

Director Social Services

Annual Report

2022/23



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Introduction

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Social Services Annual Report 2022/2023. Over the past few years the Department has been developing this annual report to highlight the key areas of improvements and challenges that have been faced.

This report has been developed in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document. The Act aims to provide the most radical change to the way in which Social Services is provided since 1948. It focuses on improving the well-being of people who come to Social Services for support. It is person centred and focuses on prevention and reducing the need for care and support. It recognises that responsibility lies not only within Social Services Departments, but also within the wider Local Authority and with partners (particularly Health and the Third Sector).

The Act shares similar principles with a number of key national/regional strategies that are being implemented throughout the Council, in particular the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Director of Social Services has a statutory requirement to publish an annual report in relation to the delivery of its functions, to evaluate its performance and also include lessons learned. A key aspect of the report is showing how the six Quality Standards have been implemented in relation to well-being outcomes.

This report provides a strategic overview of the work undertaken throughout 2022/2023 and what plans are in place to move forward. Further supporting information can be found from page 30 of the report.

The report includes evidence of where Social Services have worked collaboratively with partners.

Experiences and learning from service users has been considered as part of the development of the report. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) findings, Audit Wales (AW) findings, case studies, complaints and compliments and quarterly reporting have all been considered as part of the development of this report and evidence from these has been used to inform future learning.

The annual report is used to demonstrate accountability to citizens and service users. As part of this process, the report will be presented to full Council for ratification before it is published on the Council's website and will then be sent to Welsh Ministers. The report will be available on line bilingually and will be shared with partner agencies in order to share good practice, learning and experiences.

Director's Summary of Performance

22/23 saw a great deal of change for the Council and the Social Services Directorate. The council has a new political administration which in turn has led to a change in the executive member for social services. Councillor Trollope is now our Executive Member bringing with him a sound knowledge of the Social Services agenda, having previously held this position, and having sat on the Social Services scrutiny committee for many years. We have seen a change in the way scrutiny committees have been designed. Social Services now report to the PEOPLE scrutiny committee to which our Education Directorate also report.

A new Corporate Plan has been developed to take us through to 2027. The plan has the following 4 priorities which the Social Services Directorate will be working to

- Maximise learning and skills for all to create a prosperous, thriving, resilient Blaenau Gwent
- Respond to the nature and climate crisis and enable connected communities.
- An ambitious and innovative council delivering quality services at the right time and in the right place
- Empowering and supporting communities to be safe, independent, and resilient

The change has also extended to the senior leadership of the Social Services Directorate, with myself Tanya Evans taking up the role of Interim Director and Alison Ramshaw stepping up as Interim Head of Children's services. These interim arrangements have remained in place throughout the whole of 22/23.

As a Directorate we have reviewed our priorities alongside the priorities for both children's and adult services. It is no surprise to see that both children's and adult services have very similar priorities in relation to safeguarding, workforce, the preventative agenda, plus the sustainability of services.

Budget pressures have been a significant factor during this year due to the increase in demand and complexity of need we have been dealing with. That said the outturn for the end of the financial year was better than expected, all be it still an overspend position. This directorate is heavily dependent on grants from Welsh Government to deliver its core services. If these grants stop in the coming years, it will have a negative impact on our ability to provide our statutory responsibilities.

The Directorate has a clear workforce strategy in place, which has had a positive impact on recruitment to hard to fill vacancies in provider services and our front-line children's social work teams. It has led to a reduction in sickness rates in provider services which had been a hot spot for some time. The workforce has been working as hard as ever this year to meet the needs and provide quality service to the people of Blaenau Gwent. We have much to be proud of in relation to what has been achieved in the last 12 months.

Some of the achievements include: -

- Cwrt Mytton our residential home for people with dementia has been able to open back up to visitors following the pandemic and have held numerous successful social events which have been shared on social media
- Successful staff recruitment to areas we have been struggling to recruit to for some time
- The adult services new IAA structure went live in April 22 and is no longer reliant on grant funding
- The Commissioning Team have continued to support the external sector by passporting the numerous grants received from Welsh Government to support them to continue to deliver services
- We have opened our new SMART flat and progressing the use of technology to support people in Blaenau Gwent to remain independent and living at home for as long as possible.
- Community Meals take up is increasing including our 'tea time trays'

- We have maintained a strong outcomes based approach to the way in which we deliver practice ensuring we hear about “What Matters” to the people we serve balancing their rights and responsibilities
- Augusta House respite provision has been extended to include Children
- The 14 plus Team won a social care accolade for building brighter futures for children and families.
- The child care and play sufficiency assessments have successfully been completed with 5-year action plan in place
- We have seen the launch of our own BG MyST which works intensively with children with complex needs to prevent them entering residential care and working with those in residential care to support their return to foster care or their families.
- The joint Youth Offending Services we have with Caerphilly had a positive inspection.
- Our Children Looked After numbers continue to remain stable.
- We have successfully placed all our children allocated seeking asylum Seeking under the National Transfer Scheme
- The opening of the Augusta House reablement PODS which will give people with learning difficulties the opportunity to develop their independence skills in a purpose-built supported environment.
- The purchase of electric vehicles for Community Meals and home care to support the climate crisis agenda.
- Implementation of the new operating model for the children locality teams to manage the workload and demand for services.
- Successfully used the Regional Integrated capital fund to purchase our first residential home for children looked after.
- Our Families First Young Carers group are finalists in this year’s Social Care Accolade awards



Tanya Evans
Interim Corporate Director
Social Services 2022/23



Cllr Haydn Trollope
Cabinet Member for People and
Social Services

How People are shaping our Services

Engagement

The Social Services Directorate is committed to providing high quality services to its citizens and uses various engagement methodologies in order to understand if the service is achieving the intended outcomes or if amendments to service delivery needs to be considered. The service ensures that the voice of people is used to inform and improve the service moving forward.

The staff ensure that people's voices are heard and listened to by having the 'what matters; conversation to establish the personal outcomes each individual wants to achieve and the support networks they may already have in place to rely on to meet those outcomes.

Throughout April 2022 to March 2023 a variety of engagement events have taken place and include the following:

- **Summer of Fun activities**
- **National Play Day**
- **Men's Health Week**
- **Child Safety Week**
- **Summer Platinum Jubilee events in Cwrt Mytton Residential Care Home**
- **A Gwent regional stakeholder consultation**
- **National Children's Day - promoting the importance of a healthy childhood and the rights of a child**
- **National Smile Month**
- **Involvement with Individuals, children and families occurs on a daily basis and is recorded as part of care planning**
- **Unpaid adult and young carers sessions.**

Complaints and Compliments

The Social Services Department is committed to providing high quality services to its users; however, despite best intentions, it is recognised that sometimes things can go wrong and the Social Services complaints procedure provides people with the opportunity to voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied with a service. The service uses learning from these complaints to improve services moving forward. The service also welcomes positive feedback and compliments and also uses this information to further improve services.

From 1st April 2022 to 30th April 2023 in children's services there were 5 stage 1 complaints and 6 stage 2 complaints (1 stage 2 complaint is currently being investigated).

Some examples of the complaints received are shown below:

- Lack of communication between social services and childcare setting
- Quality in the recording of information
- Not sharing information with parents in respect of safeguarding concerns and actions taken between care settings

- Unhappy with the conduct and communication of a staff member
- Information omitted from minutes during a professionals meeting

Some examples of learning identified and actioned within Childrens services throughout the period were:

- Processes to be reviewed and staff reminded via supervision and training sessions of the importance of communication between professionals
- Staff to receive refresher training focusing on recording factually accurate information in the appropriate language and that is not subjective
- Staff to receive training on how to have 'uncomfortable conversations' in order to be honest and open with parents when keeping observations at the request of social services
- Discussions to take place in 1: 1 supervision session in respect of professional presentation and communication skills
- Minutes to be amended to reflect the full dialogue of the meeting and training and development sessions to be arranged for staff

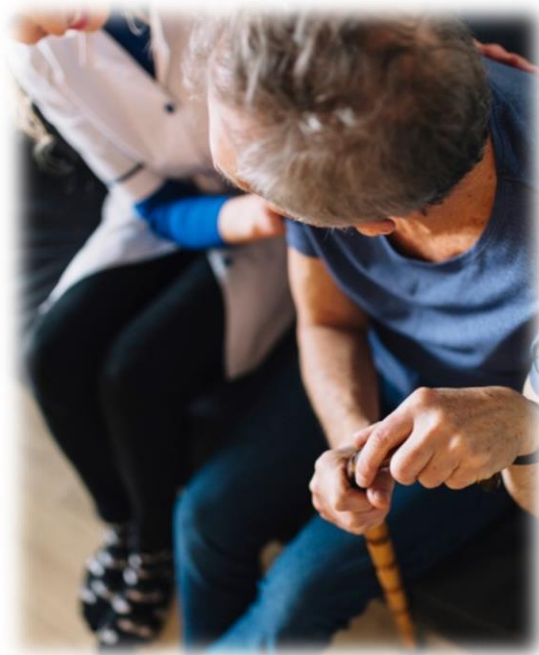
From 1st April 2022 to 30th April 2023 in adults' services there were 2 stage 2 complaints, 1 completed and 1 complaint is currently being investigated.

Some examples of the complaints received are shown below:

- The recording of information in formal documents and the quality of communication shared between professionals and complainants

Some examples of learning identified and actioned within Adults services throughout the period were:

- Staff will be reminded of the importance of recording accurate information in the appropriate language, and to include service users and families as part of this process.



Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

Priorities

The Corporate Plan 2022/27 is the Council's roadmap setting out the vision, values and priorities of the Council and the business plans within Social Services are aligned directly to the Corporate Plan. The Social Services priorities are shown below and the Quality Standards demonstrate where improvement has been made, challenges have been addressed and where outcomes have been achieved.

Departmental Priorities

- 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 communities and partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support
- Ensure we have an appropriately skilled, motivated and supported workforce with clear career development pathways in place that support our service delivery
- To have effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect people from harm
- To develop a partnership approach to reducing and alleviating the impacts of poverty

Children's Services Priorities

- Ensure all children are safeguarded
- Ensure we have an appropriately skilled, motivated and supported workforce with clear career development pathways in place that support our service delivery
- Ensure all teams deliver an outcomes based approach to practice and service delivery
- Ensure that we provide / commission modern, flexible, cost effective high quality support services that meet both current and future well-being needs of children
- Ensure that preventative support is available for children and their families, that promote early intervention and prevents needs from escalating.
- Manage the Children's Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget
- Ensure the Safe Reduction of Children Looked After Strategy 2020 – 2025 actions are regularly monitored and reviewed
- Ensure outcomes for children looked after continue to improve through the implementation of the Corporate Parenting action plan
- Review the way in which children's services operates and decide if a change is necessary in order to manage demand and workload.
- Children's Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles

Adult Services Priorities

- Ensure all adults are safeguarded
- Ensure we have an appropriately skilled, motivated and supported workforce with clear career development pathways in place that support our service delivery
- Ensure all teams deliver an outcomes based approach to practice and service delivery
- Ensure that we provide / commission modern, flexible, cost effective high quality support services that meet both current and future well-being needs of vulnerable adults and their unpaid family carers
- Ensure that preventative support is available for adults and their unpaid carers, that promote and maintain personal independence
- Manage the Adults Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget
- Undertake a review of the current model of Community Options
- Adult Services contributes to meeting the Sustainable Development Principles

Progress of Quality Standards

During a comprehensive assessment of performance at the end of 2022/23, the following achievements and challenges were identified as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.

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

The dedicated **Information Advice and Assistance (IAA)** Teams are the first point of contact for the public who wish to access advice and support and for contacts and referrals for both adult and children services. In relation to adult services this also includes contacts for some health functions. A range of other professionals work within these teams. The teams take a **preventative approach** to ensure needs are met at the earliest opportunity, by the right service, to prevent needs from escalating. Contacts into IAA remain high and have been increasing throughout the period of this report. The Children's IAA Team is funded by a mixture of core and grant funding which is a risk if future grant funding is removed. However, the new Adult Services IAA structure went live in April 2022 and is no longer reliant on grant funding creating a more sustainable service.

Preventative service delivery continues to be a priority across all services. Children's Service's IAA teams have seen a significant rise in referrals, but, despite this, all referrals have been dealt with within statutory timescales. All contacts across both adult and children's services take an outcomes strength based approach by establishing **'what matters'** to the customer and the number of referrals being allocated continues to be stable, evidencing that the preventative work, undertaken at the 'front door', continues to be successful.

Staff are supported with access to training on 'what matters'. New staff have also attended training sessions on **Collaborative Communication** and accessed other learning opportunities available in order to support outcome focused practice, and deliver interventions based on an outcomes/strengths based approach. **Monthly reflective practice sessions** continue in each of the service areas and refresher training is available to all staff through Workforce Development.

Adult Service staff have been undertaking **learning and development opportunities in collaboration with colleagues from Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB)** as part of a project facilitated by Social Care Wales (SCW) and there has been a strong emphasis on focussing on changing the conversation with patients during our assessments within our acute and community settings. This work was evaluated by Social Care Wales in the Autumn of 2022. The outcome of the Social Care Wales work will be presented to the Gwent Adult Strategic Partnership Board as part of showcasing across the Regional Partnership Board (RPB). An evaluation report on Balancing Rights and Responsibilities Programme Evaluation can be found at the end of the document under 'useful documents'.

Regional partnership arrangements continue and Blaenau Gwent has a strong voice in the development of these arrangements. Joint Service Manager supervision takes place between the Heads of Service from Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Children Services regarding the Youth Offending Service (YOS) delivery, this ensures the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent, in receipt of services from YOS, have their continued needs met.

Across Adult Services we continue to provide opportunities for wider case discussion and problem solving. We have weekly 'fish bowl' meetings which focus on:

- **The presentation of complex cases**
- **Peer support**
- **Quality assurance**
- **General opportunities for creative problem solving**
- **Case discussions**
- **New ways of working**
- **How to best support people who access our services.**

Adult Services are also looking at meeting structures on how best to streamline the 'fish bowl' approach with Balancing Rights and Responsibilities and Systems Review. This to be agreed and finalised in Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

Performance measures reported during 2022/23 are showing: -

Adults Services Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) - The number of **enquires received at 'front door' was 4610** compared to **2931 in 21/22 (Aug 21 – March 22)**. Number of **referrals resolved at IAA was 2767** (made up of those enquiries signposted, closed down before progressing to assessment and those that led to an IAA) **compared to 1562 in 21/22 (Aug 21 – March 22)**. The remainder **1843 went onto the Long term teams, Safeguarding, Community Resource Team (CRT) and The Local Authority unpaid carers team compared to 1369 in 21/22 (Aug 21 – March 22)**.

Children's Services IAA- there were a total of **6,755 referrals** with **772 of them being referred to preventative services (Families First) compared to 5781 referrals in 21/22 with 546 of them being referred to preventative services (Families First)**.

Support to our unpaid carers including our Young Carers, have benefited from the development of a new scheme that supports them with the impact of the cost of living crisis. The department has implemented a series of information opportunities along with a carers small grant scheme with funding provided by Welsh Government and the Carers Trust for 2022/23 and 2023/24. The coordination of this project has been led by officers from both Children and Adult Services to ensure that we provide equitable opportunities to both our young and adult carers.

Across both Adult and Children's Services we continually monitor and review the way in which services operate and decide if a change is necessary in order to manage demand and workload. As a result of this, as of January 2023, a new pilot commenced with the Children Services **Locality Teams** which will run over a 12-month period. Within this pilot, three new operational care planning teams were established with the 4th becoming the **Statutory Assessment Team**. Early indications are that the change is impacting positively on capacity and outcomes for the child and family. The Statutory Assessment Team has also eased the work pressure on the Locality Teams. The pilot is reviewed regularly to ensure that the staff complement is appropriate and that the new model is working well. Caseloads continue to be monitored and all staff and team managers are ensuring caseloads are accurate to ensure they are manageable.



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

Within Adult Services we have introduced a new post of Social Work Senior Practitioner with responsibility for the Mental Capacity Act and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS). We continue to work in partnership with the Gwent DOLS team which is hosted by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB). The numbers of people waiting for a DOLS assessment within Blaenau Gwent has reduced considerably during 2022/23 as a direct result of the local monitoring and as a result of coordinated resource to address the back log via both the Gwent DoLS team and externally commissioned assessments.

A **Gwent Dementia Action Plan** has been developed and aligns to the 20 All Wales Dementia Pathway Standards which will also include performance measures. Work stream subgroups have been developed to take forward this programme of work which includes:

- **Engagement**
- **Memory Assessment Service**
- **Dementia Connector role**
- **Dementia Friendly Hospital Charter**
- **Education/Workforce**
- **Measurement/Performance**

Discussions continue with the Alzheimer's society regarding dementia advisors for the dementia reablement programme in line with the Dementia action plan and this new service is due to commence in April 2023.

We continue to aim for the delivery of modern flexible and responsive services that enable older people to maximise their independence and live with appropriate support within their communities. We have developed a new assistive technology SMART flat. Our reablement service within our integrated Community Resource team continues to deliver person centred reablement support.

We have continued to see **increasing demands placed on the Health and Social Care system including at our community and acute hospital sites**. We have been working with our Gwent Local Authority colleagues and ABUHB to revise current models of support to enable patients who are ready for discharge to either safely return back to their own homes or to utilise alternative accommodation, on a temporary basis, whilst waiting for support to enable them to return home. We are using current partnership Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) grant funding to develop a menu of support services including, **increasing the use of Step Closer to Home beds to reduce the dependency on hospital stays and reduce length of stays**, providing additional care home capacity as well as additional capacity within our assessment teams in order to address both the current and future demand.

A Gwent wide 'whole-system' approach is in operation to support people who are experiencing a mental health crisis and includes:

- **Mental Health 111- point of contact live 28th November, this provides a point of contact that is accessible for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis or emotional distress within Gwent - also for family/friends and carers**
- **Emergency Department support service has been introduced at Grange University Hospital Emergency Department, peer support workers provide support to those in emotional distress, preventing escalation and improve quality of mental health support services. Alternatives to hospital**
- **Mental Health Shared Lives service continues to be successful in minimising those in crisis being admitted to psychiatric units and also supporting earlier discharge. Citizens report improved satisfaction.**
- **Crisis Support House, Ty Cynol for those who meet requirements of a safe stay**

Within Children Services, the **South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS)** have entered into the early alert process whereby children are referred to a link worker within one month of a placement order to ensure all potential links to potential adoptive families are explored in a timely manner.

The **Life Journey Work Coordinator** is rolling out training to childcare social workers. Improvements have been made to the quality of materials provided to **adoptive parents**. Understanding the child days and trauma nurture timelines are completed for children aged 18 months + and this provides adoptive families with enhanced information of the impact a child's early life experiences.

The SEWAS Contact Worker continues to promote sibling contact which involves speaking to child care social workers at an earlier date with regards to **sibling contact arrangements** and reviewing existing arrangements. One off birth parent meetings are increasing.

Referrals to **advocacy** are closely monitored by the service manager and good performance is reported across the teams. All staff within preventative services are training in **Collaborative Communication** and new staff entered onto training as part of their induction.

Work has taken place to ensure that **mandatory safeguarding training for foster carers** is being delivered on a face-to-face basis rather than virtually. The training needs of foster carers continue to be monitored and promoted during annual reviews, appraisals and supervision sessions, a programme of training/reflective sessions for foster carers commenced in January 2023 and is being delivered by the **MyST (My Support Team)**.

A **Circle of Security Parenting Programme** has been delivered to a small number of parents with young children, in collaboration with the Psychologist and Support Worker. Additionally, Circle of Security has been delivered to a cohort of foster carers, helping to **stabilise children in care** and preventing a risk of breakdown in placement. Feedback is that they have found the parenting programme to be very beneficial and are adapting their parenting styles accordingly.

In April 2022, Blaenau Gwent established its own MyST to provide greater capacity within the service. Since this time, staff from MyST have been attending News and Networking events and meeting mentors in order to embed the service fully within Blaenau Gwent. Positively, the service is now working with children, under each of the operational teams, suggesting that the service is being utilised by all. MyST are operating at full capacity **providing support to 15 children and young people** as well as some additional bespoke pieces of work. The MyST service also continues to work with a number of young people in residential care on a 'step-down' basis as well as working with a number of **young people who are at risk of entering residential care** on a preventative basis.

Challenges remain regarding the availability of **'step down' accommodation** from residential care into foster care which is largely dependent on the availability of 'step-down' foster placements. **With the demand on placements and the difficulties with recruitment of foster carers the reduction of children in residential care is slower than we would have hoped for, however 22/23 progressed numbers were reducing mainly due to the current cohort of young people reaching 18 and moving into independent accommodation.**

A **Worcester University Evaluation of the 0 -25 Disability Service** has been undertaken. The Evaluation evidences good use of the **disability index and the disability Facebook page** and these services continue to be offered within the team.

Work is underway in respect of supporting partners, to support young people. As part of this, the **Supporting Change Team has been working collaboratively with the Youth Service** to run a small trauma informed, activity based group for some of the hardest to reach young people open to the team. This includes the establishment of a sports session and the continuation of the **Carers Support Group**. The team has also concluded a group work project working in partnership and alongside a targeted group of **young girls looking at raising aspirations/self-esteem and self-worth**. The project has been very well evaluated and the team are looking into how they can run further projects.

This year, Augusta House requested registration from our regulator Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide **respite support** to young children in addition to adults which was agreed. This has now enabled the **Disability Team** to have access to a residential respite provision which is proving successful for children with a disability and supporting the needs of their parents and carers, as well as outcomes for the young people.

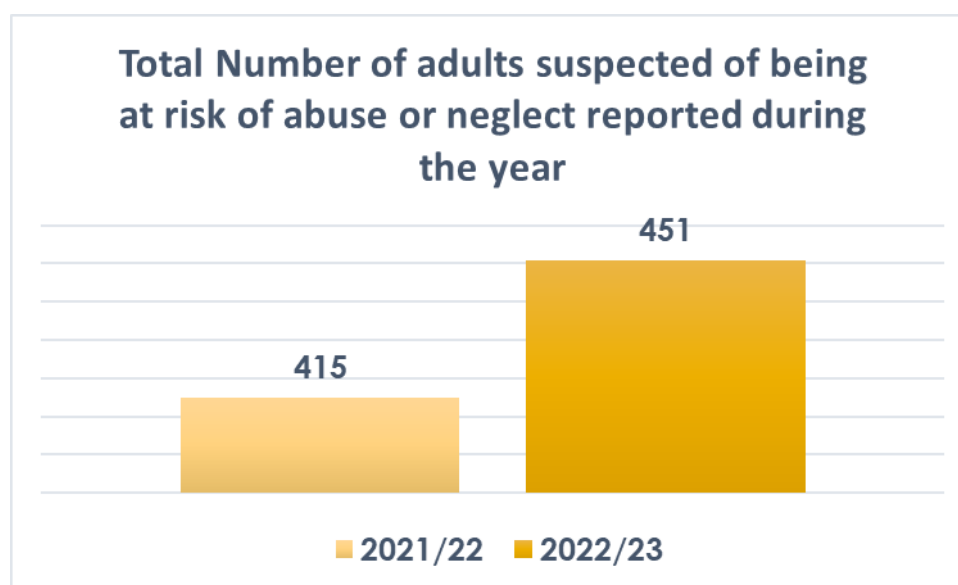


Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

The Department recognises the importance of having robust and sustainable **Safeguarding Teams across both Adult and Children Services** to ensure we not only meet our legislative requirements, but that we are also able to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

Adult Services has implemented a new **adult safeguarding staffing structure** which is now operational and working effectively. An additional senior practitioner for safeguarding has been created to create additional capacity and also provide decision making resilience.

We have seen an increase in numbers of referrals of safeguarding referrals during 2022/23 compared to 2021/22.



Staff safeguarding training is ongoing with different models of learning offered to different staff groups. Refresher training has been provided to Provider Services which has included commissioned sessions from the Workforce Development Team and also bespoke learning sessions provided by our Safeguarding Team.

All safeguarding referrals continue to be managed in line with the **Wales Safeguarding Procedures** and statutory requirements. An internal audit has taken place in relation to safeguarding processes across the directorate and reasonable assurance was given.

Despite good progress being made, the **low Social Worker vacancy rates in the Children's Locality Teams needs to be sustained**, plus there are savings attributed to the workforce which could impact on the ability to safeguard.

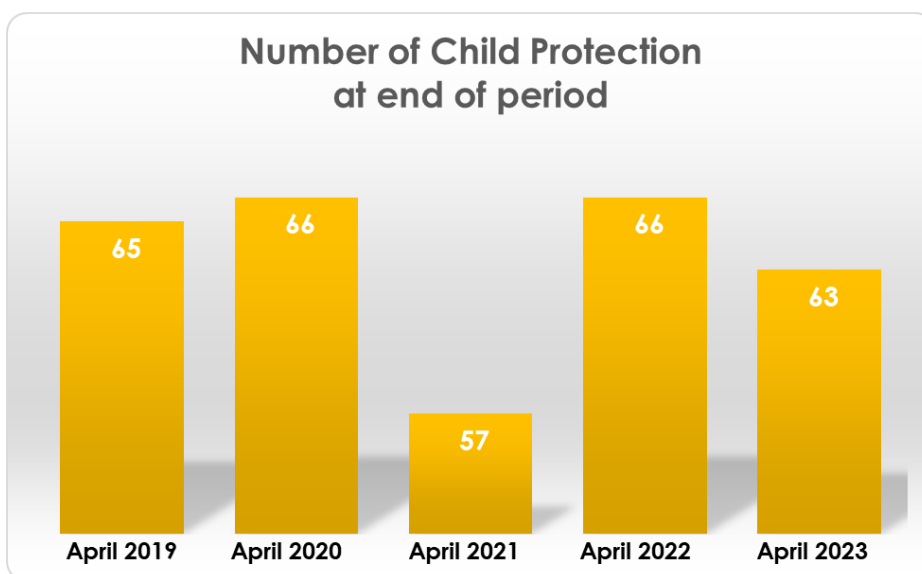
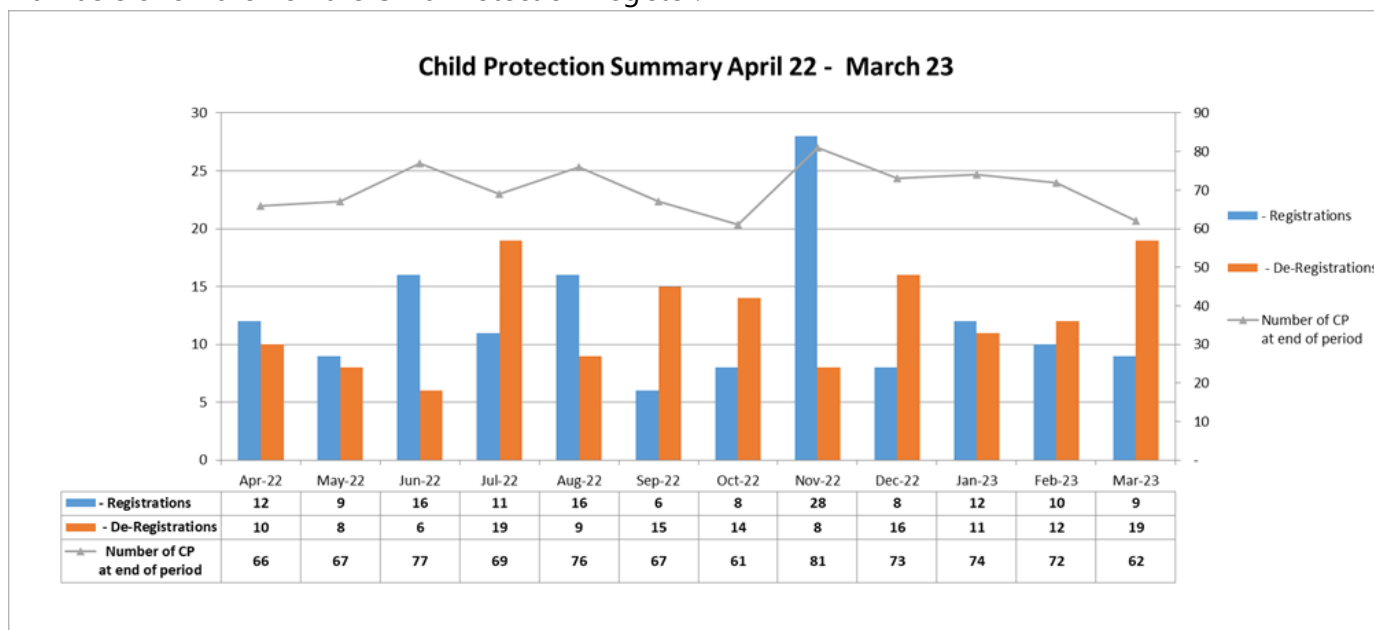
The **Audit Wales Safeguarding report** was presented to Governance and Audit Committee on 8th March 2023. The Corporate **Safeguarding Leads Group**, chaired by the Interim Head of Children's Services, with representation from each directorate across the Council, will implement the recommendations identified by Audit Wales Report. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been amended to reflect the recommendations made, and a new Corporate Safeguarding Training Framework has been approved and compliance across the council will be monitored by the Corporate Safeguarding Leads Group.

All new Council staff are informed of the Council’s safeguarding arrangements as part of their induction programme. All staff within teams have completed the relevant level of safeguarding training. Within the Children’s IAA team all Safeguarding referrals must be responded to within 24 hours and we are continuing to respond accordingly. All safeguarding concerns are responded to with appropriate decision making and all strategy discussions are usually held within 24 hours. The issue with Police meeting this timescale remains an issue when they deem it 'non-urgent' they will arrange for this to be held out of this time scale.

Safeguarding performance is good, **Child Protection** conferences have been held within statutory timescales as have all Child Protection statutory visiting for children on the register.

Currently the Child Protection Conference process is operating as a Hybrid model of face to face meetings and meetings on TEAMS. Indications are that this model is proving popular with partner agencies and families. The Safeguarding Team Manager continues to review models of facilitating conferences ensuring that the child’s safeguarding needs remains paramount to any future decisions made.

Numbers of children on the Child Protection Register: -



‘What Matters’ meetings have been implemented and used regularly in practice with multi-agency participation and high scrutiny of all **Child Protection plans**.

The **Early Years, Child Protection Training programme** is created annually and checked monthly to ensure that it is up to date. Safeguarding is always a standing item in the Network Meetings and six monthly meetings are held with Safeguarding Lead and the Early Years, Child Protection Manager.

We continue to be a key partner of the **Gwent Safeguarding Strategic Board** and relevant operational sub groups. As a partner of the Gwent DoLS Board we continue to prepare for the implementation of the **Liberty Protection Safeguards legislation (LPS)** and during the year have contributed to the consultation on the long-awaited codes of practice.

There have been ongoing reviews of the care management waiting lists due to capacity demands and **reduced availability of domiciliary care** to support people safely at home. We have proactively utilised the DASH emergency domiciliary care service to cover unplaced packages of care and this has ensured that no citizens have been without their domiciliary care packages and that they are safely supported at home. All people are safely supported within available capacity.

Work has commenced on the reviewing of all Adult Services policies and procedures. As part of this work **our Provider services medication policy has been revised and fully implemented, along with a comprehensive training package to all Provider front line care staff.**

Having a suitably qualified and skilled workforce is paramount when ensuring that vulnerable people are safeguarded. The department has developed a workforce strategy that not only ensures that we recruit and retain staff across Adult Services, Children Services and our Provider teams but that we also support their development, progression and wellbeing. To assist in the delivery of the workforce strategy the department has successfully recruited a lead officer to support managers in progressing and promoting the opportunities that we can offer staff in Blaenau Gwent.

As a partnership, we have submitted a **Welsh Government Regional (Gwent) bid to support capacity for the development of Liberty Protection Safeguards** in order to provide important rights and protections for people who lack the mental capacity to agree to care, support or treatment arrangements, where these arrangements amount to a deprivation of liberty. In addition to this, a new **Social Work senior practitioner with responsibility for Mental Capacity Act support and DoLS** has been recruited and due to start in July 2023.

There continues to be a slow but steady reduction of **Children Looked After**. New children are still coming into care but we are also progressing with discharging Care Orders for children living at home or with kinship carers.



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

Work-based services within our **Community Options and Day Activities teams** have continued throughout the year with students returning to placements within our catering enterprise in partnership with Vison 21. As part of our employment and training opportunities for people with a Learning Disability or living with poor mental health, we continue to scope new opportunities for development including the development of additional catering enterprises including a new community café

Our community meals and afternoon tea tray options offer continues to grow and we are working in partnership with learners from **Abertillery Learning Community** to re-brand the service as part of the implementation of our new electric delivery vans

Our Adult Service Community Options Service continues to provide day activities for vulnerable adults in their own communities. This includes supporting people to access training and development courses, activity sessions, exercise classes, gym sessions etc.

Provider managers have commenced engagement with **Coleg Gwent (Ebbw Vale Campus) Health and Social Care students** and will be offering work based placements to approximately 15 students during the 2022/23 academic year. This will enable our tenants / residents to engage with the students and in addition we are planning for students from the Hair and Beauty courses to provide sessions at our Care Homes.

The reduction in COVID restrictions has enabled our residential care homes, supported living services and Augusta Respite Centre to re-engage with the wider community activities and welcome visitors back into support our residents. Cwrt Mytton has welcomed learners from a number of our school as part of our intergenerational work streams and our resident and friends' associations are coordinating regular activities that bring the community back in to residents.

Our new Promoting Independence pods at Augusta Respite Centre have been completed following an allocation of funding from the Welsh Government Regional Integration Fund (RIF) grant. They are due to open in the Summer of 2023 and will provide opportunities for people with a learning disability to experience independent living, in a safe environment.

A cost of living Welsh Government funded grant scheme delivered over the winter proved a huge success with many **unpaid carers supported with food vouchers** and items to help them maintain their wellbeing including:

- **Gym membership**
- **iPads**
- **Laptops**
- **Driving lessons.**

Flying Start services were involved in the Estyn inspection that was undertaken in November 2022 on Blaenau Gwent Education Services and came out as an **area of excellence** in verbal feedback.

Families First continue to work intensively to prevent cases escalation into statutory services with:

- **330 cases active at the end of March 2023**
- **237 cases being discussed at Wellbeing panels in the last quarter**
- **A variety of group, community work and events being delivered throughout the year**

At the end of academic year 2021-2022 the following related to our children looked after

- **142 children of statutory school age were looked after by Blaenau Gwent local authority.**
- **This is a decrease compared with the**
- **previous academic year when there were 154 children**
- **The majority continue to be educated within Blaenau Gwent and attend mainstream schools.**
- **A small proportion attend more specialist education settings**
- **Almost all learners achieved recognised qualifications at the end of their statutory school studies**
- **The majority now engaged in post 16 educational and/ or training opportunities**
- **A total of 11 plans were not initiated within 10 days:**
 - **Eight were as a result of delay in the Children Looked After education team being notified at the point that the children became looked after; and**
 - **Three were as a result of the learners being unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who were not in school at the point of becoming looked after.**
- **Incidents of exclusions issued in respect of children looked after increased.**
- **The number who received fixed term exclusions during the year increased compared with the previous year**
- **The primary reason why exclusions are issued continues to be for persistent disruptive behaviour The majority of exclusions continue to be issued in respect of secondary aged pupils.**
- **The number of exclusions being issued for primary aged children remains low.**
- **54% of Personal Education Plans for newly accommodated children were initiated within statutory timescales.**

A small proportion of children looked after **experienced a change of school** during the course of the year. This is an increase when compared with the previous year. Consistency of schooling continues to be considered as part of the matching process when a child looked after moves placement. Transport is provided where necessary to ensure the stability of schooling. When a child does have to move school, processes are in place to ensure that delays in admissions are avoided, wherever possible.

The Welsh Government has continued to provide funding for a set number of children to participate in the Letterbox Club each year. The **Letterbox Club encourages reading for pleasure and learning at home**. It helps to improve the educational outlook for children who are looked after. Parcels have continued to be distributed to our children on a monthly basis between October and May, with an additional festive parcel provided in December.



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

A pathway for **Antenatal support supported by Families First** has been developed, which will mean every pregnant woman in Blaenau Gwent will be able to access the appropriate Antenatal support until the child is 1-year-old.

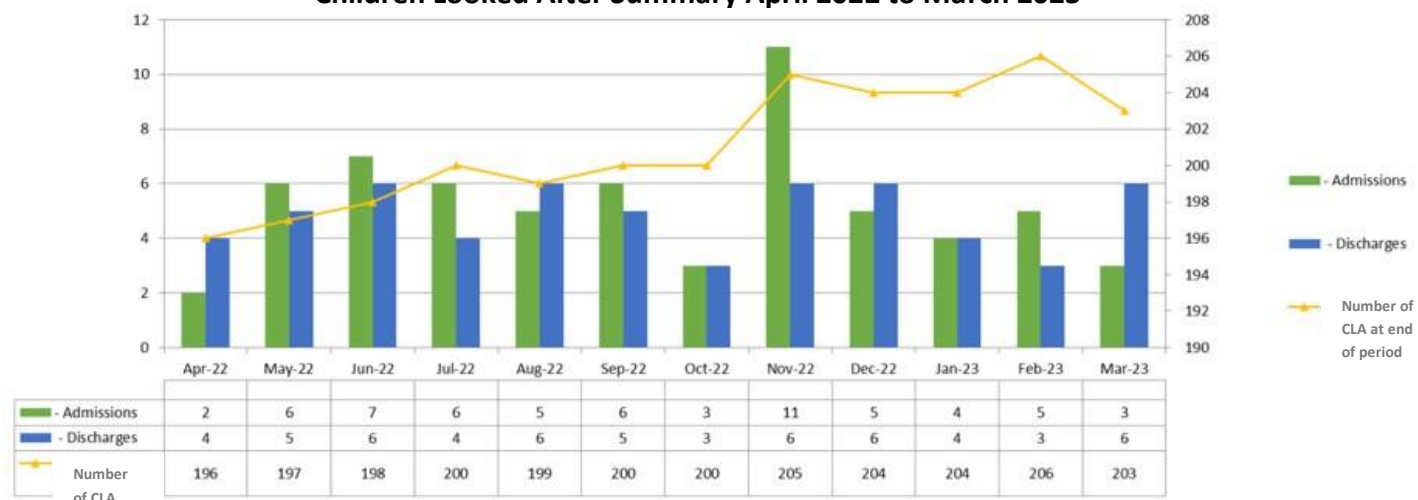
A **special guardianship order (SGO)** is a way of providing stability for a child who cannot return to live with their birth parent and for whom adoption is not appropriate. It is a legal way of giving the person caring for the child, clear, long-term responsibilities for the child's upbringing. **As at 31st March 2023 there were 145 children subject of SGO living in 107 families open to the service.**

A **formal consultation process for foster carers** has been implemented with the deadline for submission of the survey by 31st March 2023, the outcome of the consultation will be processed and reported going forward.

It has proven to be **extremely difficult to recruit foster carers** and interest in fostering at this current time is very low, despite efforts to increase awareness via social media and recruitment activity. Close working relationships with the Foster Wales Manager and the promotion of the Foster Wales brand continues. **Demand for foster placements has increased** and there has been a **greater reliance on Independent Fostering Agency placements (IFA).**

Teams continue to practice in an **outcome focused** way where we identify family options early in the intervention process, which we prioritise if children have to be admitted into the care of the Local Authority. However, there are situations when appropriate placements are not available locally leading to having to access **Independent Fostering Agency placements and residential care for young children.** Supervision is used consistently to review the plans of Children Looked After and consider opportunities for discharging the Care Orders. Regular review of care planning for these children is a priority and for those with a high level of needs referrals to MyST are considered and prioritised.

Children Looked After Summary April 2022 to March 2023



In order to help mitigate the limited placement availability, **Foster Wales** delivered local and regional campaigns as follows:

- **New Purpose**
- **Right time to foster**
- **Make a difference in 2023**
- **Become a foster carer in your local area**

A '**Men Who Care**' **Regional Support Group** has been established with four meetings being held over a year. 15 male foster carers attended the first group.

Adult Services has reviewed its Hospital Social work team and it has created additional capacity to support patients and their families and carers to avoid unnecessary lengthy stays in hospital. This team works closely with the hospital ward staff, discharge assistants and therapists to ensure that patients can return home as quickly as possible. The team also supports family unpaid carers through the discharge process and provides statutory carers assessments to enable carers to maintain their caring role alongside their work, health, leisure and family commitments.

Respite is an important part of maintaining caring responsibilities. The department is currently working with our neighbouring authorities to develop enhanced respite offers alongside the more traditional offers of care home placements, Augusta House Respite Centre and Day Opportunities. The new scheme is due to be launched in Summer 2023 and is a partnership arrangement with NEWCIS, a large North Wales provider of carer services.



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

Work continues to support a **reduction in the impact of poverty and homelessness** by providing innovative and effective Housing Support Grant (HSG) services and a new hybrid model of support is now fully embedded across Provider Services. However, **the future of the HSG funding remains a significant concern**. Support Providers are indicating their costs are rising considerably and their current contractual value no longer covers the costs of providing the service. This will impact not only on current services but also the future commissioning of services. This is being closely monitored by the Supporting People Team.

Stability and sustainability of our domiciliary care and care home market is a significant priority for our teams due to the impact of COVID 19, early indications of the impact of the rise in fuel and utility costs, and severe staffing pressures. Many providers, including our own in house services, have during 2022/23 reported **high levels of staff vacancies** which impact on their ability to provide support. Our commissioning team has continued to work with Providers in relation to the introduction to the **real living wage** and also by scoping the potential support that can be given to our domiciliary care workers to increase wages to compensate them for the increased costs of fuel. The rapidly increasing fuel prices caused concern amongst the domiciliary care market. To address this, **the Council acted swiftly and provided additional funding to staff to support the increase in fuel costs during the early part of the year**.

Due to the cost of Living Crisis the Supporting People Team were able to **fund additional Home Sustainment Packs** to support people when moving into their own accommodation to assist with the cost of living.

A cultural change is needed to consider **assistive technology as a solution** that enables people to achieve their outcomes and live independently and helps prevent/delay costly health and social care interventions. The development of our **SMART flat** will assist this by further promoting assistive technology to professionals, individuals, and their families/carers. We continue to receive requests from partners to visit the SMART flat [innovative-assistive-technology/ SMART flat](#). This to be further promoted in 2023/24. The Service Manager for Preventative Services and the Supporting People Team Manager have delivered presentations on the SMART flat to a number of organisations. We are continuing to add to the TEC equipment at the Smart Flat to ensure we continue to broaden awareness and knowledge of TEC services.

IMAGES OF SMART FLAT



Sitting Room (virtual tour screenshot)



Sitting Room (virtual tour screenshot)



Kitchen (virtual tour screenshot)



Sensory Room (virtual tour screenshot)

The Augusta PODS were completed in March 2023 and will give people with **learning difficulties** the opportunity to **develop their independence skills** in a purpose built supported environment.

We have reviewed the use of the **CARIAD** (Collaborative Assessment Reducing Interventions, Admissions and Delayed transfers of care) **reablement units** and are re-branding them with our colleagues in ABUHB so that they are maximised to support hospital flow. We have worked with colleagues in ABUHB to develop step down beds across our Blaenau Gwent care homes.

Our **Better Care / Single Handed care project** continues to promote people's independence and reduce their reliance on staff for manual handling and personal care tasks. The Better Care Team have developed a comprehensive training and support package for all staff across the Blaenau Gwent Health and Social Care community who provide frontline care.

The Local Authority has utilised equipment purchased as part of the **Welsh Government Promoting Independence Grant** to provide the latest equipment (beds / hoists/ standing aids) to support the ethos of single handed care. CARIAD bariatric flat was completed in September 2022 and now forms part of the Blaenau Gwent CARIAD offer. The coordination and monitoring will be facilitated by our Community Resource Team as part of the review of the functions and to ensure that we have a reablement and **promote independence for our most vulnerable people.**

The Better care team have been 'in-reaching' into the hospital's, working with individuals whilst undergoing assessments and were able to work with individuals to reach their potential in hospital thus eliminating the need for reablement package of care on discharge

During 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22, **the Council incurred costs of around £2m per annum** (£2.5M, £2M & £1.8M) respectively) on residential placements for Children Looked After. **Costs have been reducing as a result of lower numbers of children requiring residential provision**, however, the local authority will always need to provide residential care for some children. To address these high costs, in September 2022, it was agreed to proceed with the development of a business case to deliver local authority residential placements for children looked after. This will:

- **Reduce our reliance on private childcare providers**
- **Provide care closer to home**
- **Remove the profit element included within the current charges made by private providers.**

The **development of our own children's home** will take place over two stages. The first stage will include the acquisition of a suitable property. A **grant of £1.2 million** has recently been approved, and the process that will need to be followed are progressing such as working with CIW to ensure the home meets the regulatory requirements, following the 'change of use' processes and completing the refurbishment. The second stage will be the refurbishment and a second grant application to meet the costs of this has been submitted.

A resident's engagement group has been set up chaired by the Interim Head of Childrens Services. These meetings are proving very beneficial in ensuring local residents are kept fully informed of developments and are able to voice any views as they arise.

SEWAS are working with the National Adoption service central team and other regions to ensure marketing is targeted to increase the number of adopters for more complex children. We have been able to provide in house adopters for a number of siblings in a timelier manner. At present, the number of children

waiting for placements is decreasing as is the rate of referrals from prospective adopters. This could be linked to the cost of living crisis and will need to be monitored more closely moving forward.

During the period, the Placement Team prioritised matching meetings for placements outside of the framework, and consistently delivered monthly foster carer supervisions where this level of involvement has been required with annual appraisals also being maintained.

Work is ongoing in all areas and all teams continue to be invested in its corporate responsibilities. An accolade has been received by the 14+ team due to the work they are committed to in the young people they work with. We are now part of the **National Transfer Scheme** and responsible for a cohort of **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who are CLA**. We currently have 8 children placed mostly in England. The team is learning to develop their skills in working with this group as this is very new to Blaenau Gwent.



How We Do What We Do

Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

Having a skilled and motivated workforce is essential in order to provide high quality services. As part of this, the Council has a Joint Workforce Development Team with Caerphilly County Borough Council with responsibility for delivering a training and development strategy that supports development opportunities for staff at all levels in Social Services.

A full programme of learning is provided for the whole social care sector. All statutory, legislative, and registration linked requirements are planned and accounted for. The offer includes developmental opportunities for the workforce and support for resilience and well-being.

The challenges for the workforce to fully embrace learning opportunities remain high. The current recruitment environment has a major impact on the sector and forces harsh choices that without doubt impact on the capacity available to fully embrace development opportunities beyond the essentials.

The first half of the year continued its support for the registration of residential workers ahead of October. The Social Work Strategy continues to deliver qualified professionals, and at a rate above the national norm.

The way the workforce wants to learn has changed, they expect choice and flexibility. Various initiatives within the organisation are in place to support improving digital confidence and access to digital learning. The authority underpins its approach with the recognition of barriers that exist for parts of the social care workforce, so the offer includes the traditional classroom route.

Classroom activities use digital devices to provide safe space learning with facilitator and peer support:

- **The authority has co led the All-Wales project on securing an organisational level, fit for purpose, future proof, digital learning platform that will meet the needs of the whole sector, communities and volunteers. The authority, one of four in the first phase, are demonstrating nationally to others the benefits to the workforce of sharing across boundaries**
- **The power of social media is used to engage and communicate with the sector**
- **The learning delivery model, currently blended learning approaches and a choice of digital or face to face, will shortly include hybrid delivery – the required investment in technology having been funded by a successful bid to Social Care Wales**

The engagement from the workforce with new ways of learning is exceptional and they continue to reward the community with their ongoing resilience and determination.

Benefits continue to be realised for and by the workforce through the scale of opportunity possible due to the joint workforce development service model hosted by us in partnership with Caerphilly.

Workforce stability is a key consideration within Social Services as some teams are facing staffing shortages, however, it is acknowledged that this is a Wales wide position and there is no simple solution. The department as a whole has been working hard to look at innovative ways of managing the workload within teams as well as developing recruitment and retention strategies to address workforce pressures. Despite these significant pressures the existing staff and providers of services have continued to ensure children and adults needs are met, risks are managed, and safeguarding issues dealt with.

Social Services are working closely with Organisational Development to establish a Strategic Workforce Plan to support capacity concerns in the short, medium and longer-term as well as considering the opportunity to collaborate on a regional basis. The workforce in Social Services has been identified as a critical risk and has therefore been included on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

Local Political Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The structure of the Social Services Directorate provides clear levels of management and accountability. The Council has a clear governance and accountability framework in place which all directorates are signed up to. This framework identifies how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create a 'golden thread'. 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.

The Corporate Director of Social Services is a member of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, whereby all Council Directors meet on a weekly basis to consider and make strategic and operational decisions, although some decisions need to be considered by Scrutiny and then ratified by Cabinet or Council.

In 2022/23 the Directorate had one Executive Member with Portfolio responsibility for People and Social Services and was scrutinised by the People Scrutiny Committee, with safeguarding information also reported to this Committee. Regular liaison meetings were held with the Directorate, the Cabinet Member and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Social Services Directorate is subject to audit, inspection and review by the Care Inspectorate 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. CIW also undertake an annual review and evaluation of the Directorate's performance.

Audit and Inspection Progress

Audit Wales

Following on from an initial Audit in 2019 'Corporate Arrangements for Safeguarding of Children', Audit Wales, in February 2022, commenced a follow-up review. The focus of the review was to determine the extent to which the Council had addressed the eight outstanding recommendations and proposals for improvement to strengthen its corporate arrangements for the safeguarding of children. Seeking to answer the following question: Can the Council provide assurance that it has made effective progress since 2019 in addressing the outstanding recommendations / proposals for improvements? The overall summary outcome was positive, Audit Wales made recommendations for improvement which have been monitored as part of the corporate business planning process.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Children's Services

In 2018 CIW reported on their inspection undertaken on Children's Social Services in Blaenau Gwent. Despite the overall summary being positive, the CIW made recommendations for improvement which have been monitored as part of the corporate business planning process.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Fostering Services

In 2018 CIW reported on their inspection of the Fostering Service in Blaenau Gwent. Despite the overall summary being positive the CIW made recommendations for improvement which have been monitored as part of the corporate business planning process.

Working in Partnership

Part 9 of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act places a key emphasis on partnership working including a statutory requirement for the development of **Regional Partnership Boards**. The Boards have been established on current local health board footprints. The Gwent Board includes ABUHB and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen local authorities. The Cabinet Member in each local authority, with responsibility for health and social care, sits on the Regional Partnership Board. It is an advisory body which provides oversight and direction for areas of integrated working across health and social care.

Blaenau Gwent Council supports partnership and collaborative working and the Social Services Department 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. Social Services work in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including staff, residents and businesses. In addition, Social Services fully participates in the sharing of knowledge, good practice and information, which can result in improved services. Social Services partnership arrangements include:

- **Joint Partnership and Workforce Development Service with Caerphilly**
- **Greater Gwent Workforce Development Board**
- **Regional Adoption Service**
- **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)**
- **Regional Safeguarding Board covering all partners across Gwent**
- **Shared Lives scheme run on behalf of six Local Authorities and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board**
- **Gwent Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Partnership Team**
- **South East Wales Improvement Collaboration -4C's (SEWIC)**
- **Gwent Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Team**
- **Gwent Regional Collaborative (RCC) - Supporting People**
- **Gwent wide agreement with National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to provide children's advocacy services**

'Mwy na geiriau/ More than just words

As a department we continue to monitor compliance with our responsibilities within **More Than Just Words** and the Active Offer. We continue to ensure that when citizens contact both our Adult and Children Services Departments, that they are offered the opportunity to communicate in the language of their choice. Our assessment tools within our Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) system specifically asks the question "Do you require this conversation / assessment to be carried out in Welsh?" The form is then attached to the person's referral.

The More Than Just Words action plan has progressed, there is liaison with the local Welsh language champions and promoting the wide resources and opportunities available is now standard. Our commissioned providers work in partnership with us to promote the Welsh Language and this is reflected in our contracts and service level agreements.

Our Financial Resources and How We Plan for the Future

The total budget allocation for Social Services for 2022/23 was £49.9m. This is an increase from the previous year of £3.290m. At the end of 2022/23 Social Services had an overspend of £240,608 and this is due to the increased demand within the Looked after Children service area.

The provision of regular financial forecasting reports in line with the budget monitoring and reporting framework has enabled the Social Services Senior Management Team to make informed decisions on service delivery.

In setting the 2023/24 budget, Council agreed a number of savings proposals totalling £0.690m, and awarded additional cost pressures funding of £0.861m. For 2022/23 the department achieved £153,000 of savings.

The allocated budget and outturn for 2022/23 is provided in the table below:

Service Area	Budget	Outturn	Variance (Adverse)/Favourable
Children's Services	£14,288,800	£15,327,638	(1,038,838)
Adult Services	£29,231,440	£28,464,957	766,483
Business Management / Staff Support	£6,421,310	£6,389,563	31,747
Total	£49,941,550	£50,182,158	(£240,608)

The budget for 2023/24 is provided in the table below and includes Financial Efficiency Project savings of £0.690m.

Social Services Budget 2023/24		£
1	Commissioning & Social Work	4,247,760
2	Children Looked After	7,349,740
3	Family Support Services	203,070
4	Youth Justice	276,080
5	Other Children's and Family Services	2,523,810
7	Older People Aged 65 and Over	8,011,920
8	Adults aged under 65 with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment	18,290
9	Adults aged under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,801,990
10	Adults aged under 65 with Mental Health Needs	532,560
11	Older Adult Services	434,760
12	Community Care	20,292,770
13	Support Services and Management Costs	906,020
14	Corporate Recharges	5,803,660
	Total	54,402,430



Conclusion

This annual report outlines how we have delivered and developed services in line with the six quality standards in relation to well-being outcomes under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. It also highlights some of the challenges we have faced over the past 12 months.

23/24 will present even greater challenges due to the need to generate further savings to ensure the council can deliver its functions within the budget set by Welsh Government. We cannot deal with these challenges in isolation, so the need to work as one council and with our partners across the region and nationally is of huge importance to enable us to continue to deliver our statutory responsibilities. We will be looking to engage with those who use our service and staff to look for ideas on how we can achieve efficiencies and look at ways in which we can generate income now and into the future.

This Annual Report of the Director of Social Services provides a snapshot of service activity undertaken throughout 2022/23. Details of Further supporting information and links can be found on the following page:



Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Useful Documents

Reports to Social Services Scrutiny Committee - <http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1157&Year=0&LLL=0>

Council Corporate Plan – https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Policies_Strategies_Plans/Corporate_Plan_2018-22.pdf

Blaenau Gwent Council Budget Monitoring - <http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=1148&Year=0&LLL=0>

Social Services Website – <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/>

Workforce Development - <http://socialservicesblaenau-gwent.caerphilly.gov.uk/>

Balancing Rights and Responsibilities Programme Evaluation, October 2022



Appendix B.docx

Internal Audit Corporate Safeguarding Report

Audit Wales Safeguarding Report <https://www.audit.wales/publication/blaenau-gwent-county-borough-council-corporate-safeguarding-follow>

Safeguarding Performance Report April 2022 – June 2022 <https://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/documents/s12813/Appendix%201.pdf?LLL=0>

Useful Websites

Social Care Wales - <https://socialcare.wales>

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) - <https://careinspectorate.wales/>

Data Cymru - www.data.cymru

Dewis Wales - <https://www.dewis.wales>

Gwent Safeguarding - <https://www.gwentsafeguarding.org.uk/en/Home.aspx>

Public Service Board - <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/council/partnerships/partnership-working/>

South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board - www.sewsc.org.uk

Providing Feedback

Social Services welcomes feedback on the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services. Your views are important to us. Please contact us if you would like to give feedback on the plan or if you require this document in a different format e.g. large print, Braille, audio version, etc.

Fersiwn Gymraeg

Yn unol â Chynllun Iaith Gymraeg y Cyngor, bydd fersiwn Gymraeg o Adroddiad Blynyddol y Cyfarwyddwr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol ar gael ar wefan y Cyngor.

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