely way.
- Co-ordination of a range of services that are available to unpaid carers.
- The ongoing need to ensure information and advice is available to support identification of unpaid carers.

Priority 10: Work with Foster Care Wales to increase the number and diversity of Foster Carers in the Vale of Glamorgan

During 2022/23 we have:

- Approved 3 mainstream foster carers.
- Approved 19 kinship carers providing family alternatives for children looked after.

Key Successes:

- Increased the opportunity for children looked after to live within kinship arrangements, promoting family care and reducing additional demands for mainstream provision.
- Considered new ways of increasing the number of enquiries to the service. This included sending leaflets sent out to all homes across the Vale with Council Tax bills, prompting a positive response.

Challenges:

- There has been a reduction in our number of mainstream approvals this year. This is partly linked to a reduced number of enquiries, which appears to be a national trend.
- Reduced approvals are challenging in the context of increasing numbers of children looked after and the need to expand our pool of foster carers, which remains a priority for the service.
- We continue to have a number of foster carers leaving the service due to age and capacity (ageing foster carer population).

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.

Wellbeing Standard 6: Performance Snapshot
11 care leavers completed at least 3 consecutive months in education, employment, or training in the 12 months after leaving care.
4 care leavers completed at least 3 consecutive months in education, employment, or training in the 13-24 months after leaving care.
100% of people reported that they live in the right home for them.
99% of people reported that they received care and support through their language of choice.

Priority 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.

During 2022/23 we have:

- Two Smart houses fully operational.
- Developed plans with and RSL for development of a third SMART house to be ready in Autumn 2023.
- Developed plans for a new build of six SMART flats planned for completion 2024/2025.
- Secured Regional Integration Fund money for a Business Improvement Project Manager to assist with implementing actions identified in the Joint Commissioning Strategy for Adults with a Learning Disability 2019-2024, focussing on supporting living development.

Key Successes:

- Increased confidence and enhanced quality of life as individuals develop their levels of independence for example individuals can now do the following:
 - Ask Alexa what the weather is like for the day and will then choose clothes that are suitable for the weather.
 - Will use Alexa to call staff if assistance is required and will set reminders for staff for medication.
 - Will use Alexa to open the blinds, and turn off lights and the TV before going to bed.
 - Will use Alexa to set alarms and prompts to complete tasks.
- They have developed independent living skills such as cooking, laundry and self-care that will enable them to move on to core and cluster model with targeted support.
- Developed their social skills through joining local community groups.
- Staff supporting individuals increasing their knowledge and skills in technology and the benefits this can have for people with support needs.
- A film has been made showing individuals' abilities in utilising the technology available and the difference this has made to their lives.

Challenges:

- Ensuring robust data is available to inform future planning.
- Delivering new projects within allocated budget and timeframes.
- Ensuring technology provided is current and sustainable.

Workforce Developments 2022/23

Children and Young People Services:

- We have invested resources to support a proportionate level of restructuring across our core teams, specifically the creation of a dedicated Intake Team, two Family Support Teams and a 14 Plus Team, supported through three clear Operational Manager remits.
- Continued to utilise traditional and innovative approaches to support recruitment into key roles, including bespoke advertising and recruitment of international social workers. Maintained our commitment to 'grow our own' Social Workers by creating clear development pathways for those in unqualified roles. Maintained a commitment to well-being across all teams and the promotion of a positive culture, supporting retention of our staff.

Resource Management & Safeguarding:

- To continue to enhance recruitment of care staff through the fast-track to care recruitment programme to encourage and train new starters, so that they become more ready quicker.
- The scheme has been successful and will be continued into next year.
- With the ending of Freedom of Movement and the introduction of the Skilled Worker route, EU and non-EU workers could not enter the UK with the specific purpose of working as a care worker, as the job role was not eligible. This changed in February 2022 and care workers can, subject to Sponsorship, be brought into the UK on the Skilled Worker Visa or work part time on a Student Visa or Dependent Visa. The Vale Council is a Home Office Approved Sponsor and the care homes have been able to recruit several foreign nationals into long standing vacancies, reducing the pressures on our workers and our reliance on expensive agency staff.

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 2023/24

- We have made a number of new management appointments and will need to ensure that we deliver comprehensive inductions for them all.
- We are offering many more staff the opportunity to undertake training to prepare them to become social workers.

Children and Young People Services:

- Embedding our new structure supporting core teams to deliver against their dedicated remits.
- Achieving permanence across our teams, focusing equally on recruitment and retention.

Resource Management & Safeguarding:

- Develop the action plan for Domiciliary Care.
- Continue to develop our local training team and facilitate care staff to undertake the necessary training.

Adult Services:

- Strengthening the Integrated Discharge Service will enable greater resilience to temporary shortages and allow a greater focus on quality interventions.

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 act 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. This process has recognised the challenges in our sector in particular with domiciliary care and has enabled a sizeable level of increase funding in the hope that this results in pay improvements which will attract staff.

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.

Year End Social Services Budget 2022/23	Total Community care packages £42,416,587	Children & Young People Services £18,536,000	Adults & Resource Management £19,065,413
• £80,742,000	Adults Domiciliary care £22,362,431	YOS £724,000	Vale Community Resource Service £1,872,812
	Adults Commissioned Care Homes £17,482,478	External Fostering Placements £3,298,012	Council-owned Care Homes £3,072,754
	Adults other community care £2,571,678	External Placements £2,417,227	Social Care incl. Safeguarding £14,119,847
		Internal Fostering £2,460,239	
		Other Children's Services £9,636,122	

Note: Please note all figures are net of any budgeted grant income.

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.

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 fulfil 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.

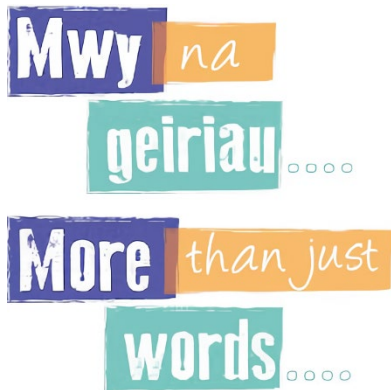
What does our regulator say about us?

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 2022-23, CIW completed a Performance Evaluation Inspection of Social Services.

This inspection reported positively on the work that the Directorate has completed to respond to the previous Assurance Checks and was complimentary of the efforts of our staff in supporting our residents.

CIW continue to undertake regular performance and 'check in' meetings with the Director and Heads of Service.

Promoting Welsh Language and Access to Services



Mwy na geiriau ... More than just words was first published in 2012, with a new five-year plan for 2022-27. Its vision is for Cymraeg to belong and be embedded in health and social care services across Wales so that individuals receive care that meet their language needs, leading to better outcomes, without having to ask for it.

Here are some of the things we have been doing in 2022/23 to promote the Welsh Language and ensure that social care workers appreciate the active part they have to play in realising this vision



Welsh Language Service Update 2022/23

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. these have proven to be popular from which they are opting to attend further Welsh language training:

Social Services staff attending Welsh language training

Course	No of staff
Entry/Mynediad	11
Foundation/Sylfaen	2
Higher Uwch	1

Dysgu Cymraeg / Learn Welsh is a dedicated information page for staff aimed at Welsh learners and prospective learners.

This year the Social Services Business Intelligence and Service Development Team introduced a weekly get together over teams (Coffi a Chlonc) to give staff the opportunity to practice their Welsh with other learners and fluent speakers across several Teams.

Customers' language preference is captured at the first point of contact with services. Social Services provide an "Active Offer" which means providing a service in Welsh without someone having to ask for it. Out of 832 Social Services assessments completed during 2022/23, 619 service users and unpaid carers had evidence of the active offer being made. Of the 619 where the active offer was made, 0 were accepted

We have a number of staff in social care who are fluent Welsh speakers, able to complete and write an assessment in Welsh

Service Area	Number of fluent Welsh Speakers
Children and Young People Services	7
Adult Services	10

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.

This year we have published a Market Stability Report which will inform our commissioning approaches across the region.

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 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.

Drawing on the events from this past year and our insight for the way forward, we intend to progress the following priorities into 2023/24.

Our priorities 2023/24

Wellbeing standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce wellbeing outcomes that people wish to achieve.

1. Review and enhance current information on Staffnet, DEWIS and public facing website.
2. Continue to focus on the development of WCCIS in relation to ensuring timely and proportionate recording to inform and improve service delivery.
3. Improve awareness of the Carers Gateway and our response for unpaid carers.

Wellbeing standard 2: Working with people/partners to protect and promote physical, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

4. Develop and implement proposals for our new operating model that includes the rationalisation of our physical office use.
5. Work in collaboration with our Third Sector partners to maximise and further develop the use of children's residential provision across the Vale to ensure sufficiency of placements and achieve financial savings.

Wellbeing standard 3: Safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm.

6. Continue to maintain oversight of our referrals at the front door to ensure we respond effectively to manage demand.
7. Implement a sustainable and integrated model for single point of access to Well-being Matters services (via the Contact Centre).

Wellbeing standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

8. Develop a Day Opportunities Board to review and shape our future delivery model in partnership with our members.
9. Extend the roll out of domiciliary care in relation to Learning Disability and mental health in line with the 'Your Choice' programme.
10. 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.

Wellbeing standard 5: Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

11. Further develop 'Grow our own' Social Work schemes and support recruitment, retention and succession planning for our harder to fill roles.
12. Work with partners to implement the Youth Offending Service Post Inspection Action Plan to enhance young people's outcomes.

Wellbeing standard 6: Working with people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation.
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13. Review our data sets to assess and improve how we are capturing data on our service users with protected characteristics.

14. Review our staff Supervision arrangements and ensure that they are fully operational and of a consistent standard.
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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 2020-25](#)
- [Service Plans](#) for Children and Young People Services, Adult Services and Resource Management, Safeguarding and Performance.
- [Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health and Social Care Partnership](#)
- [Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Board Well-being Assessment 2022](#)
- [Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment 2022](#)



Director's Annual Report 2022/2023 Challenge Feedback Form

1. Is the report clear, easy to read and does it cover the necessary ground?

Completely Mostly Partially Not at all

Comments:.....
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2. Does the picture it presents match with your experience?

Completely Mostly Partially Not at all

Comments:.....
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3. Does the report adequately reflect partnership working?

Completely Mostly Partially Not at all

Comments:.....
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4. Do you think the areas for improvement identified will address any gaps in quality and performance?

Completely Mostly Partially Not at all

Comments:.....
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5. Are the priority objectives realistic and deliverable?

Completely Mostly Partially Not at all

Comments:.....
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6. Any Other General Comments:

Comments:.....
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Please send responses electronically to:

jwinter@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Closing date for responses is: **18th August 2023.**

Thank you for your help in supporting the improvement of social services in the Vale of Glamorgan.