

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2023)

Service Area	2022/2023 Variance Outturn 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at June 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Sept 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Dec 2023 £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Looked After Children					<u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u>		Loredana Moruz
Children's Homes	(816,202)	(646,761)	(855,184)	(321,437)	The Looked After Children's budget has seen an overall reduction of £306,000. The main adverse variances being Children's Homes and Fostering & Independent Living Placements. These changes are mainly due to the following: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability Grant is now being fully utilised within Children's Homes - £278,000 has been transferred from Community Care, to assist in mitigating this cost pressure in year. • The number of residential placements reduced by 2 to 9, one of which moved to a supported living placement which are less costly – a reduction of £256,000. • The number of in-house foster placements increasing by 1, and kinship placements increasing by 6 – an increase of £34,000 • The number of IFA's reduced by 2 to 35, one of which turned 18 but was accounted for within the forecast for the full year– a reduction of £22,000. 		
Fostering & Independent Living Placements	(139,176)	(251,599)	(417,897)	(646,060)			

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2023)

Service Area	2022/2023 Variance Outturn 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at June 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Sept 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Dec 2023 £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supported living placement that transferred from Residential Placements increased the costs by £66,000. • A new Mother & Baby placement of £150,000 <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement from the Head of Service (HOS) is required for all residential placements. • Each placement is being reviewed on a monthly basis by the Head of Service with Team Managers. • There are a number of preventative services in place, which include the Supporting Change Team and MYST, both initiatives will potentially reduce the number of children within residential placements in the long term. • In house provision of a Children's Residential Home and a multi-use provision is currently in the development stage, identified savings will be built into Bridging the Gap to support the Council's budget pressures in 2025/26 and future years. 		

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2023)

Service Area	2022/2023 Variance Outturn 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at June 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Sept 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Dec 2023 £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Looked After Children							Rachel Price / Andrea Jones
Legal Fees	(335,729)	(200,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)	<p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u></p> <p>The reason for the adverse variance is due to the requirement of using the external provider to finalise existing cases. All cases supported by the external provider will cease as at the end of October 2023</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BGCBC has entered an SLA with Caerphilly CBC to provide Children's legal services. This arrangement commenced on 1st April 2022 and will mitigate this cost pressure for future years. A two-tier system will remain in place for the current financial year 2023/24 until the existing cases have been finalised by the external provider. All new cases will be dealt with by Caerphilly CBC and will be funded through the SLA. 		

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2023)

Service Area	2022/2023 Variance Outturn 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at June 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Sept 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Dec 2023 £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
Other Children's and Family Services					<u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u>		Loredana Moruz
Permanency Allowances	(44,538)	(51,711)	(92,679)	(104,762)	The reason for this adverse variance is due to the number of Special Guardianship allowances gradually increasing, plus interagency fees.		
When I'm Ready	(52,974)	(64,320)	(64,320)	(62,262)	The reason for this adverse variance is the number of placements continually increasing, placements have increased by 3 since March 2023.		
					<u>Actions</u>		
					The long-term plan is to cease commissioning costly Independent Fostering Agency Placements in line with Welsh Government's strategy to eliminate profit making provision for Children in Care by 1 st April 2027.		
					The Authority's focus will be to bring Independent Foster Carers in house and promote and provide alternative care provision such as Special Guardianship Orders which		

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2023)

Service Area	2022/2023 Variance Outturn 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at June 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Sept 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Dec 2023 £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
					<p>will reduce the CLA population in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>The savings achieved from reducing IFA's & Residential Placements will mitigate this cost pressure and fund the expected increase in the alternative care provision in the future.</p>		
<p>Older People (Aged 65 or Over)</p> <p>Cwrt Mytton</p> <p>Learning Disabilities Aged 65 and Under</p> <p>Supported Living Bungalows</p>	<p>(437,937)</p> <p>(124,323)</p>	<p>(113,115)</p> <p>(49,451)</p>	<p>(121,946)</p> <p>(71,847)</p>	<p>(77,347)</p> <p>(129,707)</p>	<p><u>Reason for Adverse Variance</u></p> <p>The reason for the adverse variances in Cwrt Mytton & Support Living bungalows is due to an increase in staffing costs, in relation to the use of agency staff to cover vacant posts, sickness absences and the pay award. There is also reduced income due to current tenant vacancies within our Supported Living Services</p> <p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A staff restructure and recruitment drive has been undertaken within Provider Services to address the staffing issues currently encountered, these actions have improved the financial position from the Outturn. 		<p>Hannah Baulch / Joanne Hawkins</p> <p>Alison Minett / Helen Beecham</p>

Action Plan

Social Services

2023/24 Forecast Adverse Variances (as at 31st December 2023)

Service Area	2022/2023 Variance Outturn 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at June 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Sept 2023 £	2023/2024 Variance as at Dec 2023 £	Action Required & Timescale	Financial Impact £	Responsible Officer
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Jan 24 - The staffing levels at both Cwrt Mytton and Supported Living service has improved as a result of reducing staff absences and successful staff recruitment and subsequently our reliance on agency staff use has reduced. A full review of staffing contracts has been completed in Cwrt Mytton and the process across our Supported Living service is due to be completed by the end of January 24. 		