

DRAFT AGENDA

ID	1815
Committee	Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Date	28/11/2019
Attendees	<p>Cynghorwyr Stephen Thomas (Cadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Keri Rowson (Is-gadeirydd)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Derrick Bevan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Gareth A. Davies (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Malcolm Day (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Phil Edwards (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr D. Lyn Elias (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Keith Hayden (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Julie Holt (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Jonathan Millard (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Amanda Moore (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorydd John P. Morgan (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Greg Paulsen (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tim Sharrem (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Cynghorwyr Tommy Smith (Aelod Pwyllgor)</p> <p>Damien McCann (Swyddog)</p> <p>Tanya Evans (Swyddog)</p> <p>Alyson Hoskins (Swyddog)</p> <p>Liz Thomas (Swyddog)</p> <p>Gwasanaethau Democrataidd (Notify)</p> <p>Leeann Turner (Secretary)</p> <p>Pob Cynghorydd (Notify)</p> <p>Sean Scannell (Notify)</p> <p>Louise Bishop (Notify)</p> <p>Anne-Louise Clark (Notify)</p> <p>Richard Crook (Notify)</p> <p>Rhian Hayden (Notify)</p> <p>Lynette Jones (Notify)</p> <p>Michelle Morris (Notify)</p>

Item ID	1383
Item Title	Cyfieithu ar y Pryd
Summary	Mae croeso i chi ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg yn y cyfarfod, mae angen o leiaf 3 diwrnod o rybudd os dyunwch wneud hynny. Darperir gwasanaeth cyfieithu ar y pryd os gwneir cais.

Item ID	1384
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Item Title	Ymddiheuriadau
Summary	Derbyn ymddiheuriadau.

Item ID	1385
Item Title	Datganiadau Buddiant a Goddefebau
Summary	Ystyried unrhyw ddatganiadau buddiant a goddefebau a wnaed.

Item ID	1386
Item Title	Pwyllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Summary	Derbyn cofnodion y cyfarfod o'r Pwyllgor Craffu Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol a gynhaliwyd ar 2 Medi 2019. (Dylid nodi y cyflwynir y Cofnodion er pwyntiau cywirdeb yn unig)

Item ID	1875
Item Title	Cynnydd ar Weithredu Strategaeth Gostwng yn Ddiogel y Nifer o Blant sy'n derbyn Gofal 2017-2020
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad y Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Plant.

Item ID	1876
Item Title	Adroddiad Blynyddol Cyfawyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol 2019-20 (Chwarteri 1 a 2)
Summary	Ystyried adroddiad Cyfarwyddwr Corfforaethol Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol.

Item ID	1877
Item Title	Blaenraglen Gwaith - 13 Ionawr 2020
Summary	Derbyn yr adroddiad.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BLAENAU GWENT

REPORT TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17TH OCTOBER, 2019

REPORT OF: DEMOCRATIC SUPPORT OFFICER

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR S.C. THOMAS (CHAIR)

Councillors: K. Rowson
 D. Bevan
 G.A. Davies
 P. Edwards
 L. Elias
 K. Hayden
 J. Millard
 M. Moore
 G. Paulsen
 T. Sharrem
 T. Smith

AND: Corporate Director of Social Services
 Head of Children’s Services
 Head of Adult Services
 Service Manager, Children’s Services
 Service Manager, SEW Adoption Service
 Scrutiny & Democratic Officer / Advisor

ITEM	SUBJECT	ACTION
No. 1	<p><u>SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION</u></p> <p>It was noted that no requests had been received for the simultaneous translation service.</p>	
No. 2	<p><u>APOLOGIES</u></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Day and J. Holt.</p>	

<p>No. 3</p>	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS</u></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.</p>	
<p>No. 4</p>	<p><u>SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 2nd September, 2019 were submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Minutes be accepted as a true record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>No. 5</p>	<p><u>ACTION SHEET – 2ND SEPTEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>The action sheet arising from the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 2nd September, 2019 was submitted.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the action sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 6</p>	<p><u>EXECUTIVE DECISION SHEET FOR THE SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the Executive Decision Sheet.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED that the Executive Decision Sheet be noted.</p>	
<p>No. 7</p>	<p><u>WELSH GOVERNMENT CHILDCARE OFFER – BLAENAU GWENT AND TORFAEN</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Children’s Services.</p> <p>The Service Manager, Children’s Services presented the report which updated Members on the continued roll out of the Welsh Government’s Childcare Offer in Blaenau Gwent and the first year of roll out in Torfaen County Borough Council.</p> <p>Members commended the report and felt that the Authority helped working families with childcare support and gave 3 to 4 year old pre-school children a good start.</p>	

A Member enquired why information on parents who had increased their working hours was not presented at a local level. The Service Manager, Children's Services said that the extra hours parents worked could be provided at a local level and parents who worked 10 or 12 hours could be informed that they would be eligible for the Childcare Offer if they increased their hours to 16.

A Member commented that more detail on grants was needed and work with the third sector should be recognised and felt that a reporting mechanism should be included in the report in relation to people going back into work. The Service Manager, Children's Services explained that the Welsh Government did not collect that information, however, a survey could be undertaken to ascertain how many people re-entered the job market as a consequence of the Childcare Offer. The Member responded that this information could be provided by Communities for Work. The Officer clarified that those numbers of people returning to work may not be as a result of the Childcare Offer.

In response to a Member's question regarding Flying Start and the Childcare Offer, the Service Manager, Children's Services clarified that Flying Start was only available in some areas and to the most vulnerable families in the community with children under 2 years of age. The Childcare Offer applied to working parents with 3 or 4 year olds. The Member enquired when the Flying Start scheme would be extended to include other areas with vulnerable parents who experienced issues around childcare. The Officer explained that Flying Start numbers were capped by Welsh Government and only 1/3 of the Borough's 0/3 year olds were included in the Flying Start scheme. The Early Years services were complex and difficult for parents to navigate and it was hoped that the Pathfinder programme would make it clearer for parents.

The Chair suggested that the Executive Member for Social Services write to the Welsh Government to express the concerns raised.

The Committee AGREED this course of action.

A Member enquired regarding who would be eligible for

	<p>the Childcare Offer. The Service Manager, Children's Services said that the Early Years Team had been working closely with Job Centre Plus regarding eligibility and were trying to market the Offer to reach as many people as possible, a video had been prepared for parents with a step by step guide on how to apply. To maximise marketing, letters and postcards would also be sent to parents advising them of the Offer.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED, subject to the foregoing, to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that Members recommendation to Executive to improve the delivery of the Childcare Offer to both Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen residents be accepted.</p>	
<p>No. 8</p>	<p><u>REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP UPDATE</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services.</p> <p>The Director of Social Services presented the report which updated Members on the work and decisions taken over the last 6 months by the Regional Partnership Board, developed under statutory guidance Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB Act).</p> <p>A Member referred to delays in patients returning home from hospital. The Head of Adult Services said Homefirst provided rapid turnaround and operated in A&E departments. Working collaboratively provided accelerated assessment to safely discharge people from hospital with clear pathways for residents which made a significant difference, however, in terms of discharge from hospitals the five local authorities operated in different ways. The Authority was operating a pilot project on behalf of other local authorities which placed dedicated staff on hospital wards to directly action any reasons for delay. Staff had reported that this pilot project was successful.</p> <p>Another Member raised concerns regarding vacancies in nursing homes and felt that some patient's families felt pressurised into choosing a nursing home quickly. The Head of Adult Services said that there was a number of Care Homes with vacancies, Officers from the Department</p>	

contacted Care Homes directly for weekly updates which identified vacancies within their Care Home and Social Workers based in hospital wards could help with this information. The Health Board had a clear discharge policy that families identify three Care Home placements, one must have a vacancy and expected families to be proactive in identifying these placements.

The Head of Adult Services agreed to speak with the Member outside of the meeting regarding individual cases.

The Corporate Director of Social Services commented that the Living Independently Strategy had been the Authority's ethos for many years. The best route for patients was to return home, however, long term decisions would need to be made in terms of Care Home placements.

Councillor Jonathan Millard left the meeting at this juncture.

The Head of Adult Services advised Members of the current data in relation to Care Home vacancies i.e. 12 vacancies in Care Homes across the Borough, 21 vacancies in dementia homes and 7 in EMI nursing homes.

In response to a Member enquiry regarding the new Grange Hospital, the Director of Social Services said that some discussion had taken place but there was a lack of information available regarding what services would be provided at the hospital but colleagues from the Regional Partnership Board felt that information on services at the new facility would be forthcoming. There was concern regarding travel links to the new hospital, i.e. people may need to take up to three buses to attend the hospital but this would be a concern across Gwent.

The Member said that he had received correspondence regarding the travel links to the hospital which had indicated improvements to Cwmbran Railway Station but the Member had concerns as this was a different line.

In relation to Mental Health services a Member commented that he welcomed the progress made with the Iceberg model.

	<p>With regard to Transformation funding the Director of Social Services said that the Department was looking at different models and Blaenau Gwent was at the forefront and had the ability to implement them. Some funding was only confirmed at a late stage which made it difficult to implement some of the large schemes within the timescale and these concerns had been fed back to the Welsh Government. As with many projects there was some slippage and the Department had put in some slippage bids.</p> <p>Another Member commented that he welcomed the investment for the new hospital, however, some parts of the Borough were semi rural and it was imperative that good transport links to the new hospital from Blaenau Gwent and neighbouring authorities were implemented.</p> <p>In response to a Member's enquiry regarding recruitment issues, the Director said that in some instances staff were seconded into posts but this had an impact on the service they left. Some staff were reluctant to leave existing posts for a short term funded post and most people wanted a permanent role even those in temporary positions.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that the decisions of the Regional Partnership Board be supported.</p>	
<p>No. 9</p>	<p><u>INTEGRATED CARE FUND UPDATE 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Adult Services.</p> <p>The Head of Adult Services presented the report which provided an overview for Members on the current allocation of funding for projects monitored by Adult Services and funded via the Welsh Government Integrated Care Fund (ICF) as at September 2019.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the impact for citizens if funding was withdrawn. The Head of Adult Services said that if funding was removed the integrated care bed facility, which allowed patients to leave hospital quickly, would be withdrawn and would lead to delays in people</p>	

	<p>leaving hospital while their homes were being adapted. A Compassionate Communities Members briefing session was being arranged to look at how to better support people and GP's so that people were not socially isolated. If funding was withdrawn this would impact on the progress made and preventative services would cease.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 1, namely that the evidence provided to support the way in which available ICF grant funding is being accessed to support the strategic priorities of the Council, and the service to continue to provide progress updates to the Scrutiny Committee in 2020/21 as outlined in the report be endorsed.</p>	
<p>No. 10</p>	<p><u>NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Social Services and the Service Manager SEWAS.</p> <p>The Service Manager SEWAS presented the report on the performance of the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) and the National Adoption Service (NAS) for 2018/19.</p> <p>In relation to demand for adoptive placements and adopter recruitment a Member commented that the recruitment campaign was extremely good and felt that roundabouts and advertising boards could be utilised for recruitment purposes more effectively.</p> <p>The Head of Children's Services said that 70 children were placed with adoptive parents and confirmed that the number of adopters had fallen.</p> <p>A Member enquired regarding the delay with children receiving their life journey materials. The Service Manager SEWAS said that a new Co-ordinator had been appointed to help improve the timescales for receipt of the life journey materials with Welsh Government investment funding used to improve performance going forward.</p>	

	<p>The Committee AGREED to recommend that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the information as reported be accepted.</p> <p>Councillor Greg Paulsen left the meeting at this juncture.</p>	
<p>No. 11</p>	<p><u>FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – 28TH NOVEMBER, 2019</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to the report of the Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Chair requested a report on Community Meals Service be included in the Forward Work Programme. The Director of Social Services said that discussions were taking place with the Environment Department to look at a model to increase the number of community meals and would present a report to this Committee at a later date.</p> <p>The Chair raised concerns regarding the Annual National Performance Information contained in the Information Pack and requested that a joint scrutiny meeting be held to consider the item.</p> <p>The Committee AGREED this course of action.</p> <p>The Committee FURTHER AGREED that the report be accepted and endorse Option 2; namely that the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 28th November, 2019 be approved.</p>	

Agenda Item 5

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Social Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **28th November 2019**

Report Subject: **Progress on the Implementation of the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2017- 2020**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Tanya Evans, Head of Children's Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
8.11.19	12.11.19	19.11.19			28.11.19	18.12.19		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The Purpose of this report is to update Scrutiny Committee on the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2017-2020.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Prior to the end of 2015 the numbers of children looked after within Blaenau Gwent had remained stable since 2008 at a rate of between 135-145 within any 12-month period.
- 2.2 The end of 2015 saw a significant increase in the numbers of looked after children received into foster care. Since that time the numbers continued to increase at a steady rate peaking at a high of 237 in July 2018. Since this time the Local Authority has seen a very slow but steady decrease in the numbers of children becoming looked after. More detailed analysis of this can be found under section 6.1 of this report.
- 2.3 The First Minister has highlighted the increasing numbers of children looked after as a priority area for action in Wales. As a result, a Children Looked After Technical Group was established this year to inform Welsh Government's approach and engage with local authorities on this issue. This work culminated in a national learning event held by Welsh Government to enable local authorities to share best practice and ideas on how to reduce the numbers of children coming into care in Wales.
- 2.4 In response to the rising numbers of children coming into care, Children's Social Services in Blaenau Gwent recognised the need to develop a 3 year "Safe Reduction in Children Looked After Strategy" which started to be implemented in 2017.

- 2.5 The Strategy has three clear objectives which are: -
1. To support families to stay together;
 2. To manage risk confidently and provide support at the edge of care;
 3. To provide affordable high quality placements.
- 2.6 Each of the objectives has a number of actions aligned to them and these actions are embedded in our business planning process which is reported on quarterly basis.
- 2.7 This strategy is in the process of being independently evaluated by Worcester University. The outcome of this evaluation will inform the new Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy which will succeed the current one which it due to end in the Summer of 2020.
- 2.8 Scrutiny committee in July 2019 were fully updated on progress under each of the 3 objectives under the strategy. This report will focus on progress made since July 2019.
- 2.9 A significant development has been the allocation of Integrated Care Fund (ICF) grant money via the Regional Partnership Board given directly to Children's Services for a new priority area for 2019/20 and 2020/21 for "**Children at risk of becoming looked after, in care or, who are adopted**".
- 2.10 There was an expectation that regional approaches to this new priority should be developed, as such the Gwent Heads of Children's Services worked together to develop and submit a joint bid for this money.
- 2.11 The bid included the development of **4** regional approaches, delivered locally, with the clear aim of safely reducing the numbers of children becoming looked after. These **4** approaches are:
1. To implement a **Family Group Conference service** within each of the five local authority areas using a regional service model to be delivered on a local level.

In response to this Blaenau Gwent has:-

Recruited two full-time members of staff to undertake Family Group Conferencing (FGC) for all child and families open to Social Services under a Care and Support Plan where it is felt a Family Group Conference would be beneficial. The Family Group Conference Service is established in the Supporting Change Team.

2. Deliver a consistent **Gwent wide 'offer' of support to Special Guardians** to both assist them in their caring role but also to assist the Courts in having a viable alternative to adoption and long term fostering.

In response to this Blaenau Gwent has:-

Developed a small Special Guardianship Team consisting of two qualified social workers and one support worker. The team aim to offer similar support services to Special Guardians as we offer to foster carers.

3. **To enhance each Local Authorities Edge of Care Team (known as Supporting Change Team in Blaenau Gwent)** to build on the work already being done to prevent children entering the care system by adopting a regional service model that ensures each team benefits from the following additional resources:
 - (a) dedicated support of a **Consultant Psychologist** for advice, consultation and to improve care planning. **Education support.** We know that children who do not attend school and present with challenging behaviour at home are more likely to be those who become Looked After.
 - (b) Create the children's equivalent of a **Community Connector**. The purpose would be to positively engage young people with local clubs/interests/activities with the aim of reducing the risks of engaging with risky behaviours and create more stability across the context of safeguarding in adolescence.

In response to this Blaenau Gwent has:-

Established an Education Support Service in the Supporting Change Team with one full time support worker being appointed to the role to offer Education Support for children and families open to the Supporting Change Team. Also one full time support worker has been appointed to the role of Community Connector based in the Supporting Change Team. In terms of recruitment for the psychologist role, the job has been advertised on two separate occasions with no applicants. Work with health continues to recruit to this role.

4. To deliver a **Young Person's Mediation Service** aimed at ages 14 years and above across the five local authorities adopting a regional service model that is delivered locally in each Local Authority area. The proposed service model will work with young people and their families where conflict has led to the young person either leaving or being asked to leave their home.

In response to this Blaenau Gwent has:-

Recruited a mediation support worker on a part time (18.5 hours) basis. The mediation support worker post has been incorporated into the 14+ team aiming to work preventatively with young people and families to reduce youth homelessness through intensive mediation support. Equally the post aims to work towards rehabilitation when homelessness has been experienced.

The 4 approaches outlined above have a role to play in supporting the safe reduction of children coming into care.

The benefits of these 4 approaches should be clearly evidenced by the end of Quarter 4 of 2019/20.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

- Consider the information contained within the report and accept the report

Option 2

- Consider the information contained within the report and provide comment on any amendment or recommendations for Executive Committee.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

The implementation of the safe Children looked After reduction strategy supports the following priorities for social services under the corporate plan

- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.

5. **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

Figure 1

Budget forecast for Qtr 2 for 2019/20

	Budget 19/20	Forecast 19/20	Favourable/ (adverse)
Children's residential placements	2,655,430	2,819,921	(164,491)
Foster Parent Payments In house	1,626,000	1,844,032	(218,032)
Independent Fostering Agencies	1,714,930	1,322,421	392,509
Legal Costs	353,730	641,031	(287,301)

Figure 1 shows the budget positions in relation to placement and legal costs for our children looked after. Children's Services has undertaken a number of internal budget virements to offset the forecast overspends in relation to these

budgets. At the end of Qtr 2 Children’s Services is forecasting a £150k underspend.

It is important to note that the Council made the decision to direct the Social Care and Workforce and Sustainability pressures 2019/20 grant of £761k to meet cost pressures within Children’s Services to support while prevention work started to impact.

5.2 Legal

Children’s Legal services in Blaenau Gwent are currently being provided by an independent law firm. This is due to continued difficulties in recruiting Local Authority Child Care Solicitors. Over the past few years the legal budget has been significantly overspent due to the number of court applications made. As can be seen from 5.1 this overspend continues. However the number of Section 31 applications Blaenau Gwent have made to the court during from April – September 2019 are the same as 2018 which demonstrates this area of work has to date not increased this year.

5.3 Human Resources

No issues relating to this report at this time

6. Supporting Evidence

6.1 Performance Information and Data

Figure 2

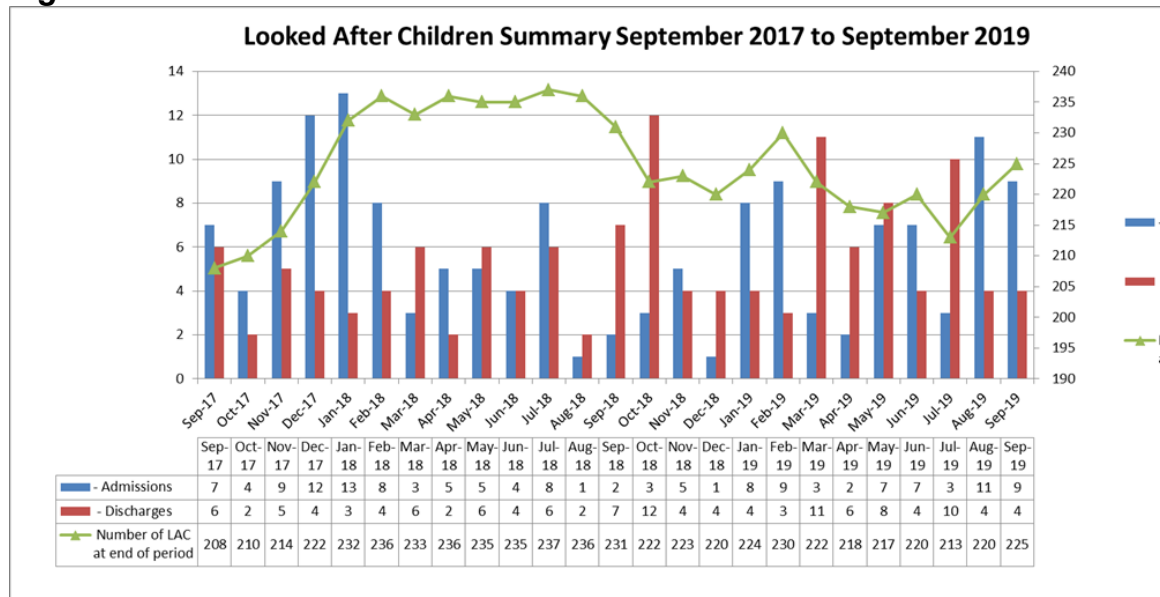


Figure 2 shows the journey in relation to the numbers of children becoming looked after and the admissions and discharges month by month.

The overall picture continues to show a very slow reduction in the numbers of looked after children in Blaenau Gwent.

August and September did see an increase in the numbers of children becoming looked after. The Head of Service with Service Managers have scrutinised these admissions to care and are satisfied all of these admissions where necessary, the majority for safeguarding reasons.

Of the numbers admitted during August and September there were 4 sibling groups of 3 which would have an impact on the rise in numbers. Of the children admitted to care during August and September, 7 of them have been placed with family members, it hoped at the end of their care proceedings they will not remain in the care system but either return home to their parents if it is safe enough, or stay permanently with extended family members under alternative legal arrangements other than a care order, therefore removing them from the looked after system.

It is important to comment on the work of the My Support Team (MyST) which has been in operation since June 2019. It is early days however good progress is being made in relation to reducing the numbers of children in residential care. In May 2019 we had 18 children in residential care. In October 2019 we have 14 children in residential care and 1 child in secure accommodation. The MyST have also prevented a number of children entering residential care. A full report on progress made by the team will be presented to scrutiny in Qtr4 of 19/20.

6.2 *Expected outcome for the public*

The successful implementation of the safe CLA reduction strategy will lead to more positive outcomes for children on a number of levels. It will prevent children coming into care in the first place due to the work under the strategy. For those children who do come into care they will have more local placement choices enabling them to maintain attendance at their local school and contact with family and friends.

6.3 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

There is extensive involvement with the children and families we work with. Their views are gathered through a number of avenues including:

- The National Youth Advocacy Service;
- Formally seeking their views following interventions from the supporting change team;
- Formally seeking their views at each review of their plan.

6.4 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

The CLA reduction strategy is 2 years into its 3 year lifetime. An independent evaluation is underway which will shape an amended strategy by June 2020

6.5 *Preventative focus*

A large part of the safe CLA reduction strategy has a preventative focus

6.6 *Collaboration / partnership working*

A number of the actions under the safe CLA reduction strategy rely on partnership working. Senior managers and staff have good working relationships with our partners which will support us in achieving the actions.

6.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***
As above

6. ***EqlA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

The safe reduction of children becoming looked after involves supporting and engaging with children and families covered by protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The safe reduction strategy is in the process of being independently evaluated. The outcome of this is expected in Qtr 4 of 19/20. The actions aligned to the 3 objectives under the strategy are incorporated under the children's services business plans. Progress on actions is reported quarterly and contributes to the Directors Annual report.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

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Agenda Item 6

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Social Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **28th November 2019**
Report Subject: **Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/20 (Quarters 1 and 2)**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Damien McCann, Corporate Director of Social Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	19.11.2019	19.11.19			28.11.2019	18.12.19		

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight key points from quarters 1 and 2 of the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services 2019/2020 (Appendix 1).
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 It is a statutory responsibility of the Director of Social Services to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Social Services and produce an Annual Report. Quarters 1 and 2 contributes to the Director's Annual Report and forms part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 The Report (Quarters 1 and 2) has been considered by the Corporate Leadership Team.
 - 3.2 **Option 1**

Members are asked to scrutinise the information for quarters 1 and 2 detailed within the Director of Social Services 2019/20 report and contribute to the continuous assessment of effectiveness by making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Committee.
 - 3.3 **Option 2**

Accept the report as provided.
4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**
 - 4.1 It is a statutory responsibility of the Director of Social Services to assess the effectiveness of the delivery of Social Services and produce an Annual Report. The Annual Report contributes and forms part of the Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF).

5. Implications Against Each Option

5.1 *Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)*

Quarters 1 and 2 of the Director's Report identifies the pressures and budgetary implications from April to September 2019.

5.2 *Risk including Mitigating Actions*

The Directorate Risk Register is detailed within the report including what actions have been taken to mitigate these risks.

6. Supporting Evidence

Performance Information (only quarter 1 data stats were available at the time of submitting)

6.1 Performance and data is provided within the Report.

6.2 Headline updates against each service updates, performance outcomes are shown as follows:

6.3 Children's

The new model in the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Team has embedded well across the operational teams, with clearly scoped out roles and responsibilities. The Police now have a presence within the IAA which further strengthens their response time for safeguarding referrals to be dealt with within the timescales required under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. Negotiations are ongoing where it is hoped an education representative will also be co-located into the IAA Team in order to ensure that the requirements under the safeguarding procedures are realised.

The National Youth Advocacy Service is now in a position to offer independent visitors as part of their advocacy service and are in attendance at Children Looked After reviews, Child Protection Conferences and Secure Review Meetings.

The SPACE Well-being (Single Point of Access for Children's Emotional Well-being and Mental Health) Programme is hosted by Families First and early indications show that the mental health needs of children and young people are being assessed early with the right agency taking the lead on providing the most appropriate interventions. At the end of quarter 2, 313 referrals had been received into the SPACE Well-being panel since the service started in April 2019.

6.4 Adults

A co-produced commissioning strategy, titled 'Our Vision and Intentions for Adults Advocacy, 2019-24', has now been completed and will be launched in October 2019 and the new advocacy helpline, Gwent Access to Advocacy (GATA), was also launched and rolled out to Social Workers and Information, Advice and Assistance teams in Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire.

Over the course of Carers week, awareness raising events and activities took place in venues across the borough along with information and advice session for Carers of people with learning disabilities. These were all delivered and supported by the Carers Lead Officer, GP Engagement Officers and the Voluntary Sector such as Carers Trust.

Compassionate Communities is a Welsh Government transformation funded programme that aims to improve the well-being of people across Gwent. Work includes the development of IAA outreach across the Compassionate Communities within 11 GP practices and also at community and acute hospital sites, where initial positive outcomes have been reported. Compassionate Communities also includes Community Connectors actively participating in Multi-Disciplinary Team discussions and hospital discharge follow up phone calls. Bids have been submitted to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to extend service provision over the winter months to support winter discharges and pressures around potential Delayed Transfers of Care

6.3 *Expected outcome for the public*

Quarterly reporting provides the public with the opportunity to view progress of the Directorate and ensure accountability.

6.4 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and other key partners where possible in helping shape and influence future design of services.

6.5 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

The Report enables the department to plan for the future as spend, risk and performance is continuously reported on and provides a baseline of where the department is currently and where it needs to be in the future.

6.6 *Preventative focus*

The work undertaken by the department looks to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention. Having an active rather than reactive approach to service planning can also help with planning resources and not spending as much on services in the future.

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The performance of the department is monitored throughout the financial year from April to March and reported to Social Services Scrutiny Committee.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Quarters 1 and 2 Report of the Director of Social Services

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Social Services

Annual Report of the Director

Quarter 1 & 2 – 2019.20

Contents

Director's Overview	1	Adult Services Priorities	20
Infographic	3	Adult Services Key Performance Indicators	25
Local Political Leadership, Governance and Accountability	4	Adult Services Case Studies	26
Social Services Directorate Structure	5	Managing Our Business	27
Governance and Performance Framework	6	Budget 2019/20 - Quarter 1 & 2	28
Departmental Priorities	7	Complaints and Compliments - Children's & Adults Services	29
Quality Standards	8	Directorate Risk Register (Risks)	30
Children's Services Priorities	14	Glossary	33
Children's Services Key Performance Indicators	18	Contact Details	34
Children's Services Case Studies	19		

Director's Overview

After another challenging year in 2018/19, we are anticipating another difficult and challenging year ahead. The first half of the year has seen progress on a number of fronts; the Action Plan following the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection report for Blaenau Gwent Council in July 2018 has been progressed with a small number of actions remaining to be completed; the Strategy to Safely Reduce the Number of Children Looked After is showing some promising signs; the joint procurement with Caerphilly for domiciliary care providers has provided some resilience and officers from Blaenau Gwent have led on a co-produced commissioning strategy for advocacy for adults.

The Strategy to Safely Reduce the Number of Children Looked After 2017-2020 continues and the Supporting Change Team has been externally evaluated and shown to both prevent children going into care and been able to support some children leave care and return home successfully, this has resulted in the team being made permanent. The Family Group Conference Service has now been established to enable families to meet together, to find solutions to problems that they and their children are facing within a professionally supportive framework. The Special Guardianship Order Support Team (SGO) are also now in place and fully functional with a very clear core offer to support SGO arrangements with already good positive feedback received from families, partners and court. My Support Team (MyST) is also fully embedded and beginning to reduce the number of children in residential placements, they are also delivering practice consultations and foster carer clinics which has received very positive feedback from practitioners.

The joint procurement for Support at Home Services has continued to progress well with the procurement exercise now complete and contracts awarded with 10 providers now able to work within Blaenau Gwent giving the authority more resilience. All existing providers have been successful with the addition of 5 new providers with the new framework commencing from October 2019. A co-produced commissioning strategy, entitled 'Our Vision and Intentions for Adults Advocacy, 2019-24', has now been completed and will be launched in October 2019 and the new advocacy helpline, Gwent Access to Advocacy (GATA), was also launched and rolled out to Social Workers and Information, Advice and Assistance teams in Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire. This is a great step forward in deliver advocacy to adults across Blaenau Gwent.

The Transformation Programme to support the continued development of a 'seamless system' of care, support and wellbeing in Gwent, in response to the Welsh Government's new long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales' has seen progress. The SPACE Well-being (Single Point of Access for Children's Emotional Well-being and Mental Health) Programme hosted by Families First have shown early indications that the mental health needs of children and young people are being assessed early with the right agency taking the lead on providing the most appropriate interventions.

Compassionate Communities is also part of the Transformation Programme that aims to improve the well-being of people across Gwent. Work includes the development of IAA outreach across the Compassionate Communities within 11 GP practices and also at community and acute hospital sites, where initial positive outcomes have been reported. Compassionate Communities also includes Community Connectors actively participating in Multi-Disciplinary Team discussions and hospital discharge follow up phone calls.

The new model in the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) Team has embedded well across the operational teams within both adults and children's with clearly scoped out roles and responsibilities. The Police now have a presence within the Children's IAA team which further strengthens their response time for safeguarding referrals. A Performance Review Annual Letter has been received from the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) which identified how service users, attending Cwm Coch, described Social Workers as very supportive and accessible. They also identified how the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service with partners had embraced the 'what matters' conversations, evidencing the MIND workers interface with the Police, Women's Aid and Cwm Coch hospital, as well as the emotional support via telephone, signposting to relevant services and cascading information within the team they provide.

Extensive work has been on-going to plan for the launch of the new Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) during Safeguarding week 11th to 14th November 2019. The Project Board responsible for the new procedures are in the process of implementing a communications strategy comprising of 3 stages: pre-launch; launch; and post launch training. Two launch events are due to take place during Safeguarding Week. A new pilot to tackle food poverty during school holidays, 'Holiday Hunger' was rolled out during the summer holidays 2019 and was delivered via the children and youth play schemes. The scheme is currently being evaluated.

Finally, Social Services budgets have been under pressure in recent years particularly as a result of the sustained increase in the number of Children Looked After, this pressure continued to impact on the budget situation within Children's Services over spending by £961K in 2018/19. There has been an additional £750K added to the Children's Services base budget to cover this pressure and considerable work has commenced with the budget currently standing at £150K under spend at the end of September 2019.

Key Statistics from Quarter 2

Page 27



54.9%

Proportion of Children's Services cases supported by preventative services

225

Number of Looked After Children



Rate of older people in residential & nursing home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over

15.26



0.33

The rate of delayed transfers of care per 1,000 population aged 75 and over



Local Political Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The structure of the Social Services Directorate provides clear levels of management and accountability; this is shown on page 5. As a whole the Council has a clear governance and accountability framework in place which all directorates are signed up to. This framework is reflected on page 6 and shows how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create a 'golden thread'.

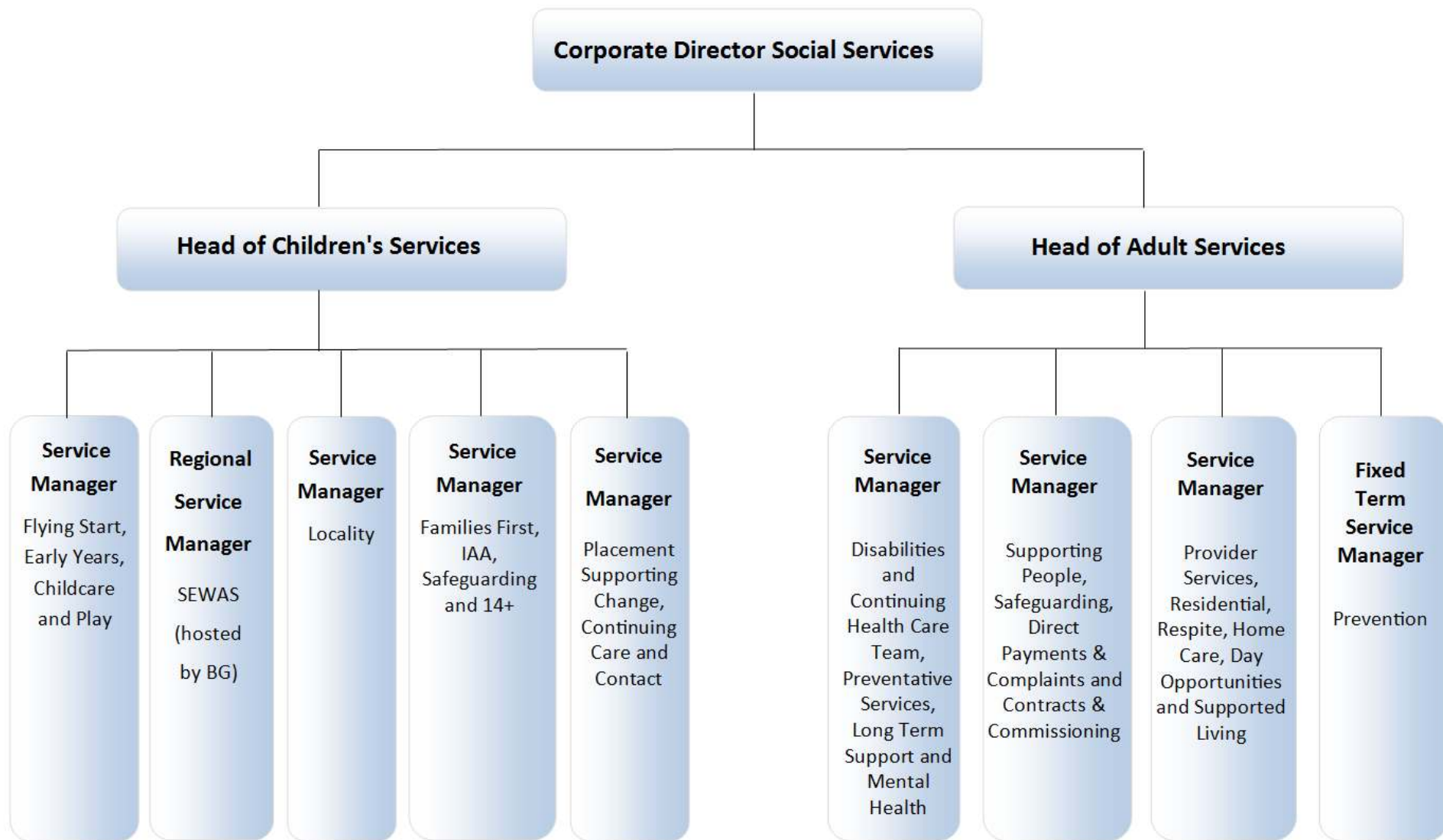
Making improvements and maintaining standards in the current difficult financial times remains a challenge, therefore it is more important than ever to focus the Council's priorities and resources on the areas that matter most to the community. The priorities for the Social Services Directorate are found on page 7 and monitoring of these is included throughout the document.

The Social Services Directorate is subject to audit, inspection and review by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). On a quarterly basis the Director of Social Services and/or Heads of Adult and Children's Services meet with CIW to discuss achievements, performance and key challenges. The Directorate has one Executive Member who has portfolio responsibility for Social Services as a whole. The Directorate is scrutinised by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee. Regular liaison meetings are held with the Directorate, the Executive Member and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

Blaenau Gwent continues to work with a wide range of partners where partnership opportunities provide better outcomes for local residents than the Council could achieve if working on its own. We work in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including staff, residents and businesses. Some Social Services collaboration includes:

- Joint Partnership and Workforce Development Service with Caerphilly;
- South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS);
- South East Wales Emergency Duty Team;
- South East Wales Adult Placement Scheme;
- Gwent Frailty Programme Integrated Health and Social Care Teams;
- South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board (SEWSCB);
- Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board (GWASB);
- Gwent Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Partnership Team;
- South East Wales Improvement Collaboration -4C's (SEWIC);
- Gwent Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Team;
- Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership;
- Gwent Regional Collaborative (RCC) - Supporting People;
- Gwent wide agreement with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to provide children's advocacy services; and
- Greater Gwent Workforce Development Board.

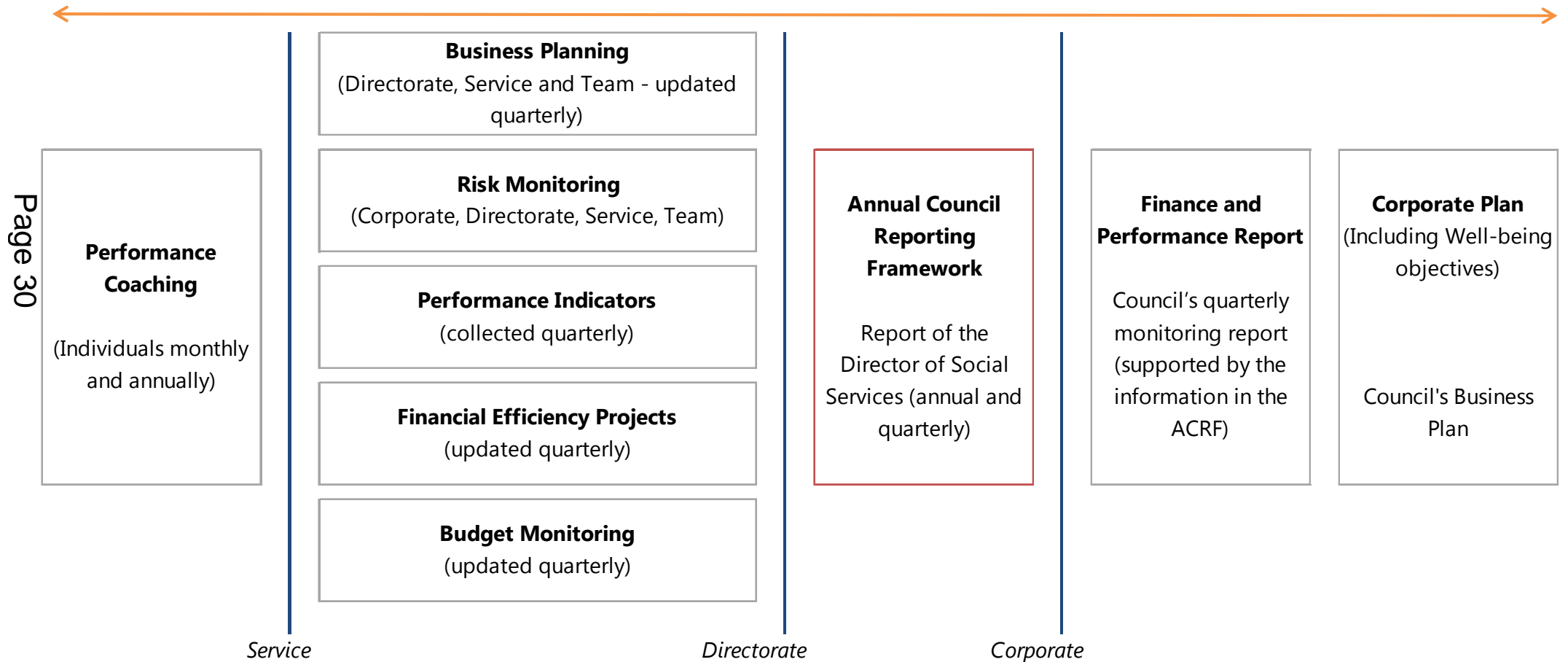
Social Services Directorate Structure



Governance and Performance Framework

The Council has in place a Performance Management Improvement Framework that sets out requirements for performance monitoring and improvement across all services and teams. This framework is complied with by Social Services who also have additional monitoring requirements as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Golden Thread - How information is reported through the organisation



Departmental Priorities 2019/20 – What we are trying to achieve

Departmental Priorities 2018/22 (To be reviewed annually)

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own well-being.
- To work with people to make sure they have a say in achieving what matters to them.
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater.
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support.
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.
- To put effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm.
- To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of poverty.
- To ensure effective forward financial planning arrangements are in place to support the Council's financial resilience.
- Ensure long-term sustainability is at the forefront of our thinking and decision-making, enabling us to work better with people, communities and each other, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

Children's Services Priorities 2018/22 (To be reviewed annually)

Page 31

- Enhance screening and IAA provision (Front door) – Children.
- Support and encourage a cultural change across Children's Services by ensuring that community members have a say in what matters to them.
- Implementation of the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy.
- Implement the Safe reduction of looked after children Strategy 2017-2020.
- Improve outcomes for Looked after Children.
- To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements.
- All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded.
- Manage the Children's Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget.
- Children's Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles.
- Ensure that all children in Blaenau Gwent have the best start in life (Early years)

Adult Services Priorities 2018/22 (To be reviewed annually)

- Enhance screening and IAA Adult Services support at our front door - in line with recommendations within the SSWB (Wales) Act 2014.
- Support and encourage a cultural change across Adult Services by ensuring that citizens have a say in what matters to them.
- Ensure that preventative support is available to citizens - promoting personal independence and reducing dependencies.
- Ensure that we provide / commission modern, high quality care and support provision that meet both current and future well-being needs of our citizens.
- To develop alternative models of support that promotes independence and supports well-being outcomes.
- Ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded.
- Develop and maximise opportunities for partnership working across Welsh Government Flexibilities Grants and Welfare Reform related programmes.
- Manage the Adult Services core budget and grant programmes to ensure that expenditure comes within budget.
- Adult Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles.
- Support our local environment; the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and our duty as a council and as an Adult Services Department

Quality Standards 2019/20

Social Services work to undertake actions in order to help people to achieve well-being. The Quality Standards below describe the activities of Social Services that contribute to the achievement of well-being. These activities must be undertaken in order to discharge duties under the Act and secure well-being for people who need care and support and carers who need support.

Quality Standard 1 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.

Self-Assessment –

The new model in the Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) Team has embedded well across the operational teams, with clearly scoped out roles and responsibilities. The Police now have a presence within the IAA which further strengthens their response time for safeguarding referrals to be dealt with within the timescales required under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. Negotiations are ongoing where it is hoped an education representative will also be co-located into the IAA Team in order to ensure that the requirements under the safeguarding procedures are realised.

The National Youth Advocacy Service is now in a position to offer independent visitors as part of their advocacy service and are in attendance at Children Looked After reviews, Child Protection Conferences and Secure Review Meetings.

Over the course of Carers week, awareness raising events and activities took place in venues across the borough along with an information and advice session for Carers of people with learning disabilities. These were all delivered and supported by the Carers Lead Officer, GP Engagement Officers and the Voluntary Sector such as Carers Trust Service / Age Cymru.

A co-produced commissioning strategy, titled 'Our Vision and Intentions for Adults Advocacy, 2019-24', has now been completed and will be launched in October 2019 and the new advocacy helpline, Gwent Access to Advocacy (GATA), was also launched and rolled out to Social Workers and Information, Advice and Assistance teams in Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire.

Compassionate Communities is a Welsh Government transformation funded programme that aims to improve the well-being of people across Gwent. Work includes the development of IAA outreach across the Compassionate Communities within 11 GP practices and also at community and acute hospital sites, where initial positive outcomes have been reported. Compassionate Communities also includes Community Connectors actively participating in Multi-Disciplinary Team discussions and hospital discharge follow up phone calls. Bids have been submitted to Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to extend service provision over the winter months to support winter discharges and pressures around potential Delayed Transfers of Care.

Quality Standard 2 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support and relevant partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Self-Assessment –

The SPACE Well-being (Single Point of Access for Children's Emotional Well-being and Mental Health) Programme is hosted by Families First and early indications show that the mental health needs of children and young people are being assessed early with the right agency taking the lead on providing the most appropriate interventions. At the end of quarter 2, 313 referrals had been received into the SPACE Well-being panel since the service started in April 2019.

A new service is available to young people who are struggling with their mental health and emotional well-being. This has been advertised on the Blaenau Gwent website to provide an understanding of the services available to young people across Gwent. The website features a wealth of information suitable for young people themselves, parents and carers, and professionals working with children and young people.

When the Mental Capacity Act 2019 is implemented it will provide 'Liberty Protection Safeguards' (LPS) - a new system to replace the current Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS). It is expected to be implemented in spring 2020 and guidance regarding this has been circulated to staff. A task and finish group has been set up to look at what needs to be done Gwent wide in order to prepare for the introduction of The Liberty Protection Safeguards Policy. Multi-agency work is necessary to ensure all staff in all settings have the appropriate training and information around Liberty Protection Safeguards as this will impact on all agencies.

A newly recruited Adult Mental Health Practitioner is currently being shadowed and the mental health Shared Lives Project has gone live offering adults in need of care and support the opportunity to be supported in a friendly, homely environment within the local community.

A Performance Review Annual Letter has been received from the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) which identified how service users, attending Cwm Coch, described Social Workers as very supportive and accessible. They also identified how the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service with partners had embraced the 'what matters' conversations, evidencing the MIND workers interface with the Police, Women's Aid and Cwm Coch hospital, as well as the emotional support via telephone, signposting to relevant services and cascading information within the team they provide.

Quality Standard 3 - Local Authorities must take appropriate steps to protect and safeguard people who need care and support and carers who need support from abuse and neglect or any other kinds of harm.

Self-Assessment –

Work continues to ensure that DBS Compliance for Children's Services is in place and extensive work has started to plan for the launch of the new Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) during Safeguarding week 11th to 14th November 2019. The Project Board responsible for the new procedures are in the process of implementing a communications strategy comprising of 3 stages: pre-launch; launch; and post launch training. Two launch events are due to take place during Safeguarding Week and the Safeguarding Procedures Training Group have also produced a FAQ sheet identifying key changes for practitioners during launch week. Other support materials include a video and user friendly marketing leaflets.

Barnardo's "Open closed door" program continues to provide services to 20 families in Blaenau Gwent, including young people and children who are exposed to domestic violence. The sexual exploitation risk assessment framework (SERAF) document to assess Child Sexual Exploitation is under review and its likely replacement is currently being piloted by Newport City Council.

A participation event has been held with the Local Authorities to explore the view of the older Children Looked After (CLA) population in the use of language by the department. This follows feedback on an event held in England where CLA highlighted derogatory terms used in CLA case recordings/documents etc. The outcome of the event is imminent and findings will be reported and changes made accordingly.

SEWAS have a steady flow of enquires but still not enough adopters to meet the demands for the number of children being referred to the service, particularly those children with complex needs. The rolling recruitment strategy to maximise the number of adopters available continues. This year, in addition to attendance at all major events, SEWAS were present at the Pride of Gwent awards and have repeated advertisements on Congress theatre tickets, radio and social media activity. There are now additional priorities to aid recruitment i.e. a standalone website, embedding the new adoption register and implementing the new stage 1 and 2 process for assessment. These should improve recruitment and the timeliness of assessments. SEWAS continue to work in collaboration with voluntary adoption agencies to avoid delay for children.

Regular risk management meetings are held as part of any safeguarding or care and support planning interventions. These meetings are multi-agency and are very effective in preventing young people's needs escalating. This model is underpinned by the principles as outlined in the safe reduction of CLA strategy and in applying the strengths based model of practice.

Quality Standard 4 - Local Authorities must work with people who need care and support and carers who need support to learn, develop and participate in society.

Self-Assessment –

The Childcare Offer is now fully rolled out and exploration into why some parents are not accessing the offer is likely to take place shortly.

A new pilot to tackle food poverty during school holidays, 'Holiday Hunger' was rolled out during the summer holidays 2019 and was delivered via the children and youth play schemes. Questionnaires are currently being collated and evaluated in order to feedback to the Welsh Government as well as the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) who are piloting a model of intervention for adopted children in schools, the work is still in its infancy but going well.

The Safeguarding /Children Looked After (CLA) Education Team are developing a framework for CLA child friendly schools, which will include a good practice guide and self-evaluation tool for schools. The task and finish group comprising of representatives from Social Services, Education and schools has met with a focus on questions for consultation with young people and training to raise awareness of CLA for whole school staffing groups.

Main focus of activity has been the supporting of the ABUHB Compassionate Communities work stream. To date this has been positive and work is ongoing to develop a sustainable social care model within the GP surgeries. This is in addition to the usual Community Connectors presence at the GP waiting areas working to re-connect people back into their communities. The Community Connectors also work with many groups and organisations within communities to help people find activities and groups that can benefit their own well-being. The team manager IAA and lead connector are also participating in the overarching project board on the Neighbourhood Care Network foot print.

Quality Standard 5 - Local Authorities must support local people who need care and support and carers who need support to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.

Self-Assessment –

Welsh Government investment monies are being used to improve the current service provision within the South East Wales Adoption Services (SEWAS). There is now increased capacity in the service to deliver more direct work, birth parent support, sibling contact and improving adoption support plans. A number of additional posts have been developed including a dedicated social work post to improve 'life journey' work, a TESSA (therapeutic educational support services in adoption) psychology post to provide peer support for adopters and capacity has also been increased to implement a young person's service to ensure the voice of children can be heard.

The Supporting Change Team has continued working with families in order to prevent children coming into Local Authority care, support rehabilitation to birth families or prevent foster placements breakdown. The Family Group Conference Service is now active and enables families to meet together, to find solutions to problems that they and their children are facing, within a professionally supportive framework.

The Special Guardianship Order Support Team (SGO) is now in place and fully functional with a very clear core offer and strategy to approach SGO arrangements within Blaenau Gwent. The team and their services have already received positive feedback from families, partners and court and are in the process of delivering further awareness sessions for Blaenau Gwent staff.

My Support Team (MyST) is also fully embedded and, alongside direct work for a limited number of cases, MyST has also started delivering practice consultations and foster carer clinics with very positive feedback from practitioners. Respite with Local Authority foster carers is increasingly used as a strategy to prevent children becoming looked after with an increase of referrals from the previous quarter.

Memory drives have been purchased in order for children in care aged 10-18 to have access to equipment to store life story information (photos, films, other memories) with support from their carers. These have been provided to either foster carers or social workers for children in Independent Fostering Agencies, or residential placements, with a clear message regarding their use and purpose.

Quality Standard 6 - Local Authorities must work with and support people who need care and support and carers who need to support to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Self-Assessment –

A Performance Review annual letter from the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) was published which highlighted the joint working with Monmouthshire on the MyST team as well as the commitment to return children from residential care to live closer to home.

Discussions are currently ongoing within the Housing Solutions Team to determine if an out of hour's service is required for the Housing First Scheme.

Independent Reviewing Officer's continue to face challenges when reviewing a child's Care Plan in relation to movements from Residential Placements to Foster Care. These challenges include a lack of suitable placements, a lack of robust planning in relation to introductions to new Foster Carers, geographical distances between residential placement and foster carers and children who have been in a residential placement for a long period of time (as some find it difficult to adapt to moving to foster care and establishing 'normal' family relationships as the child does not always want to leave the residential placement).

The joint procurement for Support at Home Services has continued to progress well with a further event for Providers taking place in Caerphilly's Council Chamber to support those considering or wishing to submit a bid. The procurement exercise i.e. evaluations; selections; presentations and interviews has now been concluded and contract award letters have been issued to 10 providers for Blaenau Gwent. All existing providers have been successful with the addition of 5 new providers. Plans are now in place to meet with all providers and social workers ready to commence the new framework from October 2019.

The Housing Support Grant is an important early intervention grant programme which prevents people from becoming homeless, stabilises their housing situation, or helps potentially homeless people to find and keep accommodation. The new Housing Support Grant Guidance which sets out the governance framework for local authorities to operate and administer the grant is out for consultation until 29th November 2019.

Children's Services Priorities

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Enhance screening and IAA provision (Front door) – Children.	As the IAA team are the front door for children's services it is crucial it is appropriately staffed to meet service demand. The view of the Service Manager overseeing the IAA Team is that the current team is under resourced. The Head of Service has asked for a report on workload activity to evidence the work of the team which will assist further discussion in relation the resources required to ensure timely decision making within the team.	Green	Amber		
Support and encourage a cultural change across Children's Services by ensuring that community members have a say in what matters to them.	<p>An internal case audit was devised in September 2019 with the theme, 'The Voice of the Child'. A total of 18 cases were randomly chosen and each case audit was completed by a Team Manager and/or Senior Practitioner, and IRO. The findings will be reported in October 2019.</p> <p>The Safeguarding /CLA education team are developing a framework for CLA child friendly schools, which will include a good practice guide and self-evaluation tool for schools. A task and finish group has been established whereby it was agreed that the child's voice should help inform these documents and it was agreed for NYAS to support this work.</p> <p>Progress has been made in terms of consultation with foster carers and a questionnaire is under development and due to be sent out prior to Christmas. Information Sharing Groups for foster carers continue to include consultation on a variety of topics giving the carers an opportunity to influence policies and procedures and further strategic work in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>Monthly meetings continue with mentors for outcome focused work and there is evidence of change in practice. Each team is able to bring examples of use in practice of specific tools that enable and empower families to be included more in the decision making process and intervention from SSD. Children's senior management team recognise the need to further embed this outcomes approach and are planning a workshop with Team Managers to create a plan to achieve this</p>	Green	Green		

Children's Services Priorities

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Implementation of the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy	<p>The prevention and early intervention strategy is in the first 6 months of its 3 year delivery plan. There is still a significant amount of work to be done to achieve the objectives of this strategy. Owing to developments with the flexibilities grant and Children and Communities Grant (CCG) from Welsh Government, there are significant changes to be made which need to be captured as part of this strategy.</p> <p>The actions under the strategy will be reviewed in Quarter 3 to include the work of the CCG.</p>	Amber	Amber		
Implement the Safe Reduction of Looked After Children Strategy 2017-2020.	<p>Significant progress continues to be made under the CLA reduction strategy. The strategy is being independently evaluated by Worcester University. We expect the evaluation report to be ready early in Quarter 4 which will support the development of the new CLA reduction strategy which will come into being in the summer of 2020.</p>	Green	Green		
Improve outcomes for Looked after Children.	<p>The 2019/20 Corporate parenting action plan continues to be implemented. The corporate parenting board met in Quarter 2 and focussed on 2 specific areas. These included the work the MyST Team were doing in Blaenau Gwent and the work being done under the National Foster Framework not only in Blaenau Gwent but regionally and nationally.</p> <p>A full progress on MyST is due to be presented to scrutiny committee in Quarter 4.</p>	Green	Green		
To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements.	<p>Monthly meetings continue with mentors for outcome focused work and there is evidence of change in practice. This enables families to be empowered so that they are included more in the decision making process and intervention from Social Services.</p> <p>Information Sharing Groups for foster carers continue to include consultation on a variety of topics giving the carers an opportunity to influence policies and procedures and further strategic work in Blaenau Gwent. Evaluation of SCT was completed and an Action Plan was developed to implement the recommendations of this report. Progress has been made already with an anticipated completion by Christmas.</p>	Green	Green		

Children's Services Priorities

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded.	<p>The all Wales Child Protection Procedures has been under review for some years. The new procedures are now complete and will be launched during early November 2019. A dissemination plan will be drafted by the safeguarding manager to ensure the procedures are understood and adhered too. The SERAF document to assess CSE is also under review and its likely replacement is currently being piloted by Newport City Council.</p> <p>An update on the action plan developed as a result of the CIW 2018 inspection was presented to scrutiny committee in quarter 2. This demonstrated good progress on the 9 recommendations made. 4 of the recommendations have been fully completed. Good progress and been made on the remaining 5 with a plan that full completion is achieved by the beginning of quarter 4.</p>	Green	Green		
Manage the Children's Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget.	Due to the work of the MyST Team the numbers of children in residential care have decreased to 14 as at 30.9.19, however sadly we do have 1 child in secure accommodation	Green	Green		

Children's Services Priorities

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Children's Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles.	<p>The successful implementation of the Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy will lead to more positive outcomes for children on a number of levels. It will prevent children coming into care in the first place due to the work under the strategy. For those children who do come into care they will have more local placement choices enabling them to maintain attendance at their local school and contact with family and friends.</p> <p>Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation) There is extensive involvement with the children and families we work with. Their views are gathered through a number of avenues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Youth Advocacy Service; • Formally seeking their views following interventions from the supporting change team; • Formally seeking their views at each review of their plan. <p>Thinking for the Long term (forward planning) The Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy is 2 years into its 3-year lifetime. An independent evaluation is underway which will shape an amended strategy by June 2020.</p> <p>Preventative focus A large part of the Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy has a preventative focus.</p> <p>Collaboration / partnership working / Integration A number of the actions under the Safe Reduction of CLA Strategy rely on partnership working. Senior managers and staff have good working relationships with our partners which will support us in achieving the actions.</p>	Green	Green		
Ensure that all children in Blaenau Gwent have the best start in life (Early Years)	This is a new priority and more work is required.	Amber	Amber		

Children's Services Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator Description	Outturn 2018/19	Performance 2019/20				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Trend
Number of children on Child Protection Register	56	70	61	-	-	↑
Rate of Children on the Child Protection Register per 10,000 population	41	52	45	-	-	↑
The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority Child Protection Registers (CPR)	1.87%	3.39%	4.12%	-	-	↓
The average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year	277	278	284	-	-	↓
Number of children looked after	222	220	225	-	-	↓
Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 population	164	162	166	-	-	↓
The percentage of looked after children who have had three or more placements during the year	8.11%	7.3%	9.8%	-	-	↓
Proportion of children's services cases supported by preventative services	57%	61%	54.9%	-	-	↓
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support – children	43%	24.5%	44.6%	-	-	↓
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (children)	12.8%	12.8%	13.7%	-	-	↑

Children's Services Case Studies

Safeguarding

Personal History

Child A is a child looked after, residing with foster carers. Child A has experienced significant instability in their foster placement but has been with their current carer for approximately two years.

Situation and Current Needs

Child A moved school in line with their long term care plan, enabling them to attend a school closer to their foster placement. Soon after transition to their new school, Child A started experiencing some difficulties and staff found it challenging to respond to some presenting behaviours. Child A quickly experienced fixed term exclusions and this placed significant pressure on the foster placement. A reduced timetable was implemented and this was supplemented by respite care from Children's Services and enhanced CLA mentoring session. This contributed to the foster placement being maintained during this period.

Support Received

At an early stage of the transition, it was agreed that there should be a statutory assessment of educational need. Just prior to receipt of the statement of educational need, Child A received a further exclusion and the school was clear it was unable to meet the required need.

The statement outlined that Child A should receive part-time additional support in school.

CLA education team advocated for a greater level of support than was initially proposed. This was agreed and whilst awaiting a suitable school placement, the child received an alternative package of education.

Outcome Achieved

Child A has now transitioned to an alternative mainstream secondary school, with part-time support and a statement of special educational needs. Careful transition planning has taken place and Child A has settled well, is attending school regularly and is on a full timetable with no further exclusions.

Future Plans

To remain in current foster placement and continue to attend a mainstream school setting.

Adult Services Priorities

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Enhance screening and IAA Adult Services support at our front door - in line with recommendations within the SSWB (Wales) Act 2014.	<p>Core business continues within our IAA teams and further enhancement has included the development of IAA outreach at our Community and Acute hospital sites. The wider strategic priority developments, sponsored by the Integrated Partnership Board during 2019/20 include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Development of an integrated Health and Social Care IAA team; 2) Compassionate Communities - commenced work stream as part of the integrated approaches to IAA within GP surgeries, including the increasing of social care presence; and 3) Integrated Well-being Networks (IWN) - We are currently strategically mapping our community resources via the transformation Integrated Well-being Networks. <p>The progress of our IAA work stream has been shared with Care Inspectorate Wales as part of our 6 monthly reviews.</p>	Green	Green		
Support and encourage a cultural change across Adult Services by ensuring that citizens have a say in what matters to them	<p>The key strategic actions for this priority for 2019/ 20 confirmed by Adults Departmental Team and the Integrated Partnership Board are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Confirmation and embedding of an enhanced advocacy programme (Gwent region); 2) Final review of hospital discharge service, including the potential expansion of Home First and regional approach to discharge; and 3) Continuation of cultural changes through initiatives across Adult Services. These include a new quality assurance process and a new senior practitioner post in IAA to influence care management processes and changes across provider teams in line with RISCA regulations and outcomes of recent CIW inspections. <p>The Gwent Advocacy project has gone live in Blaenau Gwent during quarter 2 and we are progressing a CIW engagement event for quarter 3 where citizens will be provided with an opportunity to discuss how, when and where interaction with Social Care should be. We continue to work with colleagues across Health, Social Care and the Third Sector to promote the importance of personal well-being and independence.</p>	Green	Green		

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Ensure that preventative support is available to citizens - promoting personal independence and reducing dependencies.	<p>The key strategic actions for this priority for 2019/ 20 confirmed by Adults Departmental Team and the Integrated Partnership Board include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the finalising of the Prevention Strategy - due December 19; and 2. the reconfiguration of the IAA / prevention teams. <p>This work commenced during quarters 1 and 2 with a review of the current IAA staffing structure, the appointment of additional support worker staff and links to the Compassionate Communities work streams.</p>	Green	Green		
Ensure that we provide / commission modern, high quality care and support provision that meet both current and future well-being needs of our citizens.	<p>The key strategic actions for this priority for 2019/ 20 confirmed by Adults Departmental Team and the Integrated Partnership Board include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the commissioning of a new domiciliary care service in conjunction with Caerphilly County Borough Council; and 2) Gwent partnership working to develop a Gwent wide approach to commissioning of care home placements - section 33 agreement/ pooled budget. <p>New domiciliary care tender has been completed and will commence 1st October 2019. The department has submitted a number of new Integrated Care Fund bids for consideration by the Regional Partnership Board panels which will enable us to 'test' new initiatives and ways of working during 2019/20 and 2020/21.</p> <p>Commissioning report (summary) for both Social Care and Supporting People has been submitted to SMT and will be tabled within the Social Services Scrutiny Committee information pack in October 2019.</p>	Green	Green		

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
To develop alternative models of support that promotes independence and supports well-being outcomes.	<p>The key strategic actions for this priority for 2019/ 20 confirmed by Adults Departmental Team and the Integrated Partnership Board are mainly via the use of testing / experiments of alternative service models of provision via Gwent transformation projects, plus the development of new Blaenau Gwent posts. Adult Services staff are supporting the Bridging the Gap work steam of prevention and early intervention.</p> <p>A number of new initiatives have been implemented which have been developed using alternative models of support. This includes the recruitment to Integrated Care Fund projects 2019/20, including a new post to review alternative day activities across the Gwent region, a post to develop the Blaenau Gwent catering enterprise and a social media lead for Health and Social Care. A social work senior practitioner has commenced in the new training post to embed the 'what matters' work across Prevention Services and we have successfully secured additional capital to enhance our assistive technology offers.</p> <p>We are also developing a Dementia Reablement service which includes the opportunity to support citizens from the point of early diagnosis including support for people with complex dementia's who are residing in Care Homes. We continue to work with Corporate colleagues to remodel our Day Activities / Community Options Service including working with Third Sector partners to develop and enhance our horticulture service.</p>	Green	Green		
Ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded.	<p>The key strategic actions for this priority for 2019/ 20 confirmed by Adults Departmental Team and the Integrated Partnership Board are to ensure that the new All Wales procedures are successfully introduced across Adult Safeguarding.</p> <p>Adults Safeguarding Performance Information for the period from the 1st April 2018 to March 2019 has been submitted to the Joint Education and Learning and Social Services (Safeguarding) Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>We are continuing to support the development of the new Safeguarding Guidance which is due to be published during quarter 3. A safeguarding screening project has been developed in conjunction with IAA.</p>	Green	Green		

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Develop and maximise opportunities for partnership working across Welsh Government Flexibilities Grants and Welfare Reform related programmes	<p>The key strategic actions for this priority for 2019/ 20 confirmed by Adults Departmental Team and the Integrated Partnership Board include the ongoing monitoring and review of those grants within the Housing Support Grant (HSG).</p> <p>During the period all grants have been and will continue to be maximised and outcomes monitored in line with the Welsh Government guidance. All returns have been submitted to Welsh Government in line with the grant terms and conditions.</p>	Green	Green		
Manage the Adults Service core budget and grant programmes to ensure that expenditure comes within budget	<p>Integrated Care Fund capital bid and transformation / pacesetter funding for the next phase of the Information, Advice and Assistance and preventative services have been submitted for 2020/21.</p> <p>All budget savings for 2019/20 have been achieved. Budget planning and monitoring meetings have been held for Provider and Care Management teams due to estimated budget pressures for 2019/20 and reduced underspend, and staff are engaged with the Bridging the Gap work streams.</p> <p>Financial impact of Brexit is being scoped.</p>	Green	Green		

Priority Title	Self-Assessment	BRAG			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Adult Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles	<p>Long Term – The CIW inspection of regulated services provides a baseline of where the service areas are currently and where it needs to improve in the future. This is supplemented by internal inspections and longer term aims and objectives identified through robust business planning and regular review.</p> <p>Prevention – Adult Services continues to develop a number of preventative services to ensure that it is fit for future purpose. The preventative focus for regulated provider services is to support people to be as independent as possible for as long as possible, with timely interventions alongside internal and external professionals when required.</p> <p>Integration - integration includes the development of future services in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities, with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and third sector partners. In addition, each provider service area is working together wherever possible sharing resources, expertise, knowledge and learning.</p> <p>Collaboration – collaboration is taking place with the third sector to commission additional housing related support provision and preventative support in the long term teams via SLA's. We are collaborating with our Local Authority and ABUHB partners to develop commissioning arrangements on a Gwent wide footprint to ensure that the Care Home market is sustainable and consistent in its quality and delivery to residents across Gwent. We have developed a (5 LA's) hospital discharge service (Home First) to be funded by the health board and are looking to further expand this other parts of the Health and Social care system.</p> <p>Involvement – We aim to engage with those receiving a service through a range of methods including,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with those receiving a service and visitors. • Discussions with management and staff. • Discussions with visiting professionals. • Follow up telephone conversations where necessary. • Visits to service users in their own homes where applicable. • Up to date Inspection reports are available on line to the general public and prospective users of regulated services. 	Green	Green		

Adult Services Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator Description	Outturn 2018/19	Performance 2019/20				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Trend
Rate of delayed transfer for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 and over	1.16	0.33	0.33	-	-	↔
Rate of older people in residential & nursing home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over	14.11 (196)	15.34 (213)	15.26 (212)	-	-	↑
The number of adults (aged 18+) receiving a service in the community who receive a direct payment	127	128	122	-	-	↓
Percentage of referrals signposted to preventative services (adults)	7.1%	13%	16.2%	-	-	↑
Proportion of adult services cases supported by preventative services (New)	29.6%	32.2%	33.9%	-	-	↑
Percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales	93.3%	100%	97.9%	-	-	↓
Percentage of proportionate assessments that led to a more comprehensive assessment for care and support - adults	64.3%	30.3%	9.5%	-	-	↑

Adult Services Case Studies

Information, Advice and Assistance Team

Personal History

MP is a 68 year old gentleman with some physical ailments owing to a previous stroke. He had recently moved to the area, lives alone and has no family living locally.

MP wanted to get out and about more often but had lost his driving license due to poor vision and was embarrassed by the fact that he now had a catheter.

Situation and Current Needs

A neighbour referred MP to the IAA Team because he was lonely and needed some support to get to his medical appointments. The neighbour receives direct payments herself and felt that MP required a direct payment of approximately 9 hours per week.

Support Received

IAA support worker undertook a couple of home visits with MP – got to know him and what he wanted to achieve. The support worker talked through some options with MP but paid particular attention to who was in MP's social network and would be able to help.

With encouragement MP contacted a good friend who said he would be more than happy to support with these things and even offered to take MP to the local pub every now and again.

MP was really happy with this and said he would feel much more comfortable if he was accompanied by someone he knew and 'trusted with his life.' He was however, worried that the friend would not take any payment for this help – something that was very important to MP as he didn't want to take his friend for granted.

I said why don't you buy him a couple of pints every now and again just to say thank you

MP was also informed about the local stroke association group.

Outcome Achieved

The IAA worker contacted MP again after a couple of weeks – the friend was proving to be an excellent support and MP felt that he needed no further support from IAA at that time.

MP is attending the stroke group and regularly chats to the community connector who also attends.

Managing Our Business

Workforce

Workforce Development activities continue to ensure support for services to:

- embed the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; and
- implement the workforce related implications of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA).

To maximise collaborative opportunities the Workforce Development Service continues to play a leading role for the Greater Gwent Region. Blaenau Gwent and the joint Workforce Development Service is the host for the regionally awarded Social Care Wales Workforce Development Grant worth £2.016 million to Gwent. The application and financial management of the grant met all requirements and the 2019/20 bid was successful. The business style approach, driven by Blaenau Gwent, is commended by other regions.

Blaenau Gwent has influenced at both a regional and national level and through involvement in major steering and development groups have promoted its positive and forward thinking attitude to its workforce. Current projects include: providing editorial support for the formal assessment process for the new Health and Social Care Qualification Framework, leading a project involving Health to deliver a regional dementia learning framework for Gwent, showcasing the benefits of digital marketing to engage with customers and promote attendance at training events.

The Care Sector workforce continues to have free and open access to a comprehensive range of learning events and learning resources. The 2019/20 training needs analysis has directed particular emphasis on: continuing support for the domiciliary care workforce to register with Social Care Wales, supporting professionals development of outcome focused skills and practice, and preparing for changes to Safeguarding Procedures and Liberty Protection Safeguards

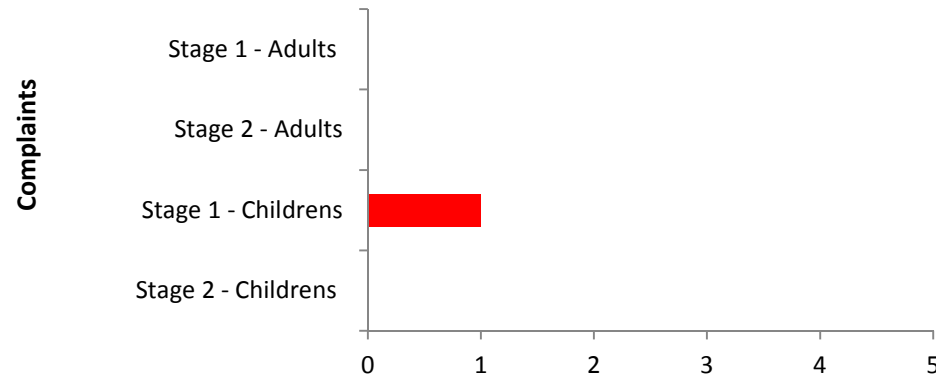
The Social Work Strategy continues to realise a return on its investment in the new Social Services Practitioner Award. A further cohort of employees are being sponsored to continue their studies and qualify as Social Workers.



Budget 2019/20 - Quarter 1 & 2 (April 2019 to September 2019)

Budget Area		Budget	Forecast	Variance	
		£	£	£	%
1	Commissioning & Social Work	3,226,040	3,198,232	27,808	0.86
2	Children Looked After	7,084,640	7,084,316	324	0
3	Family Support Services	191,240	186,602	4,638	2.43
4	Youth Justice	237,820	228,118	9,702	4.08
5	Other Children's and Family Services	2,183,800	2,131,458	52,342	2.40
6	Older People Aged 65 and Over	5,911,180	5,847,263	63,917	1.08
7	Adults under 65 with Physical Disabilities	41,800	41,650	150	0.36
8	Adults under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,449,760	3,400,723	49,037	1.42
9	Adults under 65 with Mental Health Needs	628,420	643,931	(15,511)	-2.47
10	Other Adult Services	357,430	360,596	(3,166)	-0.89
11	Community Care	15,662,660	15,677,604	(14,944)	-0.10
12	Support Service & Management Costs	921,990	921,348	642	0.07
13	Corporate Recharges	5,018,490	5,018,487	3	0
Grand Total		44,915,270	44,740,328	174,942	

Complaints and Compliments – Children’s and Adults Services



Children’s Services

In quarters 1 and 2 the total number of complaints received within children’s services was 1. The complaint was considered at stage 1 of the complaint process.

- Delay in social worker arranging a visit, lack of support and a lack of explanation, inclusion and advice

The complaint was broken down into a number of different elements out of which the majority were not upheld. Where elements of the complaint were upheld the following actions were taken to continue to learn from and improve practice: -

- Managers to remind staff of the importance of keeping families updated, visits to be undertaken promptly and to ensure adults playing a central role in children’s lives are spoken to as part of the assessment.

Additional to this, the department received 31 contacts from people who expressed they had matters they wanted to resolve quickly, and they wanted independent support to do so, however they did not want to make a ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ complaint at that time. In all cases a resolution was agreed without the need to escalate the matter further.

Adult Services

In quarters 1 and 2 the total number of complaints received within Adult Services was 0.

The department received 11 contacts from people who expressed that they had matters they wanted to resolve quickly, and they wanted independent support to do so, however they did not want to make a ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ complaint at that time. In all cases a resolution was agreed without the need to escalate the matter further.

Social Services Directorate Risk Register

Risk Description	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
<p>There is a risk that increasingly complex needs and demand for services provided by Social Services, in particular for Looked After Children, will put further significant pressure on the Council's budget.</p> <p>**** Corporate Risk *****</p>	<p>This remains a volatile area and it impossible to predict an ideal number of children looked after per head of population. The population of children looked after is affected by multiple variables outside the immediate control of the local authority and, in that respect, we must be both proactive and reactive. The Children's Services IAA is implementing the principle of Early Action Together; this places an officer from Gwent Police in our IAA service which, in turn, enables multi-agency screening of referrals. Having a police presence in the IAA service also enables us to undertake basic checks and swifter risk assessment of extended family when it is deemed too risky for children to remain in the care of their parents. ICF funding has been used to develop a 'Mediation Worker' post for those young people and their families experiencing significant relationship tensions. This is intended to prevent family breakdown being a reason for young becoming looked after. The Supporting Change Team continues to provide intensive support services for those children identified as being at risk of becoming Looked After and quarterly monitoring undertaken by the senior management team is demonstrating the efficacy of the team's work. The MyST (My Support Team) is now fully operational and working at capacity. The remit of the team is to work intensively with children who are in residential provision with the aim of helping them return to a foster placement or family environment if possible. The team also works with children, families and carers where there is a risk of having to move to residential provision with the aim of preventing that escalation. Our Placement Team continues its recruitment process and we continue to work collaboratively to commission high quality foster placements for our children looked after. The newly developed Special Guardianship Support Team already shows that foster placements are being converted to Special Guardianship placements thus reducing the numbers of children Looked After by the Local Authority.</p>	<p>Critical</p>

Risk Description	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
Failure to comply and meet with the new legislative changes under Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs) following Supreme Court Judgement will result in a failure to meet statutory obligations under the Mental Capacity Act. 2005	Work continues to ensure staff are fully supported and aware of the new legislation and changes required for practice. This has included staff from across Children and Adult Services. A presentation has been delivered to a number of Regional Partnership Board (RPB) planning groups including the Gwent Adult Strategic Planning Group (GASP) and the Gwent Safeguarding Board including all partners – Health / Local Authorities / Police/ Probation etc. Once the training packages and promotional materials are available a communications strategy will be developed to disseminate to all parties	Medium
Safeguarding - Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent	Review of new safeguarding screening arrangements have been undertaken and revised process at the IAA/ front door has been put in place. Work to update the Safeguarding Procedures has continued throughout Quarter 2 and it is intended that they will be launched in Q3 during National Safeguarding Week (in November 2019).	High
There is a risk that ineffective information governance arrangements (particularly in joint working arrangements) could lead to personal or sensitive information being inappropriately disclosed to third parties	There is no additional information to report from Adult Services, However, It is acknowledged that the information managed within Children's Social Services is of a highly sensitive nature and staff are aware of the need to ensure that this is securely managed. In quarter 2 there were 4 alleged data breaches. All were investigated. On investigation one was deemed not to be a data breach. The action taken to contain, investigate and manage the other three meant that referral to the ICO was not felt necessary. There are always lessons to be learned however and data security will be provided to 2 specific teams in Q3 and will then form the basis of regular training on our established timetable of Monday morning training.	High
If the Directorate does not have the appropriate capacity and capability in the workforce will result in an unacceptable impact on the ability to deliver services effectively.	There are no new issues to report however quality recruitment is challenging across professional posts including Social Workers / Therapists etc. This is particularly challenging where we are recruiting to fixed term grant funded posts.	Medium

Risk Description	Quarter 2 Update (July – September 2019)	Status
Failure to improve attendance rates within the Directorate will lead to an unacceptable impact on the ability to deliver services effectively.	We are currently reviewing the actions noted in the recent Organisational Development (OD) report. We are analysing the 'hot spot' areas and will develop specific action plans for these areas. This includes working with OD and Occupational Health to prioritise referrals and managing capability and disciplinary processes. In Children's Services absence monitoring is done in individual teams and we are monitoring compliance with the Absence Management Procedure.	Medium
The ICT provision supporting the department is not resilient and fails to provide assurance requirements in terms of operational functionality and data security.	<p>The risk which prompted this has been mitigated due to swift action by the department. View of the department is that generally this is a corporate risk and as such should be on the Corporate Risk Register</p> <p>DMcC raised this as a risk at CLT and it was agreed that PJ meet with ALC to develop a Commercials Directorate Risk Register where this risk would sit, the risk could then be evaluated as to whether it required escalation to the Corporate Risk Register.</p>	

Glossary

ABUHB – Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

ACRF – Annual Council Reporting Framework

BG – Blaenau Gwent

CCG – Children & Communities Grant

CIW – Care Inspectorate for Wales

CLA – Children looked After

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation

DoLS – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

GATA – Gwent Access to Advocacy

GP – General Practitioner

GWASB – Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board

HSG – Housing Support Grant

IAA – Information, Advice and Assistance

IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer

LA – Local Authority

LPS - Liberty Protection Safeguards

MYST – My Support Team

NYAS – National Youth Advocacy Service

Quarter 1 – April to June

Quarter 2 – July to September

Quarter 3 – October to December

Quarter 4 – January to March

RCC – Regional Collaborative Committee

RISCA - Regulation and Inspection Social Care Act

SERAF - sexual exploitation risk assessment framework

SEWAS – South East Wales Adoption Service

SEWIC – South East Wales Improvement Collaboration

SEWSCB – South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board

SGO - Special Guardianship Order

SLA – Service Level Agreement

SPACE - Single Point of Access for Children’s Emotional Well-being and Mental Health

SMT – Senior Management Team

TESSA - therapeutic educational support services in adoption

The ‘Act’ or SSWB Act – Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

Contact Details

If you require any further information or have any feedback you wish to share, please:

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Agenda Item 7

Executive Committee and Council only

Date signed off by the Monitoring Officer: N/A

Date signed off by the Section 151 Officer: N/A

Committee: **Social Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **28th November 2019**
Report Subject: **Forward Work Programme – 13th January 2020**
Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**
Report Submitted by: **Cllr Steve Thomas, Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
x	x	19.11.19			28.11.19			

1. **Purpose of the Report**
 - 1.1 To present to Members the Social Services Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme for the Meeting on 13th January 2020 for discussion and to update the Committee on any changes.
2. **Scope and Background**
 - 2.1 The Scrutiny Work Programmes are key aspects of the Council's planning and governance arrangements and support the requirements of the Constitution.
 - 2.2 The topics set out in the Forward Work Programmes link to the strategic work of the Council as identified by the Council's Corporate Plan, corporate documents and supporting business plans. Effective work programmes are essential to ensure that the work of scrutiny make a positive impact upon the Council's delivery of services.
 - 2.3 The Committee's Forward Work Programme was agreed in July 2019, recognising the fluidity of the document to enable the Committee to respond to urgent and emerging issues, and included timescales when reports will be considered by the Committee. The work programme is managed and implemented by the Scrutiny and Democratic Officer under the direction of the Chair and Committee.
 - 2.4 The forward work programme for the forthcoming meeting will be presented to Committee on a 6 weekly cycle in order that Members can consider the programme of work; request information is included within the reports, as appropriate and / or make amendments to the work programme.
3. **Options for Recommendation**
 - 3.1 **Option 1:** The Scrutiny Committee consider the Forward Work Programme for the meeting on 13th January 2020, and
 - Make any amendments to the topics scheduled for the meetings;

- Suggest any additional invitees that the committee requires to fully consider the reports; and
- Request any additional information to be included with regards to the topics to be discussed.

3.2 **Option 2:** The Scrutiny Committee agree the Forward Programme for the meeting on 13th January 2020, as presented.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- Appendix 1 – Forward Work Programme - Meeting on 13th January 2020

Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Forward Work Programm

Scrutiny Meeting Date: Monday 13th January 2020

Scrutiny Deadline to receive reports: Friday 20th December 2019

Report Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of Report	Method/ Expert Witness/Exec Member	Latest CLT Sign Off Date	Executive Meeting Date	Council Meeting Date
Assisted Transport – Charging Policy	Alyson Hoskins	Policy Development To provide Members with the numbers affected by the implementation of the policy and to make recommendations regarding the future charging for transport.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Preventative Model of Service to meet future social care demand	Alyson Hoskins	Policy Development Development of a Preventative Strategy for Adult Services.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Corporate Parenting Progress Report	Tanya Evans	Monitoring To demonstrate to Members how outcomes for Looked After Children have been improved by the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Action Plan.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	Info Item – 29.01.20	N/A
Regional Partnership Board - Quarterly	Damien McCann	Monitoring To provide Members with quarterly updates from the work of the Regional Partnership Board developed as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act, Part 9, integration and partnership.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	29.01.20	N/A
Departmental Staff Sickness Absence Quarterly Monitoring	Damien McCann	Monitoring To undertake a quarterly review of staff sickness absence.	Agenda Item	17.12.19	N/A	N/A

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