



Social Services Annual Report 2015 - 2016

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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Contents

Foreword	3
Infographic	8
Introduction	11
Children's Services	13
Adult Services	36
Managing our Business	59
Risk Register	73
More than Words	77
Looking Forward to 2016/2017	79

Foreword

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Social Services Annual Report 2015/16. 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.

Over the past year the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has been a focus of the work of the Department. The Act aims to provide the most radical change to the way in which we provide Social Services since 1948. It focuses on improving the wellbeing of people who come to Social Services for support. It is person centred and focuses on preventative services and reducing the need for care and support. It recognises that responsibility lies not only within Social Services Departments, but in the wider Local Authority and with our partners (particularly health and the third sector).

Blaenau Gwent has been working towards the principles of the Act for some time, developing preventative services (in Supporting

People and Families First); encouraging people to remain as independent as possible ('Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in 21st Century') and the work undertaken in Learning Disability (the BOLD project) which is a systems approach and very much in line with the principles of the Act. We still have some way to go to be fully compliant, and change will not simply be a result of changing processes and procedures but a complete cultural change for both ourselves and the public. Understandably this will take some time to embed.

For a number of years this report has included an update on the financial situation whereby the combination of reducing budgets and increasing demand for our services has meant that we need to ensure we work smarter to deliver the best possible services for people living in Blaenau Gwent. A focus on our finances has been a key priority over the past few years as the Council is required to meet substantial savings, which will continue over the coming years. In order to address these

savings requirements the service has identified a range of initiatives and efficiency savings to meet the reduction in the budget. Budget savings in previous years have included a decision to outsource more of our in house Home Care service and the restructuring of our service areas to provide a more effective and efficient service.

As part of the restructuring, Children's Social Work Locality Teams have been developed that cover geographical areas in order to improve multi agency links. In Adult Social Services links with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) have been improved in order to shape future integration.

As part of our collaboration agenda with partners two new Health and Social Care hubs for the East and West of the Borough have been established to improve communication, reduce duplication and reduce the complexity of accessing Health and Social Care services.

Over the past year the department has been working on a national, regional and local basis to prepare for the changes ahead. The current

situation in relation to the various Sections of the Act includes:

- **Training** – Working with the Care Council for Wales to develop a national framework for training. The first cohort of people to be trained will be Team Managers, Senior Practitioners and those at the front line (Information, Advice and Assistance).
- **Information Advice and Assistance (I.A.A)** – Working with colleagues in the Communications Team to develop the new “front door” approach – this coincides with work being done across the Council on the Customer and Digital Transformation programme.
- **Assessment/ Care and Support Plans** – The East Community Team has trialled a new approach to assessment by asking service users the “what matters to you” question in order to create an outcome focussed approach.
- **Looked After Children** – The challenge in relation to Looked After Children will be the

understanding of how the Act has changed previous legislation and ensure current procedures are in place and practice is compliant with this.

- **Safeguarding** – There will be more changes for Adult Safeguarding and training has taken place for relevant staff.
- **Charging** – Involvement in the technical groups and reporting on changes to the charging policy.

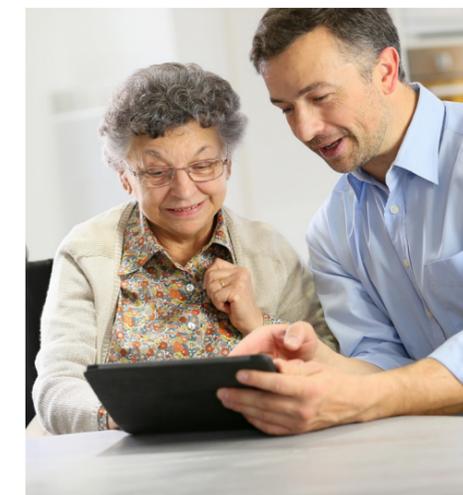
The Department has done as much as possible to be ready for the Act and it is clear that such a radical transformation will require time to implement and embed.

A very positive development this year with regards to the Act has been the agreement by Welsh Government to fund the national Community Care Information System which will replace Draig, but should also provide the opportunity for a single system across Social Services and Health Community Services.

Here are some of the highlights from 2015/16:

Excellent performance by Youth Offending Service

The Blaenau Gwent/Caerphilly Youth Offending Service has been awarded a purple grading by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in recognition of their outstanding performance. This grading is the highest possible level that can be awarded to a Youth Offending Service, with the Blaenau Gwent/Caerphilly service being the only one in Wales to receive it.



There has been a six year decline in the number of children and young people that have become first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System. The most recent figures published by the YJB show that from January 2014 to December 2014, there was a 39.4% decrease compared to the previous year. The reoffending rate has also decreased from 32.3% to 29.6%, as indicated by the most recent figures published.

Community Options Award Celebration October 2015

Community Options were very proud to hold their third annual Achievement Award Celebration. Throughout the year service users participated in 25 achievement categories, 144 awards were presented to service users by the Executive Member for Social Services and the Mayor of Blaenau Gwent.

Looked After Children (LAC) Awards

On 20th November 2015 the achievements of Blaenau Gwent's LAC were celebrated in what has become an annual award ceremony. The ceremony, held at the Ebbw Vale Institute, was well attended with a wide array of awards being given for academic achievement and also for children and young people who had made progress in other areas of school life.

Transforming Blaenau Gwent Programme Financial Efficiency Projects

The Council is embedding a transformation programme to improve service delivery and make financial savings. As part of this a number of replicative teams within each service area have been consolidated into central teams.

This has included Performance Management, Finance functions including budget management, the collection of income and debt management, Workforce Development and Business Support.

It is encouraging to recognise the good work that has been undertaken within the department at a time of reducing resources. However, we are aware that there will be increasing pressures on us to deliver quality services to improve outcomes for the residents

of Blaenau Gwent over the next year. Our focus will be very much on achieving this whilst being conscious of the demands on our workforce.



Liz Majer
Director of Social Services



Cllr Hadyn Trollope
Executive Member - Social Services

Infographic

The infographic below shows key information on how Social Services has performed in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15.



The percentage of **Protection of Vulnerable Adult** referrals completed where the risk has been managed remains above target at **91.1%**.



Community Care

The rate of older people aged 65+ being supported within the community has seen an improvement from **120.89** to **108.40** in 2015/2016.

Hospital Discharge

The number of people delayed in being discharged from hospital due to social care reasons has seen an improvement with the number decreasing from **20** in 2014/15 to **5** in 2015/16.

Families First / Flying Start

434 the number of parents who enrolled on a parenting programme in 2015/16 compared to **317** last year.

The number of parents that access Flying Start or are referred to Families First that are supported to progress with achieving employment status has improved from **185** in 2014/15 to **228** in 2015/16.



The percentage of LAC reviews completed within statutory timescale remain consistently high at **96.7%**.



The percentage of Looked after Children who have had 3 or more placements during the year has seen an improvement with a declining figure from **15.4%** in 2014/15 to **12.4%** in 2015/16.



The numbers of initial child protection conferences and review child protection conferences held within required timescales continues to remain **above 95%**.



Assistive Technology

The number of adult clients assessed during the year who are provided with electronic assistive technology as part of a package of care has increased from **274** in 2014/15 to **279** in 2015/16.



Looked After Children

93.76%
Secondary school Attendance in 2015/16.
96.93%
Primary school Attendance in 2015/16.



Child Protection

The number of children on the child protection register as at 31st March 2016 was **71** with **100%** of child protection reviews being carried out within the statutory timescale.



93.8%
of service users felt they were treated with dignity and respect by Social Services.

74.6%
of adults reported that we helped them to feel safe.



Introduction

The 2015/16 Annual Report covers the period April 2015 to March 2016. It provides a balanced overview of performance information, statistics, case studies, achievements and challenges to show the impact our work has had on individual's lives.

The information contained in the report will be of interest to a wide audience that includes citizens living in Blaenau Gwent, people who access our services, carers, key stakeholders, partner agencies and regulators.

About Blaenau Gwent

The area consists of three distinctive valleys, supporting the five main towns of Abertillery, Nantyglo and Blaina, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale and Tredegar.

Of the 22 local authorities in Wales, Blaenau Gwent is the second smallest with an estimated population of 69,674. This compares with an average population across all Welsh local authorities of 141,000 and an average of 74,000 across the

comparable authorities (Isle of Anglesey, Ceredigion and Merthyr Tydfil). The projections for Blaenau Gwent's population are expected to see a decrease of over 6% by 2036.

Blaenau Gwent is an area rich in both economic and social history but the decline of the former heavy industries has left high levels of poverty, poor health and unemployment.

The area has some of the highest levels of social and economic deprivation across Wales. 47% of Blaenau Gwent's local areas are amongst the top 20% deprived areas in Wales.

Blaenau Gwent has a higher rate of adult social care clients per 1,000 population than the comparable authorities. The rate was also higher than the Wales average. The rate of children per 1,000 population was higher than the rate for the comparable authorities and also higher than the Wales average.

Blaenau Gwent prioritised 21% more spending on social care provision than the level set out by the Welsh Government. The comparable authorities spent, on average, 24% more.

In 2014/15, Blaenau Gwent increased the total number of social work staff it employed owing to an increase in the number of Looked After Children. For the same period the number of social service staff employed across Wales decreased.

In line with national trends the demographic profile of Blaenau Gwent is changing. Improved living conditions and advances in medical science mean people are now living longer than in the early part of the last century; however life expectancy in Blaenau Gwent is 10 years lower than our neighbouring authority Monmouthshire.

As we start to realise the impact of these demographic changes on our services, we have been implementing more innovative methods of working in order to meet this increased demand at a time of reducing Welsh Government budget allocations.



About the Social Services Department

The department consists of three service areas as highlighted below.

Children's Services

The remit of the service is to ensure that the assessed needs of children and young people are met by supporting families, and working jointly with key partners. The service works to protect children and young people at risk of harm and only where absolutely necessary seek to look after children and young people outside of their family home.

The service includes: Assessment, Care Planning, Review, Safeguarding, 14+, Children with Disabilities, Fostering, Adoption, Youth Offending Service, Flying Start, Families First and Early Years and Play.



Adult Services

The remit of the service is to protect vulnerable adults aged 18 and over. Working jointly with key partners enables vulnerable adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives which includes remaining in their own home for as long as possible. The service covers: Assessment, Care Management, Prevention and Provider Services including Community Options (Day Services and work projects), Domiciliary Care, Residential Care, Supported Living, Respite Care and Supporting People.

Business Management

The remit of the service is to support frontline services and processes ensuring that the services we provide are high quality and value for money. The service leads on aspects of Information Technology and Systems, Contracts and Commissioning, Direct Payments and supports Performance Management and Quality Assurance.

Progress against priorities

Each year an assessment of work undertaken is completed by the Children's, Adult and Business Services. The following sections are split per service and show the priorities for 2015/16, along

with a high level summary self-assessment. Further detail of key areas of work is detailed throughout the rest of this section. Our self assessment uses the BRAG rating –

BRAG Status	Meaning
Blue	Action has been completed
Green	No issues, action is on track to be completed by planned end date
Amber	Minor issues that may prevent action being completed by planned end date
Red	Significant issues that will prevent action being completed by planned end date

Please note that some priorities are recorded as partially completed as they are long term priorities which will continue into 2016/17. It is also important to note that even though a number of priorities have been achieved this year

due to the nature of the priority and our long term commitment to early intervention and prevention, promotion of independence and safeguarding, a number of these priorities will be developed even further in 2016/17.

Children's Services

Children's Services	
Priority Title	Self Assessment
Continue to strengthen partnership working and identify improved outcomes for families involved with Flying Start, Families First, Early Years, Play and Social Services.	Achieved – This year has seen the development of much stronger links between all teams under the Children's Services portfolio which has improved partnership working. This has been evidenced by the increase in referrals from the locality teams into Families First, and the development of a pilot project in Flying Start outreach element being used for babies placed on the child protection register.

All Teams to contribute to improving outcomes for LAC and Care Leavers.	Achieved – The Corporate Parenting Board has become one of the real drivers in improving outcomes for LAC. The Board has multi-agency attendance alongside the Executive Member for Social Services and the Social Services Scrutiny Chair and Vice-Chair. The action plan from the CSSIW inspection has been implemented and has involved profiling our LAC population to identify those presenting vulnerable/risky behaviours.
All Teams to deliver services that safeguard children and young people.	Achieved - The Local Learning and Review Group which sits under the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board has met consistently during 2015/16 and continues to enjoy multi-agency attendance. The group has adapted to the changes in priority from the Board and become more practitioner focused. Estyn recently re-inspected the Local Authority and Recommendation seven, which centred on safeguarding, was deemed to be good.
All Teams contribute to the improvement of placement stability for LAC.	Achieved - As part of the Welsh Governments push to improve outcomes for LAC, they have supported the third sector in applying for Big Lottery funding to roll out a 'Confidence in Care' training programme to foster carers across Wales. A selection of Blaenau Gwent foster carers is currently undertaking this 12 week training programme. The training is research based and demonstrates an increase in placement stability and better educational outcomes for children.
Blaenau Gwent as host of the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) will ensure compliance with the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015	Achieved - The SEWAS Regional Team has been successful in bringing together a workforce from across five local authorities with varying practices, procedures and cultures.
Ensure the workforce is prepared to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.	Partially Achieved - Training on the principles of the Act is underway, however, significantly more in-depth training is required over the next 12 months to understand and implement the requirements under the codes of practice relating to the Act.

Children's Services

Category: Responding to Need - Progress and Challenges

Progress made in 2015/16

A review of the Families First provision was undertaken early in 2016, with the intention of remodelling the service during 2016/17. This was in order to upskill the staff to increase confidence in managing more complex cases which do not meet the statutory threshold for intervention. As a result of this initial review a more in-depth needs analysis based on the last three years performance information is now being done. This is alongside upskilling workers by secondments into the locality teams to increase knowledge and experience.

Flying Start has successfully rolled out into Hilltop in Ebbw Vale, Cwm and Brynithel during the financial year. This has increased the number of children eligible for Flying Start services from 966 at the end of 2014/15 to 1,071 at the end of 2015/16. The outreach element of Flying Start has been targeted at babies

who names are being placed on the child protection register. The highest referral rate into Families First is from Social Services, which provides evidence of the workforce awareness raising having worked during 2015/16.

The Families First and Flying Start projects are now using the same data base for recording as Children's Social Services. This is in order to enable better information sharing and the development of a robust quarterly performance monitoring report being developed for the Children's Senior Management Team.

The Corporate Parenting Board has become one of the real drivers in improving outcomes for LAC. The Board has multiagency attendance alongside the Executive Member for Social Services and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee. This year has seen the following improved outcomes:

- Decrease in the number and length of fixed term exclusions in academic year 2014/15. The total days reduced from 131- 47.5

- Systems in place to monitor outcomes for those who are presenting risky/vulnerable behaviours such as child sexual exploitation and sexually harmful behaviour.
- LAC who left formal education in July 2014 are being tracked to ensure every effort is made to ensure they remain engaged with education, training or employment.
- Following the CSSIW inspection of LAC and care leavers who present risky/vulnerable behaviours, an action plan has been prepared and implemented during the year. The main achievements have been:
 - Re-establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board;
 - Re-establishment of the LAC Forum to strengthen the voice of our LAC in service developments;
 - A new risk assessment model adopted and mandatory training taking place; and
 - A quarterly report on practice issues raised by Independent Reviewing Officers presented to Senior Management Team within Children's Services on a quarterly basis.

Recommendations from research undertaken by the National Youth Advocacy Service have been partially implemented. Workshops have been held to support care leavers to develop their independent living skills which, in turn, will help them successfully move on from foster care when they wish to do so. A decision has been taken to bring the contact workers back together as one team instead of the resource being spread over the locality teams. This will achieve a better understanding of, and management of, the contact needs for LAC and provide a more consistent approach.

Team Managers and Senior Practitioners have received initial awareness training on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Meetings have been held with the Corporate Performance Team to ensure systems are in place from April 2016 to capture the new performance indicator requirements.

As part of the corporate agenda to progress the customer digital work stream, Service Managers have been instrumental in ensuring the new front door of the Local Authority is compliant with the Act

in ensuring the information, advice and assistance requirements are embedded.

Challenges in 2015/16

There has been a continued increase in the numbers of referrals into Families First. The numbers of referrals made into Social Services has remained on par with the previous year; however the number of cases being put before the court and the numbers of LAC has increased significantly. This has led to the agreement by Corporate Management Team to provide additional social work resources on a time limited basis.

The take up of Families First from families referred into Social Services, who then do not meet the eligibility criteria for statutory services, has been very low with only 11% year to date. The reasons for this need to be understood to promote a greater uptake of services to meet lower level needs.

The number of parenting programmes delivered during the year has reduced, despite there now being a dedicated Parenting Team in place. The largest reason for referrals into Families First is parenting. The challenge for

2016/17 will be to increase the number of parenting programmes delivered, and understanding why there has been a dip in delivery throughout 2015/16.

In relation to improving outcomes for LAC, despite some good progress being made and systems being put in place to track and monitor progress across the service, the challenge is now to demonstrate tangible evidence of how the service is making a difference.

The following areas will require this consideration throughout 2016/17:

- A reduction in sexual exploitation risk via interventions provided;
- To see a reduction in sexually harmful behaviour via interventions provided;
- Developing a clear pathway of support for LAC to access education, training and employment;
- Ensuring all 16 and 17 year olds have suitable accommodation to meet their needs by only using B&B as a last resort; and

- Improving the way we communicate with LAC, care leavers and foster carers and involve them in improving service delivery.

The significant rise in looked after numbers has presented a real challenge in being able to place LAC with Blaenau Gwent carers. This has resulted in the increased use of Independent Providers which is a more costly option but not necessarily a superior one.

The Department has been able to accommodate a number of large sibling groups who were initially placed together in foster care. However, due to their emerging needs being very complicated, this has resulted in placement moves.

Due to the codes of practice in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act only recently being issued by Welsh Government, it has been difficult to understand and develop what will change under the Act. Developing a more detailed understanding of the codes of practice will be critical throughout 2016/17.

Category: Safeguarding - Progress and Challenges

The Director of Social Services has a statutory responsibility for safeguarding within the Local Authority. The safeguarding of children and young people continues to be a priority for the Council as a whole and constitutes a key element of the core business of Children's Services. A high level of risk is attached not only for the children of Blaenau Gwent but for the Council as a whole if safeguarding is not delivered correctly. It remains a standing agenda item at the weekly Corporate Management Team meetings, has been included on the Corporate Risk Register and, as noted by our progress made this year, multi-disciplinary working continues to be fundamental in addressing safeguarding issues.

The Local Learning and Review Group, which sits under the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board, has met consistently during 2015/16 and continues to enjoy multi-agency attendance.

The group has adapted to the changes in priority from the board and become more practitioner focused.

Estyn recently re-inspected the Local Authority and Recommendation seven, which centred on safeguarding across the Local Authority, was deemed to be good, which was an excellent achievement as a result of the hard work of all involved.

The Joint Safeguarding Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee meets termly with three meetings being held annually. Systems are in place to report each schools' safeguarding activity in relation to the numbers of Child Protection referrals made into Social Services. This level of information allows the Education Safeguarding Manager to target schools that don't make referrals to explore the reasons why.

The SEWAS regional team was developed in April 2014. There have been continuing challenges in bringing together a workforce from five local authorities with varying practices, procedures

and cultures; however, the service has continued to make progress. Welsh Government guidance says it should take eight months from the first enquiry to when a person is approved as an adopter. The average time taken within SEWAS is seven months. In other regions across Wales the average time it took from a child becoming looked after to being placed for adoption was 16.8 months.

Prior to the development of the National Adoption Service the average time across Wales was 26 months. This reduction in waiting time is a significant achievement within the region. Reviews of the different functions of SEWAS have been undertaken which has resulted in the reconfiguration of resources to better meet the needs of the service. This has included the development of Senior Practitioner posts and allocating social work time to support the adoption support team. This is in order to address the needs of adopted children at an early stage and prevent placement breakdown.

Under the Act the region is required to set up a management committee to oversee the work of the regional service. This is in place and has met quarterly since 2014. The committee has multi-agency attendance with strong engagement from health.

Challenges in 2015/16

All teams have followed the All Wales Safeguarding Children Procedures consistently throughout the year. This combined with other factors has led to a 50% increase in cases being put before the court between April to December 2015 due to safeguarding concerns. This has in turn resulted in a significant increase in our LAC numbers from 145 to 188. This increase in statutory work has reduced the capacity to progress service developments such as auditing the multi-agency involvement in strategy meetings and expanding the profiling of children exhibiting vulnerable behaviours beyond our LAC population.

An increase in workload inevitably increases the pressure on the workforce. The challenge going forward into 2016/17 will be to maintain a stable workforce.

As a region the SEWAS service is still in its infancy. The performance information being collated on a national level is helping regions understand the market for adoptive placements. The majority of adopters want to adopt babies however; those children waiting to be adopted are older children and sibling groups. This is proving a challenge as there is a mis-match in the market.



Category – Complaints and Compliments 2015/16

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 complaints procedure provides people with the opportunity to voice their concerns if and or when they are dissatisfied with a service

The total number of complaints received in 2015/16 was 32, out of these:

- 14 were received and resolved within 24 hours;
- 17 were received at stage 1, of which 14 were resolved and;
- 3 were still being investigated at year-end.

Out of the 17 Stage 1 complaints received:

- 5 were completed within timescale;
- 9 were completed outside of timescale; and
- 3 were carried forward into 2016/17.

One stage 2 complaint was received and this was also still being investigated at year-end.

Nature of Complaints

The nature of complaints received included:

- Lack of communication, support and consultation with parents of LAC;
- Unhappy with the service received;
- Unhappy with the way they were spoken to;
- Didn't feel listened to;
- Breakdown in relationship between social worker/parent resulting in a request for a new social worker; and
- Lack of communication in terms of planned changes of social care staff attending annual reviews and children's foster placements.

Lessons learnt/Action taken

- Reinforcing to staff in team meetings the importance of regular and clear communication between the worker, the child and parents.
- Reminding staff they should have discussions with foster

carers, in advance in regard to who will be attending annual reviews and the purpose for attendance.

- Training arranged for staff on how to deal with issues of conflict within families and in relation to court processes and procedures.

Improving Services

Senior Management takes complaints very seriously and they ensure that recommendations identified as part of the investigations are implemented in order to inform/train staff and also to continue to improve services.

Number of Complaints received - last 3 years

Children's Services Complaints		
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
19	27	18

Number of compliments received – last 3 years

Children's Services welcome positive feedback and compliments and use this information to improve our services.

Children's Services Compliments		
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
16	6	16

Children's Services Compliments

The nature of compliments received included:

- Thank you to staff for being amazing and for listening;
- Praise for the quality of life story books;
- Thank you on behalf of the children for all the work and they will miss the visits;
- Thank you for your support and the relationship you have formed with my son who has autism;
- Praise for the involvement with the family and the outcome; and
- Feedback from solicitors on the professional practice.



Case Studies

Care Leavers Week - 14+ Dragons Den Event

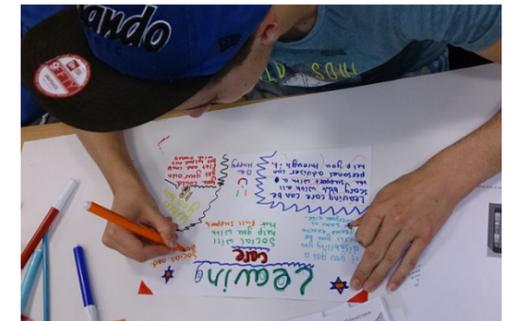
Blaenau Gwent 14+ Team held their first ever Care Leavers Event during the National Care Leavers Week. This was a great success with fantastic attendance from our young people who engaged incredibly well throughout the afternoon.

The aim of the event was to consult with young people about their personal advisor service, and for them to develop a leaflet for younger LAC to inform them of this service area.

The leaflets were judged by the Dragon's Den panel that included the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the Executive Member for Social Services and our Director.

We look forward to producing the winning leaflet in the New Year.

"Thank you for the support and telling people how I feel... My grandparents are now coming to see my school presentation"



Fostering Fortnight

On the 12th June Blaenau Gwent Placement Team completed a walk to raise the profile of fostering for Fostering Fortnight.

The walk was organised in partnership with The Fostering Network.

We had a large number of individuals who registered for the walk. We adopted a Hawaiian theme to raise more awareness. These included staff from Blaenau Gwent Children's Services, Staff and young people from Prevent and the Engage Project, Foster Carers from Blaenau Gwent Local Authority and Foster Care Cooperative.

Staff from Independent Children Services Ltd (ICS) and two CSO's officers from the Ebbw Vale ward also joined in the walk.

This evidenced a strong community spirit and partnership working. Three separate walks were completed:

Walkathon 1) Cwm to Beaufort Road Family Centre. Starting point Old Marine Colliery in Cwm.

Walkathon 2) Tredegar to Beaufort Road Family Centre. Starting point outside the main entrance of Bedwelty House.

Walkathon 3) Brynmawr to Beaufort Road Family centre. Starting point outside the grounds of The Willow Tree, Lakeside Retail Park.



"I feel better now I am not leaving my placement, thank you for helping me."

The Mayor Cllr Derrick Bevan attended and started the Cwm walkathon off and Deputy Mayor Cllr Barrie Sutton started off the Brynmawr walkathon.

Mayor Cllr Derrick Bevan, Deputy Mayor Cllr Barrie Sutton and Executive Member for Social Services Cllr Haydn Trollope welcomed the walkers back to Beaufort Road Family Centre.

After the walk we celebrated Fostering Fortnight with refreshments provided by Pizza Wheels. There was music provided, a bouncy castle, a children's entertainer, the balloon man show and a face painter.

The Owl Sanctuary attended along with staff from Bedwelty House and Head4Arts who facilitated the Hawaiian themed activities for the children. Families First, Family Intervention Service and Prevent

attended with stalls to promote their services.

Blaenau Gwent Placement Team would like to thank all those who attended who made a contribution to raise the profile of fostering in Blaenau Gwent.



"Thank you for speaking out for me and helping me understand what's going on..."

Looked After Children Awards 2015

On 20th November 2015 the achievements of Blaenau Gwent's LAC were celebrated in what has become an annual award ceremony.

The ceremony, held at the Ebbw Vale Institute, was well attended with a wide array of awards being given for academic achievement and also for children and young people who had made progress in other areas of school life (for example developing their social skills, confidence and managing their behaviours).

The Local Authority recognises its corporate parenting responsibilities and it was an emotional day for all concerned and staff were very proud that so many of our children were honoured in the ceremony.

We go into 2016 knowing that the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act will be implemented

from April 2016, and this will mean a cultural shift for ourselves, our partners and the public in how services are delivered. Care Council for Wales has worked with local authorities to develop training programmes to help implement this change.

From January 2016 the focus has been on delivering information, advice and assistance and team managers and senior practitioners who make decisions about eligibility.

From April 2016 more general training will be available and the Workforce Development Team will keep staff informed of what will be available and when.



“My advocate always helps me, she gets people to listen to what I have to say...”

Families First (East)

K was born premature and has a diagnosis of Russell-Silver syndrome which is a growth disorder characterized by slow growth before and after birth.

Both parents had difficulty managing K and also had learning needs. The family was referred to Families First for support with K who had a number of complex health needs and is registered as disabled. The family were initially reluctant to engage, but as the support was provided their engagement increased.

The Parents received parenting support and Mum also received mental health support. The Health Visitor is monitoring K as well as providing mum with support. K is receiving 5 days free childcare at a Flying Start setting.

The family were referred to Occupational Therapy for support with accessing a bath, hand rail and a fence for the back garden. The family are attending all health appointments that have been made for K and are engaging with all professionals.



“I like it that you support me through all my meetings...I have you on speed dial if I need you”

Disability Family Support Worker

C attends a local primary school and required support in school due to issues relating to his poor concentration, distraction and classroom behaviour.

Mum stated that she would like an updated Education Psychologist report to ensure that C accessed the appropriate support in school. There was also a concern around C's speech and language development.

Mum felt that C needed to be referred into the Primary Mental Health Team or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to be assessed for possible autism. A Team Around the Family (TAF) was set up and included the family, School, Health Visitor, Educational Psychologist & CAMHS. There was a referral made to the Primary Mental Health Team and also a Families First parent support group. A

referral was also made to speech & language for C. This support resulted in C receiving 1:1 teaching assistant support in a smaller classroom setting.

Mum continues to access support from Primary Mental Health Team and has been provided with strategies in managing behaviour at home which has resulted in a positive change in family dynamics.

An assessment with CAMHS resulted in a diagnosis of Autism. The family continues to receive support and this is having a positive impact on both.



"I like you helping me, you were really good at explaining things to me..."

Children's Services Data and Performance Comparison

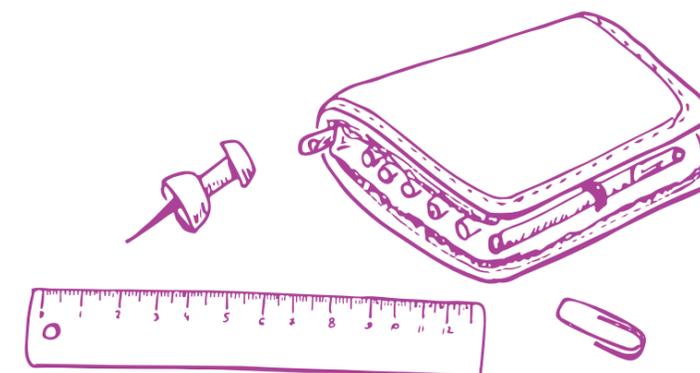
Indicator	Reported Performance			2015/16 Anticipated Performance	2015/16 Target	1 year Trend	Commentary
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15				
SCC/011b - The percentage of initial assessments in the month where there is evidence that the child has been seen alone by a social worker	44.1%	40.2%	38.8%	62.4%	40%	↑	This indicator has seen a large increase from the previous year.
SCC/002 - The percentage of children looked after at 31 March who have experienced one or more changes of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March	12.3%	13.3%	15.4%	17.5%	14%	↓	Of the 120 children 21 experience a move however, there are times when a move can be viewed positively, consolidating the child's permanent home.
SCC/041a - The percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children that have pathway plans as required	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	↔	This indicator continues at be 100%

SCC/004 - The percentage of children looked after on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	12.5%	11.2%	15.4%	12.4%	14%	↑	24 of 193 LAC Children have had three or more placement moves during the year.
SCC/011a - The percentage of initial assessments in the month where there is evidence that the child has been seen by a social worker	74.1%	68.5%	61.2%	56.8%	60%	↓	Increase in the number of LAC, only qualified Social Workers can see these cases which means that Support Workers have been undertaking initial assessments.
SCC/025 - The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations	86.6%	88.6%	88.8%	80.0%	90%	↓	749 of 936 LAC statutory visits have been completed in timescale.
SCC014 - The percentage of initial child protection conferences due which were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion	99.0%	99.1%	100%	95.1%	100%	↓	135 of 142 Initial Conferences were held within timescale.
SCC/042 - The percentage of initial assessments carried out within 7 working days	92.9%	91.8%	94.8%	86.6%	95%	↓	776 of 829 Initial Assessments have been completed within timescale. Additional Capacity is being put in place.
SCC/043 - The percentage of required core assessments carried out within 35 working days	93.9%	92.9%	94.2%	82.9%	95%	↑	This indicator continues to improve and is above target.

SCC/021 - The percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescale	98.0%	97.0%	97.9%	96.7%	100%	↓	469 of 485 LAC reviews were completed within timescale.
SCC/034 - Y ganran o adolygiadau amddiffyn plant a gynhaliwyd yn yr amserlen statudol	99.1%	97.0%	92.8%	100.0%	100%	↑	Mae'r dangosydd yma yn parhau i wella ac mae wedi cyflawni ei darged o 100%, gyda 252 o 252 Cynhadledd Adolygu Amddiffyn Plant yn cael eu cynnal yn yr amserlen.
SCC/001a - The percentage of first placements of looked after children during the year that began with a care plan in place	100%	100%	100%	90.3%	100%	↓	93 of 103 children have started to be looked after all of whom have had a LAC Care Plan in place.
(Local PI) - The percentage of approved foster carers that have an up-to-date annual review	92.2%	93.2%	98.5%	92.1%	100%	↓	58 of 63 approved foster carers have an up to date annual review
(Local PI) - The percentage of supervision sessions which took place on time	76.1%	77.2%	82.9%	84.6%	90%	↑	2089 of 2470 supervision sessions took place on time. There will be a percentage of supervision sessions that do not occur due to sickness and annual leave.
(Local PI) - The percentage of initial assessments completed in the month where there is evidence that the child has been seen	96.8%	98.7%	99.3%	97.3%	100%	↓	71 out of 73 initial assessments were completed where there is evidence that the child has been seen.
(Local PI) - The percentage of initial assessments completed in the month where there is evidence that the child has been seen	96.8%	99.3%	99.3%	97.3%	100%	↓	71 out of 73 initial assessments were completed where there is evidence that the child has been seen.

Former Outcome Agreement Indicators							
Number of parents that access Flying Start or are referred to Families First that are supported to progress with achieving employment status	22	32	185	228	200	↑	Performance improving year on year and exceeds target.
Number of parents that enroll on a Borough-wide Early Language Developmental Programme.	226	160	236	465	440	↑	Performance improving and exceeds target.
Number of parents that access Flying Start or are referred to Families First and enroll on a parenting programme.	142	156	317	434	340	↑	Performance improving year on year and exceeds target.
Percentage eligible children accessing Flying Start Childcare	58%	85%	90%	84%	91%	↓	Children who decline a childcare offer will be reoffered in case of change of circumstances. The main reason for decline of offer is that parents have alternative childcare arrangements.
Percentage of parents enrolled on a parenting programme that complete the course	51%	55%	79%	82%	80%	↑	Performance improving year on year and exceeds target.
Percentage of children enrolled on a Borough-wide Early Language Developmental Programme that complete the course	70%	44%	76%	89%	78%	↑	Performance improving and exceeds target.

Percentage of Flying Start children reaching or exceeding developmental milestones aged 3 years	51%	63%	68%	68%	68%	↔	Performance improving and target achieved.
Percentage of parents assessed after completion of a parenting programme that evidence improved parenting self-efficacy	62%	97%	98%	94%	99%	↓	Despite target not being achieved high performance remains.
Percentage of cases referred to Families First via a JAFF assessment for Team Around the Family support which have closed with a successful outcome	50%	65%	57%	64%	60%	↑	Performance improving and exceeds target.



Children's Services Key Priorities for 2016/17

Our 2016/17 priorities are set in line with the key points highlighted throughout this report, including continued development of preventative and early intervention services, promotion of independence, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and positive outcomes for LAC and care leavers at a time of reducing budgets.

Within Children's Services the main priorities for 2016/17 will be:

Priority - **All Teams to contribute to improve outcomes for LAC.**

Why is this important?

Blaenau Gwent and partners have a duty as corporate parents under the 2014 Children Act to improve outcomes for LAC. Research shows this cohort of children have the poorest outcomes in relation to health, education and employment. This status quo needs to be challenged by Blaenau Gwent as corporate parents.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- Maintain the average number of school exclusions at 3.5

- Maintain school attendance above 95%
- LAC identify how to improve outcomes and service delivery.

Priority - **All Teams to contribute to the safe reduction in the numbers of LAC.**

Why is this important?

Our LAC numbers have risen from 145 to 192 during this year. This is over the Wales average per 1000 children. There is also a clear drive from the Minister of Health and Social Care that LAC numbers should reduce.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- Reduced LAC figures to below 160.

Priority - **Ensure Families First, Flying Start, early years and play targets the most vulnerable families in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.**

Why is this important?

As a Local Authority we need to refocus the prevention and early intervention services to identify needs at an early stage and engage with families to support

them in meeting these needs. In turn this should reduce the number of families requiring statutory services, as a continual increase in the number of children on the Child Protection Register and the number of LAC is not sustainable.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- A restructure will have brought professionally qualified posts within the Families First Team to support the management of more complex needs.
- The numbers of families receiving Families First interventions who have not met the criteria for a care and support plan increase.
- The number of parenting programmes delivered increase.

Priority - **All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded.**

Why is this important?

The recent Estyn inspection highlighted safeguarding as good. This position must be maintained. The Act has new safeguarding requirements for adults which will require a refocus of services.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- The Corporate Safeguarding Team will have been formed
- All children on the Child Protection Register will have their reviews held within statutory timescale.

Priority - **The workforce needs to understand and deliver the requirements under the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**

Why is this important?

This Act came into force on the 6th of April 2016 and is the biggest change in child care legislation since the introduction of the Children Act 1989.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- Staff feel confident in their knowledge of the Act and this will be evidenced via a staff survey/ audit to be undertaken in late 2016.



Progress against priorities

Adult's Services

Adult Services	
Priority Title	Self Assessment
Social Services and Wellbeing Act Wales (2014)	Achieved - Work continues to progress to design both the Integrated Assessment (IA) and Information / Advice and Assistance (IAA) tools and structures. The proposed IA (Gwent wide) documentation was piloted in the Community Care Team (East) and tested on Social Services IT systems between January and March 2016. Training has been attended by all Service Managers, Team Managers and Senior Practitioners. Work continues to extend the outcome based approach and an evaluation report has been completed and forwarded to Welsh Government and the Department is awaiting a response. A work stream is in place to progress the development of outcome based commissioning arrangements. Workshops continued to be held with Providers to develop outcome based services.
Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century Strategy	Achieved - This work has been translated into the core work of the Independent Living Group with action plans updated as part of the work plan. Progress has been made across the eight key priorities within the 'Living Independently Strategy'. The Llys Nant Y Mynydd project is ongoing and progress is slowly improving. Health colleagues are working collaboratively with Social Care to develop an enhanced Community Resource Team / Home Care Model and a Project Officer has been appointed to drive this work forward starting in May 2016. Practitioners continue to contribute to work on developing outcome based approaches and the "what matters" conversations with service users. Work has been undertaken within Community Care East team to develop integrated approaches to service delivery in conjunction with District Nursing colleagues. Further work is to be developed in the Community Care West team.
Ensuring people receive the help they need to live fulfilled lives	Completed - This information will be monitored as part of the 'Living Independently Strategy'. This was formally collected by the Welsh Government as part of their Outcome Agreement monitoring but this is no longer required.

Progress the collaboration/ regional agenda with partners particularly Health	Achieved - LEAP 2 the Mental Health pilot project in the North of Caerphilly has continued throughout January to March 2016 and is regularly evaluated. Further elements of the mental health system are also being checked in Torfaen and the results also being presented back to the group. Systems thinking is working with the BOLD (Better Outcomes for Learning Disabilities) Team and is continuing to explore the model and how it can be extended across the Gwent area. A report was presented to the Partnership Board in late 2015 to provide an update on progress and agreement was obtained to continue the pilot for another 12 months. Contribution to regional work on the implementation of Integrated Assessment continues. Workshops have been undertaken at regional and local level with staff. Action learning sets with District Nurses and Social Workers have been delivered.
Develop alternative models of service delivery	Partially Achieved - Identifying a partner to progress the Community Options Café has been put on hold as the future of the Business Resource Centre in Tredegar is still to be decided. The 'Mynydd' Project continues to move forward slowly with reviews of tenants being sought and meetings being held between all stakeholders. The proposal for enhancing the Community Resource Team and Home Care to integrate the delivery of a reablement service has been agreed by the Task and Finish Group and signed off by Health Colleagues. A Project Officer has been appointed to progress this but they will not be in post until the end of May 2016.
Respond to the proposals for Improvement from CSSIW	Achieved - The Dementia Friendly Community work continues to go from strength to strength. A Dementia Friendly Community (DFC) implementation group has been established with a Terms of Reference and was launched officially on the 30th March 2016. The implementation group meets quarterly and has met three times since the accreditation. A regional Dementia Board has been established by the ABUHB and chaired by the Director of Nursing. The regional board leads on the implementation of the Welsh Government's 'Wales: Dementia Nation' strategy and meeting the objectives of the 'Ageing Well in Wales' and the work of the Older People's Commissioner. We have used the Dementia Friends awareness sessions as the main vehicle to raise awareness across Blaenau Gwent.

Adult Services

Category: Responding to Need - Progress and Challenges

Progress made in 2015/16

The work on quality assurance and commissioning now dovetails with the work being undertaken on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and particularly the outcomes model piloted for the Social Services Improvement Agency and Welsh Government. This work will develop and gather momentum as we start to implement the Act over the coming months and years.

The 'Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy' was reviewed in 2012 and was amended to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The ethos of the Strategy is to keep people within their own home for as long as possible, whilst the Act is about promoting early intervention and prevention by finding support within communities.

The eight priority areas of the Strategy continue to be a focus for improvement to services i.e. long term care by working with providers to ensure we meet the residential and nursing needs of the population; ensure we deliver appropriate, reliable and quality domiciliary care; further develop our reablement approach; ensure we support carers in their caring role; work closely with housing partners to develop a range of suitable accommodation; to promote and expand the use of assistive technology and direct payments; and promote skill development within Community Options to improve independence and self-confidence.

This year has seen the bedding in of the two Health and Social Care Community Teams which cover the Neighbourhood Care Network areas of East and West Blaenau Gwent; one is based in Anvil Court, Abertillery and the other at the Business Resource Centre, Tredegar. An evaluation is to be undertaken on the co-

location of social workers, district nurses and the Community Resource Team of the Gwent Frailty Project, at which point consideration will be given as to whether different approaches to the line management of these teams could be pursued. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there has been improved communication between professionals and as a result better outcomes for service users.

Following a visit to the 'Raglan' project in Monmouthshire and discussions with Home Care staff, the Members Task and Finish Group has agreed to implement a pilot project within Llys Nant Y Mynydd Extra Care scheme in Blaina. This is to try and move away from the 'time and task' orientated provision to a more relationship based model which supports individuals needs on a daily basis, depending on what they want to do on that day. The 'Mynydd' pilot project has commenced and is making slow progress, however there is a significant cultural change required not only from staff but from the individuals receiving care and their families. Staff have received training to support them in this change and with a number of

small steps the pilot should start to achieve momentum and move forward.

A project is being progressed to amalgamate the in-house Home Care Service with the current Reablement Service in the Community Resource Team of Frailty. The Members Task and Finish group have agreed the business case and have asked for a business plan to be developed to progress this further. In order to progress projects at an accelerated pace, a Project Manager post was identified and a successful bid to the Budget Contingency Fund has meant the appointment of an officer due to start at the end of May 2016.

During 2015/16 the Department continues to work with key partners including Registered Social Landlords (RSL) and our Care Home providers to increase our step up/step down (Intermediate Care) beds. This has been achieved through the investment of additional Welsh Government Intermediate Care Funding (ICF). The main focus of the additional units has been to reduce demand within Gwent hospitals by

reducing unnecessary admissions for patients and facilitating timely discharges. The reported figures for Delayed Transfers of Care (DTOC) continue to remain low at a rate of 0.89 per 1,000 population over the age of 75 in relation to Blaenau Gwent patients.

Assistive technology continues to be promoted and the assistive technology post within the Community Resource Team has been embedded so they are now more proactively considered at the first point of assessment. Direct payments has seen a small growth this year following review in 2014/15 although this continues to be a complex area of law for service users, their families and the department to deal with.

Skills continue to be developed in a number of innovative projects provided by Community Options and we are seeking to progress some of these into social firms with the hope that some of the students within these projects can be employed by the social firm or find employment within the community.

The four Community Connector posts established and funded

through the Intermediate Care Fund continue to support individuals who are isolated and lonely, reducing the potential for them to deteriorate to the point they need support from Social Services or Health. The Connectors have been instrumental in the expansion of community based activities throughout Blaenau Gwent and their work both on a one to one basis, through group activities and community sessions has proved popular with our communities.

Unpaid carers continue to be supported through the carers training programme. The department continually works to embed the role of the Carers Support Officer through the delivery of Carers events including a successful carers conference which was held in the autumn of 2015.

The Department is under considerable financial pressure and has worked hard to create more effective and efficient delivery of services. This has included robustly challenging continuing Health Care cases to ensure individuals are appropriately funded, participation in the Gwent

Frailty model and Reablement service by offering our facilities and services to Health and other local authorities e.g. Bert Denning, Augusta House and Supported Living Bungalows; Adult Services have successfully achieved the requested £480,000 savings for 2015/16 and has obtained an under spend of £1.053 million at the 31st March 2016.

Challenges in 2015/16

During a time of reduced budgets and increased savings, teams have continued to deliver services on the front line without affecting the public, however with service demands and changes in practice e.g. the forthcoming new Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; this may have an impact in the future. At times capacity has been an issue due to staff sickness and staff condensing or reducing hours to achieve a more equitable work/home life balance.

The department prepared for an anticipated budget cut to the Supporting People Team of up to 10% for 2016/17; however these

cuts did not materialise, although a number of service areas have been reviewed and a number of services have been recommissioned to deliver more customer focussed, efficient and effective housing related provision.

Accommodation at the Business Resource Centre for the Community Care West Team and the Community Resource Team (CRT) is not of the same standard as that experienced by the other Adult Services Teams. The fabric of the building and external conditions have been difficult for staff. However, it is recognised that it enables Community Care, CRT and District Nurses to be co-located, which supports our strategic aim of integrating community health and social care services. A review of the future of the building will take place during the beginning of the new financial year.



The commissioning/contracts for telecare/piper lifeline are managed corporately whilst the marketing and installation is managed within Adult Services. The challenge is to realign the responsibilities and accountabilities to one department.

This year there has been slow progress in some of the identified projects that need to be progressed. A Members Task and Finish Group has agreed to progress a business plan for the Community Options Cafe project based at the Business Resource Centre in Tredegar.

It was agreed to commission a partner organisation to work with the department to develop such a business plan for the cafe. However, progress on this has been hampered as a decision on the future of the Business Resource Centre is still to be made.

For all teams the remodelling of current service provision in preparation for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is an area for development

by CSSIW, the action plan and performance measures are updated on a quarterly basis and ensures that the department plans strategically to develop and deliver support to safeguarding vulnerable adults across Blaenau Gwent.



Category: Safeguarding - Progress and Challenges

Progress made in 2015/16

The safeguarding of vulnerable adults remains a key priority, not only for Adult Services, but for the Council as a whole. Managing the service means the department has responsibility for the daily co-ordination and management of adult safeguarding referrals and concerns by investigating any identified risks to ensure appropriate outcomes, not only for the vulnerable adults, but also the perpetrator and service provider/commissioners.

The department is part of the Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board whose responsibility is to provide a strategic lead on the protection of vulnerable adults across Gwent. At a local level the department has increased the capacity of the Adult Protection (POVA) Team with the addition of a social work post. The increase has been as part of the preparation for the implementation of new duties we are facing with the implementation of the Social

Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

An action plan has been implemented for each of the eight areas within the 'Living Independently in the 21st Century Strategy', with performance measures included as part of the Strategy. As recommended by CSSIW, the action plan and performance measures are updated on a quarterly basis and ensures that the department plans strategically to develop and deliver support to safeguarding vulnerable adults across Blaenau Gwent.

Over the last 12 months we have seen the closure of residential and nursing beds (Cwm Seren), whilst a new residential service has opened (Chiltern Place) providing accommodation for individuals with dementia needs, which evidences the department continues to closely monitor and manage the care home market.



There is the continued management and monitoring of the domiciliary care provision within the market place. The Reablement Service within the Community Resource Team is a critical component in the delivery of preventative services and assessment of need.

Further work is underway to enhance this provision during 2016/17 with the integration of the function with the in-house home care team.

Work on new approaches across Gwent to safeguard adults at risk and provide more person centred approaches continues to be piloted. Within Mental Health Services there is continued learning from the experience of the Adult's Mental Health Team (LEAP) based in Rhymney, Caerphilly, which follows the systems thinking approach. There has also been further roll out of the project to test this approach within Talygarn Hospital.

Work is focussing on evaluating the evidence of this approach and whether it can be rolled out to all areas across Gwent within the current financial envelope.

This year we have introduced the Better Outcomes for Learning Disabilities (BOLD) model using the systems thinking approach within learning disabilities.

The pilot project is being undertaken in Blaenau Gwent and the learning from the project is being shared with other local authorities and the Health Board. This project will also be evaluated and evidence gathered to consider the benefits of this approach and whether it can also be rolled out to all areas of Gwent.



Challenges in 2015/16

- The Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Team have had their capacity increased which will have to be monitored closely over the next 12 months owing to the introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and its new responsibilities and powers which may create additional demand.
- A Supreme Court judgement changed what constitutes a Deprivation of Liberty in March 2014. This resulted in a large increase in Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs). The Gwent DoLs Team has been unable to meet the current demands even though additional staffing resources have been allocated by each local authority and the ABUHB. As a result, a backlog of requests has occurred which the Team are working on to try to reduce.
- To move to a single integrated Children, Education and Adult Safeguarding Team and to explore the possibilities of developing a Gwent wide Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.



Category: 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 complaints procedure provides people with the opportunity to voice their concerns if and or when they are dissatisfied with a service. Within Adult services only 3 complaints were received, all were received at stage 1 and all were resolved at this stage. Out of these, 2 were resolved within timescale and 1 was resolved outside of timescale.

Nature of Complaints

The nature of complaints received included:

- Lack of help and support from a service;
- Lack of communication with family members;
- Moving a family member to an alternative placement without offering advocacy support; and

- Lack of clarity in informing the family of the increase in financial contributions as a result of a change in placement.

Lessons Learnt /Action Taken

- Gather better information at the 'front end' and make sure the right questions are asked and recorded.
- Communicate with family members in a more clear and timely manner.

Improving Services

Senior Management in Social Services takes complaints very seriously and they ensure that recommendations identified as part of the investigations are implemented in order to inform/train staff and also to continue to improve services.

Number of Complaints received – last 3 years

Adult Services Complaints		
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
14	10	3

Nature of Compliments received - Last 3 years

Adult Services welcome positive feedback and compliments and also use this information to improve our services.

Adult Services Compliments		
2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
21	15	18



Adults Services Compliments

The nature of the compliments received included:

- Thank you for all the care and support;
- Family Announcement in paper thanking staff for their support;
- Thanking the team for their support;
- Thank you to everyone for their thoughtfulness and support;
- Flowers sent to a member of staff to thank her for all her support; and
- Donations given to Cwrt Mytton Fund and a thank you to all staff.

Case Studies

Assistive Technology within Sheltered Housing

J is 70 years old and lives alone in a sheltered housing scheme. He is in poor health and is supported by home care each day. He can often get confused and wander out of his home.

By using assistive technology and a 'Just Checking' system J's care coordinator identified that he was often in bed for extended periods in the day, was increasingly isolated and often was awake during the night. J's health continued to deteriorate and initially it was felt that he would not be able to remain at his home and that he may need to move to residential care due to his risks at home at night. However following a referral for a further assessment by the Assistive Technology Support Worker, additional

sensors were installed (a non-monitored care assist) so that at night time the care staff could be alerted directly if J needed help. The outcome was positive and prevented a move to residential or nursing care.



"I was treated with dignity and respect..."

Community Connectors

O was widowed and expressed feelings of loneliness and of being in low mood. He had attended some local activities but felt that he did not have a connection with anyone .

O had many hobbies and interests including photography and he also wanted to make friends with people who had similar interests to him.

With the assistance of the Community Connectors O was provided with a list of groups within the area and was referred to the Royal Voluntary Service to become a befriender.

He was also introduced to a local dance group which enabled him to reconnect with old friends and ultimately became a befriender to prevent others from becoming

lonely – just as he had been. This helped to reduce O's isolation and loneliness.

Through the group he met R. R cared for a family member but also enjoyed photography. His caring role meant that not all groups were accessible to him but through his contact with O they could support each other and share a hobby. R stated, 'I am now able to share my interest in photography with a friend when it suits us both'.



*"I feel supported to continue in my caring role...
...I can do the things that are important to me"*

Community Resource Team Facilitating a Safe Hospital Discharge

J lived alone in a bungalow and was independent with all daily living before having a fall and being admitted to hospital. She had a lengthy period of rehabilitation, however her mobility level continued to decline. As J's needs increased, her family and medical professionals were concerned about how she would manage when going home.

What mattered to J was living independently in the community, despite health professionals believing she needed long term Residential Care. Initially she would only accept minimal support with showering at home.

A few weeks after her discharge she had another fall and was readmitted back into hospital, again it was felt she would be unsafe to return home alone. However, J was offered support from the Community Resource

Team (CRT) and was offered the opportunity to move initially from hospital to the intermediate care (CARIAD) bed at Red Rose Care Home, and then to the intermediate care (CARIAD) flat in an Extra Care Facility.

After approximately 6 months of support J was feeling confident to live independently within a sheltered housing scheme. She was able, with the support of a domiciliary care agency, to manage her personal care and with their support is encouraged to join social activities and groups within the scheme. J is living within the community, as she had requested and this has promoted her independence and reduced her anxiety. She is socialising more and feeling happy.



"I have been actively involved in decisions about my care..."

Community Resource Team

S received care from her partner and became concerned with her ability to cope at home alone. S had a history of experiencing domestic violence and sustained a neurological reaction to stress which affected her; physically, emotionally and cognitively.

A carer's assessment was undertaken and a Social Worker allocated. Following an assessment including a conversation about 'what mattered most to her', it was assessed that with help of equipment to aid bath transfers, S could manage at home.

She wanted to continue to access the community independently and through Community Connector involvement, she has begun volunteering at a local Arts and Crafts Group.

Following the support received, S says she is more confident and independent with all of her daily living.

She has moved to a more suitable property and is able to live a fulfilled life. Her long term goal is to pursue paid employment.



"I have been involved in all decisions about how the care and support was provided for the person I care for..."

Community Learning Disability Team

A is a 19 year old woman who lives with her parents in the family home. A is due to leave school in July – she has a moderate to severe learning disability, limited communication, ASD and associated anxieties, compulsive and challenging behaviours.

Adults Services have been working with A since her 16th birthday and preparing her for the transition to adult services. A's mother was particularly anxious about the transition process and the services A could access when an adult and her initial relationship with the Adult Services was complicated by her perceived need to require services based on what others were seen to receive.

Through developing a relationship of trust with Mum and identifying "What Matters" to A and mum as her carer a bespoke package of care was developed. This was done through conversations with A, her mum, school, observations and specialist assessments.



Thank you for speaking out for me and helping me understand what's going on..."

"What Matters" to A is to feel safe, living with Mum, being with people she is confident with, seeing friends, being busy with meaningful tasks such as cooking and being supported by specialist staff. If any of these components is missing A's behaviour becomes challenging.

Mum was taken to see the service she initially requested and learnt it would not be suitable for A. Instead, a bespoke care package of 1 day in Bert Denning (hydrotherapy), 2 days at a specialist service (SENSE) and a direct care payment to allow A to spend time with friends.

This has been a complex case involving a number of professionals and services however the excellent communication, information sharing

and collaboration between all the professionals and the family have resulted in positive outcomes. Mum and A are now very content with the services in place.



"I have had advice, help and support that will prepare me for adulthood..."

"I feel safe... I am happy with the support from my family, friends and neighbours"

Adults Services Data and Performance Comparison

Indicator	Reported Performance			2015/16 Anticipated Performance	2015/16 Target	Trend	Commentary
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15				
SCA/001 - Rate of delayed transfer for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 and over	4.70	6.23	3.57	0.89	5%	↑	This figure equates to 5 DTOC patients for the LA.
SCA/019 - % of POVA referrals completed where the risk has been managed	90%	98%	92.6%	91.1%	90%	↔	Although the trend has slightly decreased, the target has been exceeded.
SCA/002b - Rate of older people in residential & nursing home care per 1,000 population aged 65 or over	23.33	22.12	19.33	18.60	20.5	↑	The target has been exceeded and has improved year on year.
SCA/002a - Rate of older people supported in the community per 1,000 population aged 65 or over	133.34	128.41	120.89	108.40	115	↑	This indicator is showing an improvement.
SCA/007 - % of clients whose care plans should have been reviewed that were reviewed	77.5%	77.8%	79.9%	68.3%	80%	↓	Adult Services has been a part of an outcome pilot with a focus on individual outcomes rather than undertaking routine scheduled reviews.
SCA/018a - Percentage of carers of adults offered an assessment or review of their needs in their own right	100%	100%	96%	97.8%	100%	↑	The target is set at 100% and a high number have been offered a review.

SCA/018b - Percentage of carers of adults who had an assessment or review of their needs in their own right	27.0%	33.2%	32.7%	22.3%	32%	↓	Not all carers accept an uptake of the offer, therefore this is out of the Departments control.
SCA/020 - % of adult clients who are supported in the community during the year	87.78%	90.84%	91.50%	91.75%	92%	↑	This figure is showing continual improvement.
(Local PI) - The number of adults (aged 18+) receiving a service in the community who receive a direct payment	113	140	126	131	130	↑	This figure has shown improvement.
(Local PI) - The number of adult clients assessed who are provided with electronic assistive technology as part of a package of care.	243	257	274	279	280	↑	This PI has seen an increase in the number provided with assistive technology.
Local PI) - Percentage of adult clients receiving a written statement of their needs and how they will be met.	-	82%	80%	77%	90%	↓	This target and indicator recognised not all individuals will receive their care plan e.g. dementia sufferers, some people with profound learning disabilities. The indicator has seen a decline year on year which may correlate with the increase in individuals with dementia we are now seeing coming through the system.
(Local PI) - % of supervision sessions carried out on time	70.6%	61.1%	72.3%	77.2%	85%	↑	This is showing an improvement from 2014/15.

Adults Services Key Priorities for 2016/17

Social Services 2016/17 priorities have been developed in line with the key points highlighted throughout this report including continued development of preventative and early intervention services, promotion of independence and the safeguarding of vulnerable adults at a time of reducing budgets.

Within Adults Services the main priorities will be:

Priority - **Budget Management and Savings**

Why is this important?

Adult Services strive to play its part in delivering savings for the Council as a result of austerity measures from Central Government. For the last two years the service has been able to deliver an underspend, but further reductions from the base budget and more demand from demographic pressures will make it increasingly difficult to

balance the budget in following years. In addition, there will be implications for embedding the new Act which may result in an increasing or reducing budget, this will only be tested during its implementation. It is important as a Department we are at least achieving a balanced budget in 2016/17.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- There will be a balanced budget for 2016/17.
- Satisfaction from the people we provide a service to.
- Continuing to meet our Key Performance Indicators.

Priority - **Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**

Why is this important?

The Act came into force on the 6th April 2016 with new responsibilities and powers for the Council to deliver on. It will take time for staff to fully implement all of these changes given the delay in receiving regulations and codes of practice. Training will need to be

delivered to staff and the public will need to be educated around the changes within the Act.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- Service users and families experience a seamless transition to the new Act.
- Performance continues to meet the levels currently delivered to.
- Not receiving an increase in complaints.

Priority - **Continued Implementation of the Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century Strategy**

Why is this important?

The 'Living Independently Strategy' is a 15 year strategy which dovetails into the new Act; all of the eight priorities are as vitally important to drive forward today as they were when it was first launched in 2006. This is about enabling people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible which will continue to reduce the burden on Social Services budgets from expensive placement in residential or nursing homes.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- Innovative and cost effective services to assist people to remain at home.
- Satisfaction from the people we provide services to.
- Continue to meet our Key Performance Indicators.

Priority - **Progressing the Integration of Health and Social Services**

Why is this important?

Part nine of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 seeks further partnership working between Health and Social Services; we have started making progress and it is important we do not lose momentum on projects we are implementing and piloting both locally and regionally. We are looking to develop possible alternative line management arrangements within the two Health and Social Care teams and to see whether a sustainable model for both mental health and learning disabilities can be achieved over the next 12 to 18 months.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- More seamless service delivery between Health and Social Services.
- A sustainable and integrated mental health and learning disability service within Blaenau Gwent.
- An alternative line management arrangement within the Health and Social Care teams.

Priority - *Progressing Alternative Methods of Service Delivery*

Why is this important?

In times of austerity we have to look at delivering services in different ways to reduce the burden of costs on the Council and the public. Considering different options and models will be crucial to the future financial sustainability of the Council.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- A stand-alone community café.
- A relationship based model of Home Care delivered in our Extra Care schemes.
- An enhanced reablement

service using our existing Home Care service.

Priority - *Prepare for the Implementation of the new Community Care Information System (CCIS)*

Why is this important?

Welsh Government has put a lot of faith in the introduction of this new system to solve the IT compatibility issues between Health and Social Services. It is crucial that we are at the forefront of the implementation of this system in Blaenau Gwent.

How will we know we have achieved our priority?

- Seamless transition between the current IT system DRAIG and the new CCIS;
- Staff engaged and satisfied with the implementation of the new system.
- Health staff positive about the system and what it can offer them.



Progress against priorities

Managing our Business

Business Management	
Priority Title	Self Assessment
Deliver the medium term financial strategy through effective strategic and operational financial management	<p>Achieved - As a Department we have been successful in achieving an underspend of 2015/16 of £326,682. The Department is on target to achieving its CHC income target of £200K with £147K income being generated to date and potential claims of £60K anticipated.</p> <p>The provision of regular budget monitoring within the Department is in line with the Corporate Resources timetable, which has enabled the Senior Management Team to make informed decisions on service delivery.</p>
'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' strategy	<p>Achieved - The key strategic priorities within the 'Independent Living Strategy' have been implemented and shared with CSSIW. To support and evidence the improvements individual action plans have been developed and reviewed via quarterly meetings with key partners. Following a review of Care Homes by the Older People's Commissioner recommendations of good practice and service improvements have been evidenced into the plans. Provider forums and discussions continue to be held with key partners with the aim of developing outcome focused contracts and care plans to improve the quality and outcomes for service users as identified in the business plans for Adult services. There have been successful care fee negotiations with independent care providers and Third Sector Organisations and Service Level Agreements have been completed within the agreed timescales.</p> <p>The service managed the closure of Cwm Seren Care Home for older people with the successful transfer of residents to alternative accommodation within the Authority.</p>

Make arrangements to implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 from April 2016	Achieved - Continuing to work with Care Management and Domiciliary Care Providers to develop an outcome focused service and processes that enable the commissioning of a person centered outcomes domiciliary care service. A joint workshop was held with some positive feedback given at follow up meetings between Commissioning and Providers in readiness for the Act. The Team has attended Welsh Government meetings on the Implementation of part 4 and 5 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which has enabled the Team to commence preparation work in relation to the changes that will have to be implemented, they have also been instrumental in establishing a regional group for Financial Assessment Officers for greater Gwent to share common practice and align charging policies.
Progress the collaboration agenda with key partners, particularly with health	Achieved - An inaugural project has met to create a joint Health Board and Local Authorities Framework Agreement with external providers who provide publicly funded care for Younger (18 – 64 years) Adults in Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Residential and Nursing Care Homes. Professional stakeholder event held in December 2015 with tenders to be published in early April 2016 with a potential new framework in place in October 2016.
Ensure the Social Care Information System (CCIS) is fit for purpose to support new legislation and practice.	Achieved - A regional working group has been established across Gwent including ABUHB and is meeting regularly to start the planning phase and project timeline for implementation. The original implementation date of September 2016 has been postponed until April 2017 to allow further time for arrangements to finalise on a Regional and National governance framework across 29 partners. Agreement has been reached to extend the current contractual arrangements for a further 12 months from April 2016.

Ensure all the Consolidation projects for Performance & IT, Finance and Commissioning are implemented.	Completed - The consolidation of the Performance Teams across the Council was a corporate priority for 2015/16. This was undertaken as part of Council financial efficiency savings. As part of this, a restructure of the team has taken place which supports the areas of IT, Data and Improvement. There is still further work to do to complete the performance consolidation and this is being considered at the moment as part of phase 2 to be implemented in 2016. In addition to this, the Social Services Income Team and Expenditure Team now come under the management responsibilities of the Resources Directorate. A strategic link will be maintained with Social Services to ensure the statutory and legal framework is adhered to. The Commissioning Team will be retained under the management responsibility for Social Services.
Develop alternative models of service delivery	Achieved - An options appraisal has been completed for the Direct Payments Service with approval for the service to remain in house and to explore further opportunities with other local authorities in 2016/17, when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The full impact and implications of the Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is known; • Early dialogue with other local authorities to confirm their future intentions with their existing contractual arrangements; • The impact of workplace pensions and employment matters are fully realised; and • The outstanding issues of the internal financial audits are completed and evaluated to assess the potential risks.



Managing our Business

Category – Resource and Budget Management

Progress made in 2015/16

The total budget for the Department in 2015/16 was £37.9m and total expenditure was £37.6m. This resulted in an underspend of £326,682 for 2015/16 which is a significant reduction when compared to the 2014/15 underspend of £1.54m, and this has been due to an increase in the number of LAC which has resulted in an overspend against a budget of £727,000.

The Department has been successful in ensuring that the Department's debt levels remained constant and within an acceptable level. This was achieved through their debt monitoring process whereby 1,300 financial assessments were completed within the required deadline of 6th April.

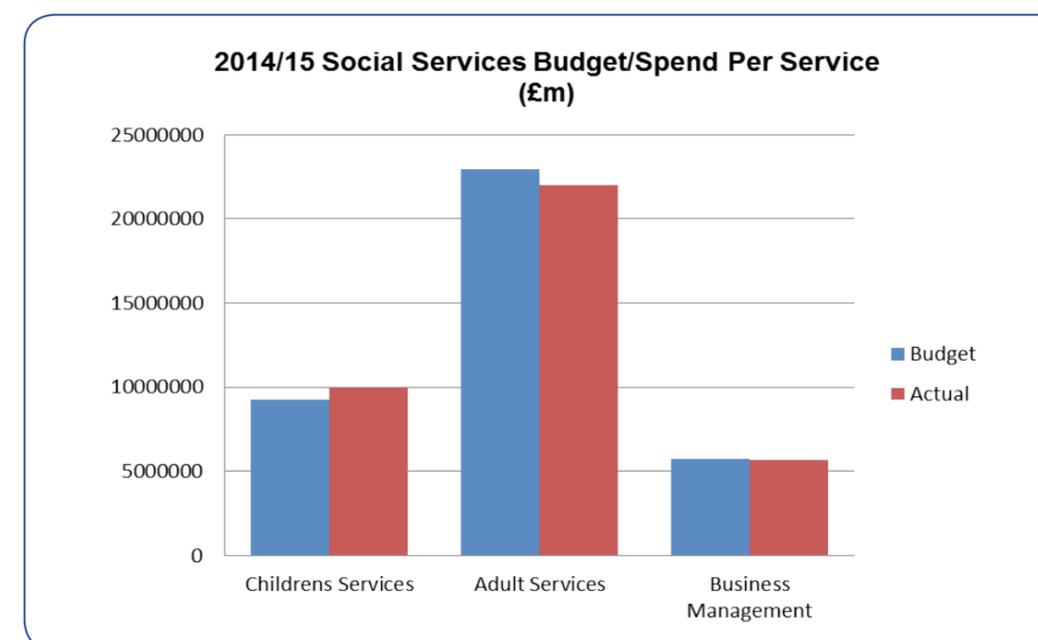
The provision of regular budget monitoring reports in line with the Corporate Resources timetable has enabled the Senior Management Team to make informed decisions on service delivery. The Team has supported the implementation and assisted in the monitoring of all Financial Efficiency Projects, the majority of which have now been achieved, and included:

- the successful introduction and maintenance of an Appointeeship charging policy.
- For property income the target was £150,000 which was exceeded with £209,000 income being generated by the end of the financial year.
- The Department has also ensured individuals who are assessed as having a Primary Health Care need are appropriately funded.



The Team managed a smooth transition of Independent Living Fund recipients from Welsh Government to the Local Authority maintaining the current level of payments and ensuring regular, concise and informative correspondence to be distributed to all recipients.

The chart below illustrates the 2015/16 budget, with actual expenditure broken down by service area. As the chart shows, the largest area of expenditure is in Adult Services which cost the Council £21,999,723.



	Budget	Outturn
Children's	£9,231,400	£9,958,146
Adults	£22,951,540	£21,999,723
Business Management / Steff Support	£5,750,320	£5,648,709
Total	£37,933,260	£37,606,709

2016/17 Budget Summary

The Social Services budget for 2016/17 is £38.9m which is an increase of £1m compared to the previous year's budget.

2015/16 Budget - April 2015 to March 2016					
		Budget	Forecast	Variance	
		(£)	(£)	(£)	(%)
1	Commissioning & Social Work	2,791,340	2,575,104	216,236	7.75%
2	Children Looked After	3,975,830	5,038,380	-1,062,550	-26.73%
3	Family Support Services	279,280	254,918	24,362	8.72%
4	Youth Justice	228,120	219,330	8,790	3.85%
5	Other Children's and Family Services	1,956,830	1,870,414	86,416	4.42%
6	Older People Aged 65 and Over	5,131,110	4,725,204	405,906	7.91%
7	Adults under 65 with Physical Disabilities	59,310	40,428	18,882	31.84%
8	Adults under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,780,410	3,555,656	224,754	5.95%
9	Adults under 65 with Mental Health Needs	782,090	649,227	162,863	20.82%
10	Other Adult Services	313,830	300,850	12,980	4.14%
11	Community Care	12,884,790	12,758,357	126,433	0.98%
12	Support Service & Management Costs	1,055,640	954,040	101,600	9.62%
13	Corporate Recharges	4,694,680	4,694,669	11	0.00%
Grand Total		37,933,260	37,606,578	326,682	0.86%

2016/17 Budget		
		Budget (£)
1	Commissioning & Social Work	2,866,220
2	Children Looked After	4,027,820
3	Family Support Services	272,990
4	Youth Justice	228,140
5	Other Children's and Family Services	1,934,320
6	Older People Aged 65 and Over	5,166,260
7	Adults under 65 with Physical Disabilities	38,650
8	Adults under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,806,720
9	Adults under 65 with Mental Health Needs	706,300
10	Other Adult Services	317,920
11	Community Care	12,573,320
12	Support Service & Management Costs	1,086,640
13	Corporate Recharges	5,915,510
Grand Total		38,940,810

In addition to the budget, the Council approved the use of reserves up to £1.2m to fund the increase in costs from external providers following the implementation of the National

Living Wage. It is also anticipated that the increase in the number of LAC will continue to be a cost pressure in 2016/17 and this will be monitored closely during the financial year.

Category – Commissioning and Partnerships

Following a local and National review of Care Homes by the Older People's Commissioner into the quality of life and care of older people living in residential care in Wales, we have received reassurances that the requirements for action detailed in our strategy and plans, have clearly demonstrated a commitment to delivering the intended outcomes.

All our responses to the requirements for actions identified in the review have been analysed as "acceptable" with constructive and positive feedback received on the proactive development of new services and processes with ABUHB, which will have the potential to progress best practice e.g. developing a 'Quality of Life' framework that will improve the Local Authority's ability to understand and monitor quality of life through collating information from residents on the aspects of this framework.

As part of the 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent

in the 21st Century' strategy, provider forums and discussions continue to be held with key partners with the ultimate aim of developing outcome focussed contracts and care plans in order to improve the quality and outcomes for service users as identified in the business plans for Adult services.

Service Level Agreements have been completed within the agreed timescales for all services commissioned with the voluntary sector and independent providers. As part of this work an analysis was undertaken to understand and identify the significant current and future financial pressures facing providers i.e. impact of National Living Wage and other regulation changes for 2016 and beyond.

A draft Market Position Statement (MPS) has been produced (2015 to 2020) and issued to stakeholders and providers for consultation. The MPS has been designed to contain information and analysis to benefit providers of adult's care and support services in Blaenau Gwent. It is intended to help identify what

the future demand for care might look like and to act as a starting point for discussions between the Authority and those who provide services.

Although some positive feedback has been received "*The demographics are great, really useful*", "*Good section on the detail of current services*" engagement with Providers is continuing to further develop the MPS in relation to future commissioning intentions, and plans to address demands for specialist services such as dementia services in domiciliary care, to assist with Provider's business planning and continuity.

As a result of changing demands for residential care across the sector as a whole, the department has managed the closure of a private Older People's Residential Care Home. All residents were successfully relocated to new care homes with the majority remaining within the Borough and all received post relocation visits from Care Managers and Age Cymru Advocates. These visits were maintained to ensure that all the

individuals were fully settled and that they and their families had an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns, "Age Cymru supported me to find a new place to live".

We began working as part of the Greater Gwent Health, Social Care and Well-being Partnership's new Regional Joint Commissioning Group to develop and implement a programme of commissioning activity regarding the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This is with particular reference to Part 2 of the SSWBA, the duty to promote alternative models of service delivery, and, Part 9, which sets out those areas where health and social services must integrate service delivery, and those areas expected to pool budgets.



As part of the Regional Commissioning Group we are working together with other commissioning leads from across the local authorities and the Local Health Boards (LHB) to address service provision taking account of national direction as well as any regional identified priorities.

Involvement is on-going with the Integrated Health and Social Care Commissioning Programme's inaugural collaborative project Commissioning Care Assurance & Performance System (CCAPS).

The informatics system enables the development of a National Health and Social Care Framework Agreement for collaborative commissioning of publicly funded care and support of people aged 18-64 years, in care homes with or without nursing requirements, who have mental health and/or learning disability needs.

We have actively provided, and regularly updated information for the development of the procurement and tendering framework and participated in professional's stakeholder events. The project has an anticipated

'go live' date for the Framework Agreement of 1st October 2016 and CCAPS will support the on-going performance management of the framework providers to deliver beneficial outcomes for citizens.

The Regional Joint Commissioning Group has initiated a number of other work streams identified as priorities going forward, such as Domiciliary Care and, future options for accommodation for older people. Some of the on-going work we are undertaking as part of the older person's accommodation work-stream includes:

- Assessment of current capacity and forecast demand
- Consideration of over/under provision
- Analysis of the range of accommodation requirements
- Assessment of options for regional development
- Development of joint commissioning standards
- Development of quality assurance and contract monitoring processes

Category – Workforce Management

The Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Workforce Development Service became fully integrated in 2014. This ground-breaking joint service continues to progress serving 5000 plus Care Sector staff. Some benefits realised and achievements in the past year are:

- Acted as lead for the first ever regional submission of a Social Care Workforce Development Plan for Greater Gwent.
- Maximised all allocated funded places for Social Workers to participate in the Continuous Professional Education and Learning (CPEL) framework.
- Played a leading role in establishing a communication framework between regional transformation and workforce development services.
- Hosted a locally delivered 'Best Interest Assessor' post graduate programme.
- Maximised available external funding for social care qualifications, by improving partnership arrangements with local colleges that delivered

an increase of over 200% in registration and assessment.

- Provided training opportunities for local unemployed wanting to work in care, in association with Blaenau Gwent Community First.
- Trained Blaenau Gwent Home Care employees to be able to demonstrate care skills to informal carers.
- Launched a new Internet based workforce development website that included improved search facilities, auto adapt for mobile devices, functional design, and sustained freedom of access to all.
- Added 196 to the growing number of Dementia Friends by training Dementia Champions.

The primary focus for the Workforce Development Service during the year has been preparing for the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the lead up to 6th April 2016 when the Act came into force. Welsh Government required a training programme to be delivered regionally and Blaenau Gwent achieved all Welsh Government targets for Act related training.

Blaenau Gwent Workforce Development Service:

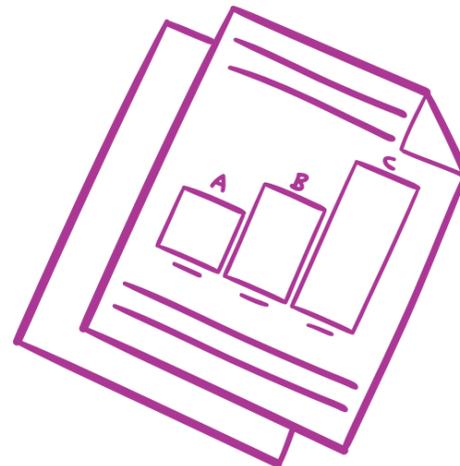
- Has been encouraged by the local commitment to maximise all learning opportunities;
- Have benefited from national and local training programmes; and
- Have influenced the direction of national investment in workforce development.

The Workforce Development Service is working towards for 2016/17:

- Progressing the benefits of collaborative working within the Greater Gwent region including shared opportunities with ABUHB; Continued support for the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and other legislative changes;
- Customer led improvements to the website;
- Modernised approaches to training and development; and
- Developing a strategy for qualifying and developing social workers.

Category – Performance Management and Quality Assurance

The Performance Consolidation model came into effect this year and included the merging the performance teams in Corporate, Education and Social Services. All of which has taken place without any disruption or impact on the service areas. In December 2015 it was agreed for the Social Services Income Team and the Expenditure Team to come under the Management of the Resources Directorate to consolidate this capacity.



Challenges in 2015/16

Business Management has faced a number of key challenges this year:

The main challenges for the service are regarding the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Mainly the realignment of all policies and procedures in relation to charging and financial assessment throughout Greater Gwent, interpreting and implementing guidelines and code of practice, and determining the financial impact that the changes within the Act will have on income generation.

Throughout 2015/16 the implementation of the charging policy for Appointeeships was problematic due to the nature of the client group and the concerns raised for charging vulnerable adults, this resulted in a means tested methodology being implemented. In addition there are a number of new data requirements that will need to be developed throughout the year.

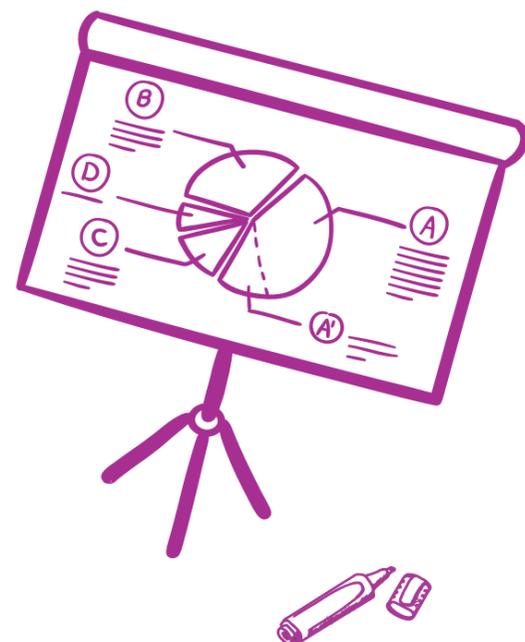
The consolidation projects and the current financial climate within the Council has proven challenging in relation to staff morale and trying to reassure staff through an unsettling period. The introduction of agile working has also been challenging, trying to manage the logistics with the new working environment and desk shortages.

There have been a number of commissioning challenges throughout the year including the closure of Cwm Seren Care Home for older people, the poor performance of a domiciliary care provider, the changes to ABUHB staffing and roles which impacted on joint contract monitoring arrangements for Care Homes for older people. The late budget settlement has created uncertainty in the market with Providers and 3rd Sector i.e. not knowing if funding will be available.

The key challenges for Direct Payments is centred on the Local Authority continuing to actively increase the number of citizens balanced against the appropriateness, capacity and resources available to ensure full compliance with the Act.

Process maps and systems are in place so that staff are aware of what and when to do things, however sometimes due to an ‘oversight’, processes are not followed and information not shared.

Although a lot of work has been undertaken to develop business plans, there is still work to do with ownership of and use of Directorate plans. The Wales Audit Office data quality audit took place in early 2016 and identified issues with the quality and collection of some national indicators. The consolidated performance team has been very effective but it has brought a lot of work to the central team with less capacity.



Directorate Risk Register

Risk	Current Controls	Score	Proposed Further Action
<p>Financial Lack of financial capacity to meet increasing levels of complexity and demand on Social Services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Robust financial management procedures in place including income maximisation and budget monitoring. Detailed performance reporting that includes monthly demand data. Social Services identified as a priority area in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service prioritisation and planning. Spending sanctions in place and regularly reviewed. Develop collaborative arrangements for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Adoption Service Mental Health Learning Disabilities Detailed project plan developed for each savings proposal. Preventative services e.g. Community Resource Team and Families First will tackle problems at an early stage of care/welfare needs. Engagement with the third sector/ community based organisation is part of the prevention agenda.
<p>Financial Funding not identified to purchase and implement the new social care ICT system – CCIS.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is part of the local, regional and national project team and governance arrangements to share knowledge and standardisation on systems and processes. Data migration. Regional task and finish groups established. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation received from Bridgend County Borough Council and Welsh Government on contract award and additional funding which will offset any additional capital for ICT hardware. Currently working on a regional implementation plan across Gwent to go live in April 2017. ADSS have secured additional resources and funding to support the national implementation of the CCIS system.

Risk	Current Controls	Score	Proposed Further Action
<p>Social Failure to ensure adequate safeguarding arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent.</p> <p>Risk also sits on the Corporate Risk Register. arrangements are in place for vulnerable people in Blaenau Gwent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board. SE Wales Safeguarding Children's Board. Standing item on CMT agenda. Local learning & review group. Director has a corporate responsibility for safeguarding. Lead Executive Member identified for safeguarding. Adult protection co-ordinator and process in place in line with All Wales process. Joint Social Services and Education and Active Living Safeguarding scrutiny meeting held. 	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope joint Adults and Children's Safeguarding team. Scoping of potential for regional multi-agency safeguarding hubs. Adult and Children's Regional Boards. Funding made available for a Social Worker within the Adult Safeguarding Team to support the team in using outcome focussed social work intervention.
<p>Business Breach of data sharing protocols for shared services/joint arrangements where Social Services information is accessed via non Blaenau Gwent ICT equipment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No unmanaged network device to be allowed. Joint arrangements/ service level agreements for service delivery including data protocol. All arrangements with other public sector organisations who are required to comply with PSN requirements i.e. managed network devices. 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All organisations to sign third party agreement on network access. Personnel Controls – BPSS (Personnel checks). Technical Controls – Aventail SSL VPN with dual factor authentication. Computer lockdown policy (Group Policy Baseline Templates). Access control to minimum privileges and IT resources required for the role. No saving sensitive data locally. Individual Accounts. Laptops encrypted. Digital Loss Prevention. Physical Controls – Locked Offices/ Access Cards. Administrative Controls – 3rd party agreement/WASPI assured ISP/Risk Registers.

Risk	Current Controls	Score	Proposed Further Action
<p>Partnership Social Services unable to progress partnership working.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of Joint Workforce Development Team with Caerphilly. Collaborative arrangements via the SE Wales Improvement Collaborative. Gwent wide Adoption Service. Partnership with ABHB. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to identify future collaborative arrangements (Joint Fostering Service). Continue to strengthen working relationships and promoting partnership working through the various Joint Project Boards. Continue to seek the support of Social Services Improvement Agency (SSIA).
<p>Partnership Ineffective integration with Health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance via Integrated Partnership (IP). Frailty across Gwent. Relocation to the BRC where Community Care team West and District Nursing are based. Relocation to Anvil Court for Community Care team East and District Nursing. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pilot project is being carried out in the North of Caerphilly on a new model for Mental Health. Learning from this project will inform the implementation of the model locally following evaluation of the pilot. A pilot project has been developed in Blaenau Gwent on a new model for Learning disability. Learning from this project will be shared with other Gwent authorities.
<p>Business Reduced staff capacity that results in an inability to perform core functions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with absence monitoring processes. Restructure of care management teams including integration of teams to provide additional capacity. 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support the Blaenau Gwent Transformation programme including the various consolidation projects to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Risk	Current Controls	Score	Proposed Further Action
<p>Business Supreme Court Judgement has resulted in a huge increase in Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) authorisation requests.</p> <p>Risk also sits on the Corporate Risk Register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed two new Best Interest Assessors within the Gwent DoLS team. Implemented a screening tool in order to prioritise those at greatest risk. 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All partner organisations to second a member staff into the Gwent DoLS team to meet the demand and backlogs.
<p>Legislation Failure to fully implement the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in order to transform services will lead to significant reactive and unplanned services and significant reputational risk.</p> <p>Risk also sits on the Corporate Risk Register.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff engagement sessions. Staff training on the Act. Regular communication through ACRF and Director's Blog. Engagement with other directorates, statutory and non-statutory partners. 	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further specific and targeted training to be identified.

Welsh Language - “More than just words”

‘Mwy na geiriau/ More than just words: A Strategic Framework for Promoting the Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care’ was published in 2012 by the Deputy Minister for Social Services. The aim of the framework is to ensure that organisations recognise that language is an intrinsic part of care and that people who need services in Welsh get offered them. This is called the ‘Active Offer’. During 2015/16 the Social Services Department in Blaenau Gwent, through its delivery group, has continued to embed the strategy by:

- Making sure we offer an improved Welsh language service for the citizens of Blaenau Gwent.
- Gathering data and information on the availability of Welsh language services in our regulated services.
- Finding out if people in regulated services are receiving

services in Welsh currently and also establishing how they would like their services delivered in the future.

What have we done in 2015/16?

- **We have assessed the language skills of our Social Care work force.** During 2015/16 the Local Authority asked our employees ‘what is your preferred language’ and ‘what Welsh languages skills do you have to support our social care customers?’ We have conducted a similar exercise with our commissioned social care providers and together we have identified the staff and services that currently support our Welsh speakers. We have also gathered details on Welsh cultural opportunities, events and activities that our providers are facilitating –

including the celebrations of Welsh Culture, access to Welsh speaking media and any Welsh language interactions between staff and recipients of our services.

- We have been a pilot area for the implementing of the integrated assessments in preparation for the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and we have used this opportunity to ensure that **staff have embedded the 'Active Offer'** as part of our 'What Matters Conversation'. We have ensured that both our proportionate and integrated assessments record the citizens language of choice and that staff at our contact duty service actively promote the 'active offer' as part of their interactions.
- We have **reviewed our contact list of staff** who are able to support customers when Welsh is the customers preferred language and know who is available to undertake assessments of need.
- The Welsh language skills of a staff are considered whenever a post is advertised and is integral to our corporate

recruitment processes.

- We have continued to provide learning opportunities for our staff which **encourage them to become confident Welsh Language learners**. We have allocated specific training places for our Social Care Workforce who wish to become Welsh learners and worked with our Corporate Equalities Officer to develop bespoke learning opportunities for Social Care staff with differing language abilities. This has included both 'taster' sessions, staff briefing and formal training courses.
- In preparation for the implementation of the **Welsh Language Standards**, we have been working with our corporate colleagues to develop and implement policies, procedures and working practices to allow us to meet the standards. We have also raised awareness and understanding of the requirements of the standards through briefing session for senior managers including all of the Social Care Managers and key social care staff across all areas of the department.

Looking Forward to 2016/17

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 1st May 2014 and sets out a new statutory framework for social care in Wales which came into effect on 1st April 2016.

The key principles of the Act are to promote independence and equality, improve access to and quality of services, and ensure a clear code of practice for social care and its partner agencies across Wales. Although the expectations of the Act will impact on all areas of the service it encompasses much of the work we have undertaken over the past few years has been working towards these principles.

The Act changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered, people will have more of a say in the care and support they receive. It also promotes a range of help available within the community to reduce the

need for formal, planned support.

- Services will be available to provide the right support at the right time.
- More information and advice will be available.
- Assessment will be simpler and proportionate.
- Carers will have an equal right to be assessed for support.
- There will be stronger powers to keep people safe from abuse and neglect.

The Act seeks to support people at an early stage so that they do not require more intensive support later. This is at the heart of the work between the Families First and Flying Start Teams and Children Services, who have a child-centred approach to improving outcomes for children and their families through the provision of key service entitlements.



The introduction of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is an exciting development with work on-going to meet its requirements throughout 2016/17, as noted in the service areas key priorities.

There is information available on the Care Council Website which will also provide links to Welsh Government and Social Services Improvement Agency – the link for this is <http://www.ccwales.org.uk/the-act>

Key Priorities 2016/17

Our 2016/17 priorities are set in line with the key points highlighted throughout this report including continued development of preventative and early intervention services, promotion of independence, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, and positive outcomes for LAC and care leavers at a time of reducing budgets.

As a department our two main priorities will be:

- Managing within budget.
- Implementing the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and ensuring the workforce is prepared.

Children's Services

- All Teams to contribute to improve outcomes for LAC.
- All Teams to contribute to the safe reduction in the numbers of LAC.
- Ensure Families First, Flying Start, Early Years and Play targets the most vulnerable families in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- All teams to ensure the children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded.
- The workforce needs to understand and deliver the requirements under the Social Service and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Adult Services

- Budget Management and Savings.
- Implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- Continued implementation of the 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century Strategy'.
- Progressing the Integration of Health and Social Services.
- Progressing Alternative Methods of Service Delivery.
- Prepare for the implementation of the new Community Care Information System in April 2017.



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

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