

Social Services Annual Report 2017/18



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Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

Blaenau Gwent

County Borough Council

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Social Services Annual Report 2017/18. Over the past few years the Department has been developing this annual report to highlight the key areas of improvements and challenges that have been faced.

This report has been developed in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB), referred to as 'the Act' throughout this document. 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 well-being of people who come to Social Services for support. It is person centred and focuses on prevention and reducing the need for care and support. It recognises that responsibility lies not only within Social Services Departments, but in the wider Local Authority and with our partners (particularly health and the third sector).

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

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

This report provides a strategic overview of the work we have undertaken throughout 2017/18 and what we plan to do moving forward. Further supporting information can be found from page 25 of the report.

Throughout the report we have tried to evidence where we have worked collaboratively with partners and where we have captured the views of service users in order to provide improved services that meet the needs of local people. The report will be shared with partner agencies to share our learning and experiences.

Experiences and learning from service users has been considered as part of the development of the report. Service users have been engaged through a number of forums such as the Carers Group, 50+ Forum and Young Carers Group. A questionnaire, required as part of the Act, has also been distributed to children, parents, adults and carers. The Population Needs Assessment, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) findings, case studies, complaints and compliments have all been considered as part of the development of this report and evidence from these has been used to inform future learning.

The annual report is used to demonstrate accountability to citizens and service users. As part of this process, the report will be presented to full Council for ratification before it is published on the Council's website and will then be sent to Welsh Ministers. The report will be available on line bilingually.



Director's Summary of Performance

As the Corporate Director of Social Services in Blaenau Gwent, I am pleased to present the annual report for 2017/18 which is a requirement of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act).

Feedback from service users, carers, families and partner organisations together with complaints and compliments as well as the Act questionnaires are all important learning and development opportunities for the Directorate. This will continue to be a focus for the coming year both locally and regionally through the citizen's panel. We view complaints and compliments as a great opportunity for the Directorate to improve the services and the service user experience moving forward (See Chapter on How People are shaping our Service).

Under the Act we have continued to invest in the knowledge and learning of our Care Management staff through attendance at Outcomes Training and collaborative working with Social Care Wales to identify best practice and showcase examples where we have supported citizens to achieve their outcomes. We have received positive feedback from the Older Persons Commissioner into the outcomes that Older People experience in Care Homes across Blaenau Gwent.

The safeguarding of children, families and vulnerable adults remains a priority moving forward for the Directorate. Children's safeguarding was a theme of CIW inspection in February and March 2018. We have received a draft report which is identifying the positive work of the Directorate and did not identify any significant safeguarding concerns during their inspection.

The three year Safe reduction of Looked After Children (LAC) Strategy has been in place for nine months and is supported by a clear action plan which is reviewed on a quarterly basis as part of the business planning process. The new Families First structure has been embedded for a year and has been well received by Families First staff and partner agencies. The development of a Supporting Change Team was approved in July 2017 to work with children and families on the 'edge of care' and has been operational since January 2018. The South East Wales adoption service (SEWAS) has undertaken a number of recruitment campaigns throughout the year. This has increased the numbers of adopters available for our LAC with a plan for adoption; however, it still does not meet demand and plans to continue with the recruitment campaigns will be undertaken throughout 2018/19. Performance over all of SEWAS is very good.

On a regional basis the Directors of Social Services are committed to looking at collaboration opportunities across Social Services and have been developing a number of scoping papers which will come to fruition in the next few months. There has also been work undertaken to explore the development of a regional Fostering Service moving forward.

In Adult Services a review of Supporting People funded posts within the Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) has been completed e.g. Mind (mental health) and Hafan Cymru (safeguarding). The report has identified positive outcomes for both citizens and wider Adult Services. We are currently working with colleagues in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) including primary care, secondary care, Public Health Wales and other partners to develop a model for Social Prescribing / Community Connectors to support the prevention agenda across Blaenau Gwent.

Blaenau Gwent Council, along with many other Local Authorities in Wales are facing serious financial problems and Social Services, like all Council Services have had to make cuts to ensure the authority delivers a balanced budget for 2017/18. The sustained increase in the number of LAC has had a detrimental effect on the budget situation within Children's Services over spending by £2.5 million in 2016/17.

The Directorate received an additional £2 million added to the Children's Services base budget to cover this pressure within 2017/18 and although considerable work has commenced with the implementation of the Safe Reduction of LAC Strategy, the increases has resulted in an over spend in LAC budget which stood at £956K at the end of March 2018.

The challenge for 2018/19 will be to continue to manage demand and to do more with less. We will undertake a number of reviews within some of the services we deliver internally. We will look to explore further opportunities for collaboration where it will improve the well-being of the citizens of Blaenau Gwent and it is right to do so.

Hopefully, this report will help you to understand how we support and safeguard children, young people, citizens, carers and their families within Blaenau Gwent and how we will continue to strive to improve our services.



Damien McCann
Corporate Director of
Social Services



Cllr John Mason
Executive Member
Social Services

How People are shaping our Services

During 2017/18 Blaenau Gwent continued to implement the required cultural and operational changes that the Act requires in order to ensure that all social care services are individually shaped by the people that use them. This includes improving the ways that we effectively engage with service users, carers, families and partner organisations, whilst actively encouraging all to provide feedback which can be utilised to shape and improve services. The Social Services Directorate is committed to providing high quality services to its users and multiple methods of engagement were implemented throughout the year in order to achieve this, some examples are detailed below.

Questionnaires / Surveys

- A survey has been carried out with the children and families who use the Beaufort Road facility in an attempt to further improve service delivery. The feedback received was that older children felt the rooms were very early years focused and as a result of this the rooms have been remodelled with one room reconfigured as a youth room. The outdoor play space is also being developed with the view to creating more quality, challenging and stimulating play opportunities which encourages children to spend more time outside and to interact with family members.
- National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) has been commissioned to undertake surveys with our children and care leavers in order to learn from their experiences in care and to shape service delivery. Some of the service changes have included: the restructure of the child care teams to reduce the number of changes of social workers a child has; the development of child friendly plans; and the development of a delegated decision making tool which clearly outlines who can make decisions in relation to the various aspects of the child's life.
- A consultation has commenced in March 2018 and will end in May 2018 regarding the long term provision of Assisted Transport in the area. The aim of the consultation is: to make sure as many people as possible are aware of the proposed transport policy; provide clear information on the changes that are being proposed; make sure people have all the information they need to provide an informed opinion; encourage people to give their views on the proposals; and collect and consider feedback before a final decision is made.
- As part of the Act, people who use care and support services were invited to complete an annual survey in relation to the provision of care and support. The number of questionnaires returned for children, parents and carers was low. In order to address this, Social Services will undertake a further questionnaire again at a later date. However, the feedback from the survey will be used to inform service provision in the future. Responses are provided below:

Children's Responses

In respect of Children's Services, 621 questionnaires were sent out to children with 92 returned, making a response rate of 16%. This is below the required response rate to enable a reliable statistical comparison with other local authorities (this would be 55% equating to 341 questionnaires). Of those that responded to the questionnaire, 49% were aged 7-14 and 51% were aged between 15 and 17. The responses from the Children's questionnaire were mainly positive, with high percentages agreeing with each question.

Of the responses:

- 88% of secondary school aged children said they live in a home where they are happy; 85% are happy with family, friends and neighbours; and 90% feel cared for and safe.
- Three quarters felt their views about care and support were listened to.
- 68% felt that they can do the things they like to do.
- 92% reported that their views about care and support were listened to.
- 96% have been able to use their everyday language and 89% were treated with respect.

- Of the responses received from primary aged children, 88% are happy with the people around them with 96% responding that they feel cared for and safe.
- The lowest responses received were 68% feeling that they can do the things they like to do. 26% responded sometimes and 6% didn't know.
- The 16 and 17 year olds were asked if they had the advice, help and support needed to prepare them for adulthood. Only 52% responded yes, 22% sometimes, 11% no and 15% didn't know.

Parents Responses

435 questionnaires were sent out to parents to gather views in relation to one question. There was a low response rate with only 44 respondents returning their questionnaire, 12 more than last year. This equates to a response rate of 11%. This response would be deemed to be too low for statistical reliability.

Of the responses, 58% of parents reported that they have been actively involved in all decisions about how their child's /children's care and support was provided with 33% reporting 'sometimes' and 7% reporting 'no'. 81% of the respondents were female and 19% male.

Adult Responses

In respect of Adults Services, 664 questionnaires were sent out to adults aged 18 and over with 249 responses received. This equates to a 37.5% response rate, which exceeded the required Welsh Government expected response rate of 25%. Of those that responded the majority were aged between 65 to 85+ (82% of responders).

Of the responses:

- 81% of respondents reported that they lived in a home that supported their well-being and 82% reported being happy with support from family, friends and neighbours.
- Only 38% of respondents felt they could do the things that were important to them and 46% reported this sometimes.
- 41% feel part of the community.
- 75% feel safe both within and outside of the home.
- 88% know who to contact about their care and support and 80% had the right information when needed and had been involved in decisions about their care and support. 86% are happy with the care and support they have had.
- 98% are able to communicate in their preferred language and 94% felt they were treated with dignity and respect.
- Of those living in a residential care home 74% responded that they chose to live there.
- The 18-24 year olds were asked if they had the advice, help and support needed to prepare them for adulthood. 75% responded yes and 25% responded no.

Carers Responses

Questionnaires were sent to carers who had a joint care and support plan with the cared for person. 10 responses were received of 22 questionnaires sent; the low number of carers deems the results to be statistically unreliable to compare nationally, however the responses and comments are valuable to the service. 86% of carers felt that they had been involved in all decisions about how the care and support, of the person they care for, was provided.

We, as have many other authorities, raised the issue of whether a questionnaire is the most appropriate way to collect information from children, parents and carers with Welsh Government and as there is currently a review looking at performance information then hopefully they will consider alternative ways of collecting information from these groups in particular.

Engagement

- The South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) Recruitment and Assessment Team continue to actively recruit on a regular basis to maximise placement availability and choice for children who are referred to the service. There are now established links with the Communication Officers across all five local authorities who are advertising locally. In addition to the October recruitment campaign, SEWAS ran another campaign in March 2018 which included local radio and social media advertising. SEWAS have also commissioned a specialist marketing company to maximise advertising activity going forward.
- The Supporting People Team and 14+ Team have worked in partnership to fund and recruit a Young Person's Mediation and Support Officer to engage with service users. The Supporting People Team, Housing Solutions, 14+ Team and the support provider, Gwalia are continuing to work in partnership to develop more housing support options for young people.
- The Housing First Model for young people is proving successful with the number of young people supported by the service increasing each quarter.
- The data from the Well-being Assessment on the Blaenau Gwent area and information from public engagement events, 'Blaenau Gwent We Want', have been mapped allowing us to demonstrate that the prioritisation of certain areas is grounded in robust evidence.
- In addition to the above, Social Services case studies are continually produced detailing real examples of service users experiences, work practice and outcomes, both positive and negative, enabling us to review and continually improve.

We recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and the complaints procedure provides people with the opportunity to voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied with a service. The service uses learning from these complaints to improve services moving forward. The service also welcomes positive feedback and compliments and also uses this information to improve services. Most complaints received by the service are regarding timeliness of information and communication, with overall compliments being around the positive support received and being diligent and professional.

Examples of complaints received in Children's Services were regarding families feeling that they did not receive feedback from a social worker in respect of their child; unhappy with the lack of communication; and social workers using unfamiliar terminology. In Adult Services examples of complaints were received regarding a breakdown in communication with the person and the social worker in terms of charging for services; being unaware of the Fairer Charging Policy; and being unhappy with the way staff dealt with a sensitive situation.

In order to continue to improve services, the outcomes of complaint investigations and learning from them are undertaken to prevent the situation from occurring again. During 2017/18 examples of learning identified and actioned include:

- All staff reminded of the importance of communicating with families in a timely manner;
- Ensuring that support plans are in place from the start of any unplanned placements being made;
- Health colleagues and Social Care staff reminded of changes to the Fairer Charging Policy and the importance of timely financial assessments;
- Staff reminded of the importance of complying with the Information Security and Information Governance Policies;
- Staff reminded that all methods of communication are recorded on the system with the persons preference in making contact being adhered to;

- Staff training around person centred care and dementia and the importance of good communication with carers; and
- Staff attended training in having difficult conversations and processes and procedures were reviewed and improved.

Below are some examples of compliments received by the service:

- Thank you to a social worker for all the support given during a phased move of a foster child to the adoptive parents;
- Praise given to a social worker for their diligence and practice;
- Bouquet of flowers given to a social worker as a thank you for the support provided to the family during complex court proceedings;
- Praise given to a social worker for building a good relationship with the family;
- Thank you to a social worker for their hard work in trying to implement a permanency plan for a child to enable them to remain with their family;
- Thank you to a member of staff for the support provided during the snow period and ensuring a vulnerable person was cared for;
- Thank you to carers for taking care of their loved one, not just physically but the love and affection shown by the carers; and
- Thank you to all staff for not just caring for their family member but for really 'caring'.



Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

Priorities

Throughout 2017/18 both Children's and Adult Services prioritised a number of areas to focus on to support service delivery in order to improve the well-being of those we help. The priorities are shown below and the Quality Standards demonstrate where improvement has been made, challenges have been addressed and where outcomes have been achieved.

The Children's Services priorities for 2017/18 were:

- **All teams to contribute to improve outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC)** – At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **All teams contribute to the safe reduction in the numbers of LAC** – At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **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 Act** – At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **All teams to ensure that children and young people of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **The workforce needs to understand and deliver the requirements under the Act** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Manage the Children's Services budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget** – At the end of this year the priority was red (significant issues identified that requires action).

The Adult Services priorities for 2017/18 were:

- **All Adult Services Teams contribute to improve outcomes for vulnerable adults (and their carers) living in Blaenau Gwent** - At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **All Adult Services teams and our partner agencies ensure that vulnerable adults of Blaenau Gwent are safeguarded** – At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Ensure that our IAA / preventative services and community based opportunities support the most vulnerable citizens in Blaenau Gwent who do not meet the criteria for a care and support plan under the Act 2014** – At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Manage the Adult Services Budget to ensure expenditure comes within budget** – At the end of the year this priority was green (on target).
- **Progressing Alternative Methods of Service Delivery across both Health and Social Care through integrated / outcomes based commissioning models to meet personal outcomes and support personal well-being** – At the end of the year this priority was amber (issues have been identified which require progress)

Progress of our Quality Standards

During a comprehensive assessment of performance at the end of 2017/18, the following achievements and challenges were identified as part of the Council's Performance Management Improvement Framework to ensure that the right areas are identified as priorities moving into 2018/19.

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

The Information, Advice and Assistance Team (IAA) has continued to develop to support people to actively manage their well-being and make informed decisions.

We continue to work with people as partners in order to prevent the need for care and support and to arrange services in a way that prevents or delays people's need for care and support.

The results from the Act's citizen feedback questionnaires, showed a positive response to the question 'people reporting that they have received the right information and advice when they needed it', with 74% of children agreeing with the statement and 19% agreeing sometimes. This was supported by the response to the question, 'people happy with the care and support they have had' with 80% of children supporting this statement and 12% sometimes, *'because my carers always will help me whenever I want'*.

An integrated approach with long term services and Health colleagues has been strengthened by continuing to work together as well as supporting the IAA in providing advice, support and assistance. An example of this is the relocation of the West Health and Social Care Hub which consists of the Blaenau Gwent Community Resource Team, Community Care Team and members of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board District Nursing Team. These teams, being based together have enhanced the preventative and early intervention model as the hub is now co-located with the Adult Services IAA Service and the Home Care Team.

In 2016/17 the Families First Team restructure was implemented in order to reduce the number of referrals into statutory services and to target preventative services to the most vulnerable families in order to prevent needs from escalating. As part of this restructure, a Screening and Referral Officer, who supports the Families First duty system, has been in post since early December 2017. The officer has worked with those who have made a referral to the IAA but don't meet the criteria for an integrated assessment. Subsequently the 'what matters' question is discussed where support needs are identified and support plans drafted in line with service specification. Families First has its own duty system where referrals are taken directly and decisions made on all referrals within 24 hours. The referral process has been streamlined so that families do not have to wait for support.

Blaenau Gwent is one of four Gwent authorities who has adopted the national approach to advocacy within Children's Services. This includes ensuring every child who comes into the care system or placed on the child protection register has a face to face meeting with an independent advocate to ensure their voice is heard.

Within Adult services, proposals have been developed to co-produce a strategic plan for advocacy commissioning across Gwent for 2019-2024. This will cover both Independent Professional Advocacy and wider forms of advocacy.

In addition, information collated from our Act's citizen feedback questionnaires was positive in relation to the numbers of citizens supported by the department. In the main, responses from our adult's survey were positive with 80% reporting that they had received the right information and advice when they needed it and 94% reporting that they were treated with dignity and respect. One citizen commented, *'definitely, without a doubt. I couldn't have done without it. I appreciate it'*.

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

In 2016/17 we reported that the Head of Service met with Newport City Council to look at their Family Assessment and Support Service (FASS) Team (a Team which works with families whose children are on the edge of care). Following this, Blaenau Gwent approved the creation of a Supporting Change Team who is working to implement the strategy to safely reduce the number of Looked After Children (LAC). Staff are now skilled in a variety of interventions such as motivational interviewing and adopting a strengths based approach to practice. A system has been developed within Children's Services to highlight those cases on the 'edge of care' to confidently manage risk and prevent children coming into care.

There have been positive results from the team's work including, one family where consideration had been given to issuing care proceedings and removal has come out of the legal process. Another child has been rehabilitated to a parent and the final care plan to Court recommending for a Child Arrangement Order (the child will no longer be Looked After by the Local Authority).

An online safety tool kit has been developed to support teachers in identifying and reporting safeguarding concerns in relation to how children and young people may be affected by abuse when using social media. This toolkit is now being adapted for use by foster carers.

An escalating issue for older children in Blaenau Gwent is self-harm and it is recognised that they tend not to want to attend the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). To assist with addressing this issue the 14+ team have had self-harm training and have developed links with the LAC nurse. A new risk assessment tool has been developed which was taken from the CAMHS Safety Plan and will be used to inform pathway plans. During local safeguarding network meetings awareness has been raised of the South East Wales Safeguarding Children's Board self-harm and suicide leaflet. It has now been requested that the leaflet is distributed to agencies represented on the group.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), the Mental Capacity Act and supporting citizens through the process of a Best Interest Assessment have all been identified as areas of essential learning for Adult Services staff. In order to address this there is a dedicated staff member who works with Health and Social Care to develop clear care pathways outlining individual responsibilities together with a training package. The DoLS / Capacity Assessment pilot project, based at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan has proved a great success as support is provided for both ABUHB and Social Care staff in the assessment of patients who lack capacity to make decisions about their future care and support needs.

An audit, undertaken by the NHS Delivery Unit, reported areas of good practice including the co-location of Mental Health Services by stating that they were highly integrated with effective working relationships between partner organisations. Areas for improvement were also identified such as the development of SMART care planning targets, crisis plans being robust, progress towards discharge to be recorded and shared record keeping needed to be improved. These areas are to be worked on over the coming year.

During the year, Cwrt Mytton Residential Care Home continued to introduce and implement the principles of the 'Butterfly' model of care and support to change the culture and approach to dementia care. The current training matrix for staff identifies training specifically relating to dementia care and includes sessions on advanced practices, supporting lives and encouraging individuals to live independently.

Workforce development has worked with Cwrt Mytton to develop and implement a coaching programme which is not classroom based but will incorporate changing attitudes and approaches to dementia. Part of the strategy is to integrate the residents into the community and the community into the home.

Cwrt Mytton has also taken part in the ABUHB Falls Pilot which aims to reduce the numbers of residents who require admission to hospital following a fall at the home. A review was undertaken in October 2017 with Cwrt Mytton highlighted as the most improved home with numbers of hospital admissions reducing dramatically.

The Authority has secured uncommitted Integrated Care Fund allocation of £58k to pilot an Emergency Care at Home project to support the reduction in hospital admissions. This will form part of the first phase of integration of the Home Care Service and Reablement Team within the Community Resource Team (CRT).

Adult Services will scope service reviews for the following service areas in line with the Council's financial efficiency programme, this will include: Cwrt Mytton; Augusta House; Supported Living Service; and Community Options. These reviews will commence in April 2018 and will make recommendations on the future direction for in house provider services from April 2019.

For those people who are coming out of hospital, it is important that they regain their independence as soon as possible through Reablement. 14 of 15 citizens reduced their package of care at the end of a period of reablement. Importantly, the reduction was maintained 6 months later for these individuals which equates to 93.33%. This is an increase from 2016/17 of 12.38%. For those individuals no longer requiring a package of care at the end of reablement was 76.04%, which is 73 of 96 individuals. This is an increase of 6.23% from 2016/17.

This is supported by the data for delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 and over as the figure was only 2.55 equating to 15 people. Last year the figure was 1.38, equating to 8 individuals.

Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

Significant activity occurs in relation to safeguarding within Children's Services. During this year, despite significant workload pressures, all child protection referrals received a response within 24 hours. 90.78% of assessments were completed within statutory timescales, an increase from last year which was 84.53%. 93.7% of initial child protection conferences were held within the 15 day timescale as required under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. 98.6% of core group meetings, which pull together a detailed child protection plan were held within 10 working days of initial conference

Reports on safeguarding have been provided during the year to the Joint Safeguarding Scrutiny Committee. This has given members the opportunity to look in depth at the safeguarding activity across the Council and give appropriate challenge in order to make improvements to the service.

The Corporate Parenting Board has developed an action plan to support LAC. The priorities within the action plan have been developed to support the 7 Definitions of Well-being as identified under the Act, plus one additional action decided upon at a local level. The action plan is regularly monitored to ensure we are addressing all elements of our LACs well-being. When last reported in April 2018 of the 30 actions, 15 were completed, 11 were in progress, 3 behind schedule and 1 needing further action.

Children's and Adults Safeguarding Training has continued. All of the Social Work staff in the Adoption Team have now received level 2 safeguarding training in order to ensure that all children referred to the service are safeguarded. A new Corporate Safeguarding Policy has been developed with both Children's and Adults safeguarding staff in consultation with Education in order to provide a clear governance structure and clarity on the roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.

A toolkit has also been produced 'Safeguarding and the safe use of Social Media'. This was created in response to the identification of the issue to the Corporate Parenting Board and to raise awareness of online safety with children and young people.

The safety of children is paramount and Children's Services work hard to ensure children are safe and, most importantly, feel safe. To support this, 90% of children completing the Act's questionnaires said they felt safe and 8% felt safe sometimes, *'because I have a happy place and my carers will always look after me'* and *'I always felt safe and secure'*.

The children on the child protection register continue to be scrutinised by the Children's Senior Management Team. This has shown, over the last 12 months, the length of time a child remains on the child protection register has increased from last year from 170.99 to 256.61. A key piece of data used to measure keeping children safe is the percentage of re-registrations of children onto the local authority child protection register, in Blaenau Gwent for 2017/18 the figure was 0.68% and equates to 1 person. In 2016/17 the figure was 0%.

Adult Services has appointed a Domestic Abuse/Safeguarding support worker (in conjunction with Hafan Cymru) within the Adult IAA hub to undertake initial screening of the duty to report (Protection of Vulnerable Adult) referrals. The post holder works directly with alleged victims of domestic abuse. Referrals are made to third sector support services, and to liaise with specialist services within the IAA hub such as Mental Health Workers and Community Connectors. This screening and allocation at source is having a positive impact on meeting requirements within the Act for preventative services and also on the resources of the Safeguarding Team allowing them to move forward on strategic as well as operational issues.

The Gwent VAWDASV Strategy contributes to the National Strategy on Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence – 2016 – 2021 and also contributes to the Blaenau Gwent Public Service Board Well-being Plan and the Regional Area Plan. The Strategy is supported by a national training framework which relates to **all** staff in the Local Authority. Training commenced in October 2017 and as at the end of March 2018, 914 employees completed the training. There are approximately 3,027 employees across the Council which works out at a completion rate of approximately 30% of Council staff further work to roll out the training will continue.

All relevant staff within Adult Services have been provided with additional training on the new duty to report / enquire legislation so that we can appropriately respond to safeguarding alerts. This is evident with 90.47% of adult protection enquiries being completed within the statutory deadline of 7 days. The total number of enquiries was 514. Although this is a reduction from last year when the figure was 100% but this related to 479 people.

The adults completing the Act questionnaire were mainly positive in reporting that they felt safe with 75% agreeing with the statement and 19% sometimes.



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

As part of the Corporate Parenting Board a decision has been made to monitor those children who leave statutory education 3 months after leaving school and annually after that. This is to ensure they receive all the support possible to remain engaged in continued education, training or employment until they are 25 years old. Of the 13 learners who completed their statutory school studies in 2016-2017, 6 are engaged in college courses, 1 has remained on at school as a sixth form learner, 3 have continued their education as post 16 pupils at special schools and 1 has gained employment. Two young people are currently not in education, training or employment (NEET).

68.75% of care leavers are still in education, training or employment after 12 months of leaving care. This equates to 11 of 16 young people. This is an increase from 2016/17 when the figure was 40% (4 of 10 people). As well as monitoring the care leavers after 12 months of leaving care, Social Services also monitor them after 24 months. For 2017/18 the figure was 80% which was double the figure from last year of 40%.

No LAC school leavers aged 15 on 31 August left school without any qualifications and this was the same for last year.

In 2016-2017 the attendance for primary aged LAC was 94.7% and 91.4% for secondary aged looked after children. This is lower when compared with the previous year when the figures were 97.3% and 94.9%. The figure for primary school aged children is slightly higher when compared with the percentage attendance for those children within the Local Authority who are not looked after but lower for those children of secondary school age.

The percentage achieving the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 2 was 65.38%, this equates to 17 of 26 children. This is an increase from last year when 57.50% or 23 of 40 children achieved the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 2.

The percentage of children achieving the Core Subject Indicator at key stage 4 was 14.81%, this equates to 4 of 27 children. This shows a small decline from 2016/17 when 16.67% or 6 of 36 children achieved the Core Subject Indicator at Key Stage 4.

Under the Act there is a duty on the Council to ensure that Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for each LAC, except where a child enters care in an emergency, the PEP must be initiated as part of Part 6 of the care and support plan before the young person becomes looked after. In an emergency placement, the PEP should be initiated within ten working days.



During academic year 2016-2017 74% of PEPs for newly accommodated children and those who changed school were updated within statutory timescales. As part of this, a regional group for LAC Education Coordinators and the Leaving Care Forum has been established to consider approaches across other local authorities for the development of Personal Education Plans (PEPs). Following this review a decision will be made on how PEPs for 16-18 year olds will be coordinated in the future.

Our annual celebration of achievement event for LAC was held in November 2017. A number of our LAC were recognised for their achievements both within school and in terms of their participation in extra-curricular activities. The event was attended by representatives from schools, foster carers, social workers, personal advisors and our LAC. The event recognised those children of primary and secondary school age as well as those young people who had completed their statutory studies and moved onto post 16 education and training opportunities.

Support with Leisure aims to provide a responsive service to address the needs of families, providing short periods of intensive support to prevent escalation of needs and reducing the likelihood of specialist service becoming involved. The service enables children and young people to become independent as they develop their skills and confidence through hands on support. By focussing on activities within the local area we aim to reduce isolation and help children to feel part of their communities. At all points in the process children are involved and consulted to ensure their voice is heard. The service is reviewed regularly to measure the progress made towards identified outcomes and provide children and their parents/carers with the opportunity to give their views on the service.

During the period, Welsh Government gave permission to increase Flying Start outreach numbers to 5% of the budget, which will mean an increase from 12 to 53 children per year. We have been working with Generic Health Visiting and Families First to ensure we target the 0-3 year old children in Blaenau Gwent that need it most in-line with our Outreach Policy.

The Childcare Pilot is progressing well and effective working collaborations are in place between Education, private providers of child care, Social Services Directorates and Welsh Government. The team continues to develop and refine processes and will shortly finalise the online application system. Audit sampling processes have been established and we comply with Welsh Government regulations which include carrying out a 20% sampling figure. There have been a lower number of applications than expected across Wales and Welsh Government has requested for Blaenau Gwent to become a host Authority for a neighbouring area.

Teams within Adult Services continue to encourage people to be active members of the community, and to support each other in reducing social isolation. The Community Connectors have helped organise an intergenerational programme, linking Buds to Blossoms day nursery with Bank House. Their first event was in December 2017, when a number of infants visited the nursing home and spent a few hours with residents, singing Christmas songs and playing together. The manager of both the nursing home and nursery are hoping to make the visits a regular occurrence.



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

SEWAS is currently addressing the issue of a projected shortfall in the number of adoptive placements available for children referred to the service. In order to do this, SEWAS is working closely with the National Adoption Service and is currently implementing the roll out of a National Recruitment Strategy.

In order to reduce the number of adoption placement breakdowns, work has continued within the Recruitment and Assessment Team to improve preparation training. The Psychology Service, which is commissioned by Families First, is proving to be very beneficial in supporting staff and families with early intervention programmes. Psychology input to this training is a valued addition and supports adopters in making an informed decision regarding an appropriate match by gaining a therapeutic understanding of how to parent traumatised children.

A family meeting culture has been embedded across the service in order to support families to stay together where it is safe to do so. Regular meetings have been held to monitor residential placements and Independent Reviewing Officers have ensured that rehabilitation back home is considered at all reviews as and when it was appropriate.

A report has been developed to run a pilot scheme to recruit specialist professional foster carers, for our LAC with complex needs. The report describes the current difficulties faced in the recruitment of foster carers and outlined the proposed pilot scheme to address these difficulties. The report will also describe potential savings if the scheme is agreed and successful. We will look to initially recruit four specialist foster carers. They will commit to LAC with more complex needs and will treat fostering like a profession by ensuring 1 carer (if they are a couple) does not take work outside the home. We will look to recruit 2 child and parent placements. These placements are used to assess a parent's ability to look after their children within a safe environment when safeguarding concerns have been identified.

These placements are often recommended by the courts and last 12 weeks. Over the past 2 years we have always had one of these arrangements in place and at times two. Implementing this pilot will prevent children being placed outside of Blaenau Gwent allowing, when appropriate, the continuation of contact with birth parents to enable quicker rehabilitation back to parents if this is the plan. Adopting this scheme will also reduce some of the discriminatory barriers our LAC face. It will make them less isolated from their communities, schools and birth families. A bespoke parenting course and information pack has also been devised in Flying Start and is being delivered to all Foster Carers.

The numbers of LAC have remained high since April 2016. Total numbers of LAC at their lowest during this 2017/18 was 178 and at their highest 211. In order to address the numbers of LAC, a Safe Reduction in Looked After Children Strategy has been developed. The strategy is supported by an action plan which is monitored regularly and reported through the Social Services Scrutiny Committee. When last reported in April 2018, of the 17 identified actions 1 was completed, 15 were in progress and 1 was behind schedule.

9.44% of LAC had experienced 3 or more placements during the year. This is an improved picture from 2016/17 where the figure was 14.2%.

We recognise that unpaid carers are key stakeholders in meeting the care and support needs of vulnerable people. The Carers Engagement Officer (Adult Services) is now attending several GP surgeries in the West of Blaenau Gwent.

A bid for additional funding to extend this to the East area of Blaenau Gwent has been successfully achieved for 2018/19. The links between Adult Carers and Children's Services for Young Carers continue to be strengthened; supported by the development of operational groups for Adults and Young Carers. In order to increase awareness of the support available to carers and to engage with them, a 50+ Forum Event took place in October 2017 and a Carer's Rights Day took place in November 2017 with the aim of raising awareness of the Families First Young Carer's provision. The sessions were very well attended and appeared to be very successful.

A new Carers Strategic Partnership and Carers Operational Group have been developed and commenced. The carers' pilot at GP surgeries in the west Neighbourhood Care Network has continued with great success by supporting many carers at GP surgeries.

The Commissioner for Wales developed a report on the review into the quality of life in care settings. The Commissioner stated, *'I am pleased to note the range of activity within Blaenau Gwent to support care home residents through rehabilitation after a period of ill-health. Some of the evidence provided describes development work and restructuring that is going on at a wider level with partners, in response, for example, to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014...'*

Only 32% of adults who responded to the Act's questionnaire felt that they can do what is important to them, 46% responded 'sometimes', 19% responded 'no' and 4% 'didn't know'. When considering the commentary that supports this question it highlights that respondents were, more often than not, referring to their own health and ability rather than commenting on the provision provided by the service, *'My mobility restricts me'*. Although some positive commentary included, *'I have good family support and I have excellent support from my direct payment carers'*.



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

As part of our support to ensure Looked After Children (LAC) live in suitable accommodation, a gap analysis of accommodation for our care leavers has been undertaken, and the work continues to be a part of the Corporate Parenting Board action plan. Work has been undertaken to ensure that children have an appropriate plan for permanence which facilitates their early discharge from the LAC system and into accommodation which meets their needs. This is demonstrated with 88% of children reporting that they live in a home where they are happy, *'yes, I couldn't ask for more, 'very loving and kind' and 'because I'm with a happy and kind family'*. 83% reported that they are happy with the people they live with, *'they are so lovely and like my own family'*. Within Blaenau Gwent 6.12% of care leavers experienced homelessness during 2017/18. This is an improvement on last year when 21.18% experienced homelessness. This equates to 3 care leavers in 2017/18 and 10 in 2016/17.

The Barnardo's Blaenau Gwent service offered a range of overnight short breaks, supported leisure services and group activities to enable disabled children and young people to have new experiences, develop social contacts and gain some independence. Blaenau Gwent Children's Services has made the decision to take the retained service back in house.

The duty on local authorities to take 'all reasonable steps to achieve a suitable housing solution for all households which are homeless or threatened with homelessness' and the duty to 'provide interim accommodation to households while a housing solution is being sought', is leading to a significant increase in demand for Supporting People funded services. The Supporting People Team is responding to this challenge by working closely with the Housing Solutions Team to ensure preventative Supporting People services are being delivered throughout Blaenau Gwent which meets this strategic agenda. For example, our Floating Support Services provides support to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. We also fund a number of short term accommodation based services such as the homelessness hostel, refuge and young person's supported housing scheme.

Residential and Supported Living Service Providers mainly give care and support to younger adults i.e. 18-65 years and are well established in Blaenau Gwent. Alongside the strategy to support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible, equally, more people with a learning disability are being supported to live as independently as possible within homes they can call their own, as opposed to group living which would have been expected previously. More people are also being supported to live closer to home rather than moving to placements out of county and the Commissioning and Community Learning Disability Teams have excellent knowledge and working relationships with local providers.

United Welsh Housing Association's Floating Support Service has continued to provide housing related support for people in their own homes to enable them to live independently. Examples include: help with housing problems; help in setting up and maintaining a home; help to access other services; support and social networks; help to access education, training and employment; assistance to claim benefits/ maximise income; and help with budgeting and managing money.

The development of the Cariat Bed Service has continued with an evaluation of the current provision of the Step Up/Step Down Beds (CARIAD) being completed. Referral pathways have been reviewed and improved with just one person providing consistency and tracking throughout, ensuring that bed occupancy is maximised, hospital admissions are avoided or earlier and timelier discharges are supported. This service, which is funded by the Welsh Government Integrated Care Fund (ICF), continues to act alongside a number of measures utilised by Adult Services Teams aimed at maintaining and/or improving the Local Authority's performance in Delayed Transfers of Care.

There are two main areas which have occupied the Regional Partnership Board. Firstly, the evaluation of the Integrated Care Fund for Gwent and to ensure this money is spent most appropriately. This process is ongoing and the Regional Partnership Board have finalised which projects will continue to be funded moving forward. Secondly, under the Act, there is a requirement to move to a pooled budget arrangement for the functions of care home accommodation on a regional basis by April 2018. There has been progress over the last 2 quarters, and together with partners we will be working towards full implementation on a phased approach over the next couple of years.

In 2017/18, 70 Disabled Facilities Grants were administered (by Public Protection – Housing Solutions via Social Services referrals) - to help people remain in their own homes and maintain independence. As part of the Act questionnaire 74% reported that it was their choice to live in a residential care home. *'I could not climb stairs, I was so lonely, Depressed'*.



How We Do What We Do

Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

The workforce have further developed the skills and knowledge needed to embed the Act in particular by having meaningful conversations to enable the citizen to have more of a voice and control over the services they receive. A programme of development opportunities, delivered in partnership with skill experts included: personal skills development; building resilience; having difficult conversations; empowering others by having the ‘what matters’ conversation; and collaborative communication.

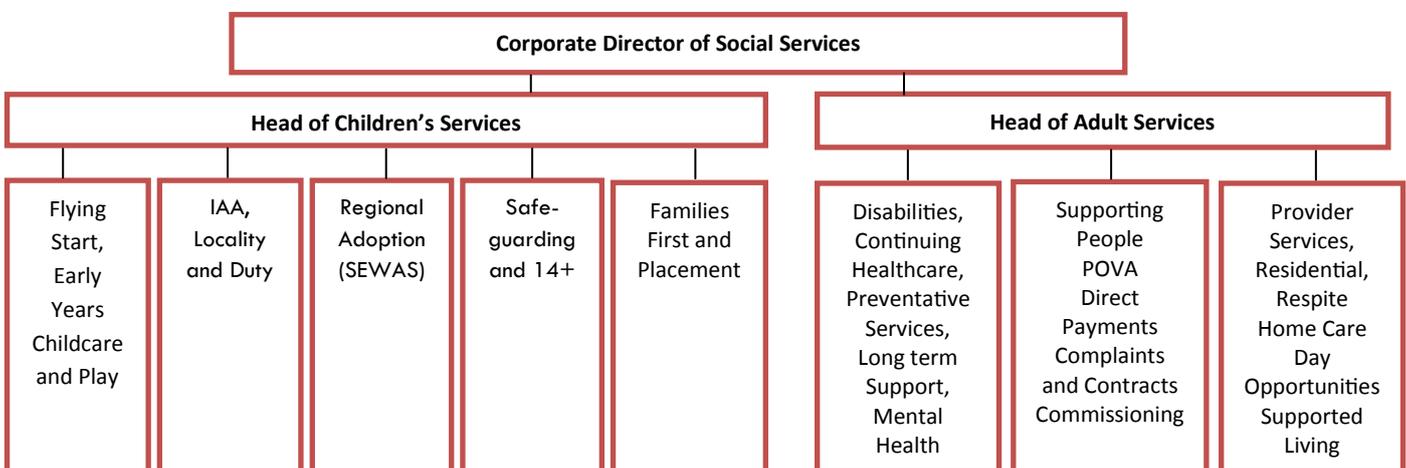
A series of engagement and consultation events supported the workforce to be involved in influencing national decisions regarding the implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. Key areas of influence have included: setting of professional fees; the design and content of a new induction and the new qualification framework for health and social care; and the key messages that needed to be included in awareness raising activity. Feedback from the workforce helped to design an innovative workforce development e-bulletin that delivers a workforce friendly approach to marketing and booking learning opportunities.

Legislation has also directed the start of a large scale training delivery programme for the workforce in response to the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015. A workforce development service Digital Transformation Strategy has been developed and the accompanying action plan will ensure the workforce can benefit from technological initiatives in learning and development.

The development of a Social Work Strategy was completed in 2016/17. An achievement now realised as part of the strategy is that CPEL attrition rates have been reduced and the pass rate is now at 100%. The 2017/18 launch of the First Three Years in Practice programme was held on 4th September 2017 and the previous year's new starters formed part of the welcoming presentation for this year's new starters. To maximise collaborative opportunities the Workforce Development Service continues to provide leadership to the Greater Gwent Workforce Board.

Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

It has been recognised by the Council that the work in Social Services is increasing and therefore a review of the staffing structure was required. This identified that, in order to manage the service effectively, the management structure needed to be reviewed. As part of this both the Director and Head of Adult Services were made permanent. Further work on the Council’s Senior Management Structure will be undertaken throughout 2018/19. The structure of the Social Services Directorate provides clear levels of management and accountability as shown below:



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

The Directorate has one Executive Member who has Portfolio responsibility for Social Services as a whole. The Directorate is scrutinised by the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and safeguarding information is reported to the Joint Social Services and Education and Learning Scrutiny Committee. Regular liaison meetings are held with the Directorate, the Executive Member and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Social Services Directorate is subject to audit, inspection and review by the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW). On a quarterly basis Social Services Senior Managers meet with CIW for liaison meetings. CIW also undertake an annual review and evaluation of the Directorate's performance.

As a whole, the Council has a clear governance and accountability framework and Performance Management Improvement Framework in place which all directorates are signed up to. These frameworks are complied with by Social Services who also have additional monitoring requirements as part of the Act.

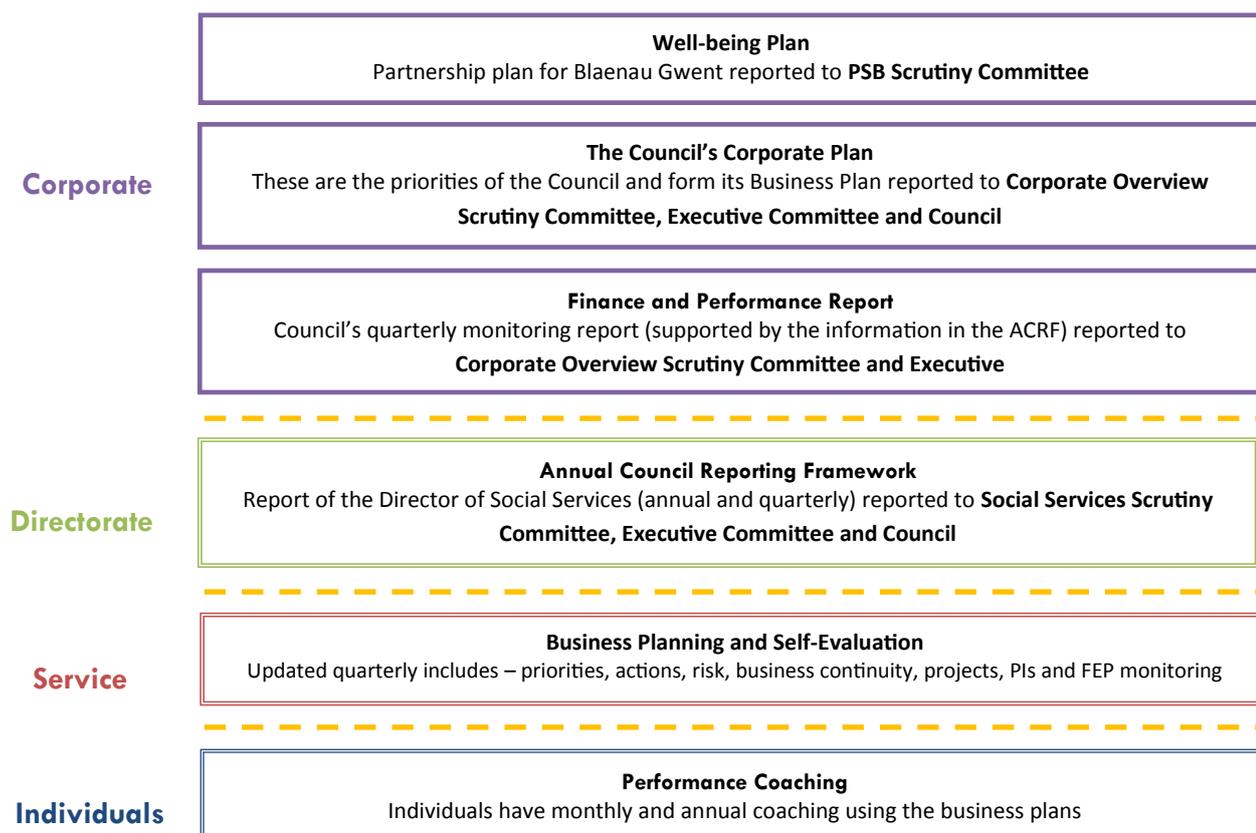
Blaenau Gwent Council supports partnership and collaborative working and the Social Services Department continues to work with a wide range of partners where partnership opportunities provide better outcomes for local residents than the Council could achieve if working on its own. Social Services work in partnership with a variety of stakeholders including staff, residents and businesses. In addition, Social Services fully participates in the sharing of knowledge, good practice and information, which can result in improved services. The Act is very clear on its expectation for partnership working and integration of service delivery and as part of this there is a duty on Local Authorities and Health Boards to prepare a Social Services and Well-being Regional Area Plan following the publication of the region's population needs assessment (PNA). The Area Plan has been developed jointly across the region (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) by the Regional Partnership Team together with the 5 Local authorities and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. The Area Plan sets out the actions to achieve the priorities identified in the PNA. The Area Plan was developed through extensive engagement with regional citizen panels, provider forums and the Regional Executive Director Leadership Group; as well as with local groups.

In March 2018, Council approved the Blaenau Gwent Corporate Plan 2018/22. The Corporate Plan is the Council's roadmap setting out the vision, values and priorities of the Council. One key priority within the Plan is, 'Social Services'. The business plans within Social Services will be aligned directly to the Corporate Plan to ensure that the priorities can be implemented over the next four years.

Our Partnership Working Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The framework below shows how reporting and monitoring works throughout the Council to create a 'golden thread'.

Planning Framework



'Mwy na geiriau/ More than just words

The Council recognises that language is an intrinsic part of care and people who need services in Welsh get offered them. This is called the 'Active Offer'. A review of the ability to deliver the 'Active Offer' across Social Services was undertaken as part of the creation our new IAA service where it was found that it is proactively promoted and all documentation identifies language of choice. The IAA Assessment for Eligibility Tool recorded within our social care system Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) previously DRAIG, specifically asks the question "Do you require this conversation / assessment to be carried out in Welsh?" The form is then attached to the person's referral.

We have written to all our providers informing them of the requirements under the Welsh Language Act 2011 to ensure they offer services in Welsh when requested. All commissioned Providers have signed the revised contract amendment form which states: "The Service Provider shall, if requested, provide the Service Purchaser with a Welsh Language Development Plan, detailing the steps which the Service Provider proposes to undertake to ensure compliance with the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Service Purchaser's Welsh Language Scheme."

The Directorate recognise a need for further development in this area which has been acknowledged by managers. However, the Directorate and its care providers experience challenges overall in recruiting and retaining skilled staff but should be minded to employ Welsh speakers where this is possible. Going forward, Welsh language community profiles will be used to develop the underpinning Area Plans that will deliver on the priorities identified in the Population Needs Assessment. The Local Authority also holds a central database that records the language skills of staff. The Head of Adult Services is the Welsh Language Champion for Social Services.

Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

The total budget for the Social Services Portfolio in 2017/18 was £41.6m and the provisional expenditure was £41.7m. This has resulted in an adverse variance of £0.1m, which is due to the cost pressures encountered within Children's Services as a result of the increased number of LAC.

During the budget setting process, additional funding was awarded during 2017/18 for the cost pressure identified of £3.5m to fund the implementation of the Minimum Living Wage, increase in Capital Limit, pressures in relation to an increase in the number of LAC and associated legal fees.

The Department has been successful in securing significant grant funding for the delivery of service provision for both Adults and Children, which has included ICF, Winter Pressures, Minimum Living Wage, Edge of Care, St David's Fund, and Placements and Traineeships, and this has assisted in mitigating the cost pressure within the Portfolio.

The Department has ensured that debt levels remained constant and within an acceptable level. This was achieved through debt monitoring process whereby 1,300 financial assessments were completed within the required deadline of 8th April. Property sales has generated income of £0.238m, an additional £0.061m against a budget of £0.177m.

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

In setting the 2017/2018 budget, Financial Efficiency Savings of £0.9m was identified and implemented and included the successful Community Options staffing Structure Review aligned to service provision of £190,000. The allocated budget and outturn for 2017/18 is provided in the table below and a full breakdown of spend is found in section 6.

Service Area	Budget	Outturn	Variance (Adverse)/ Favourable
Children's Services	£11,757,760	£12,523,229	(765,469)
Adult Services	£24,036,020	£23,364,247	671,773
Business Management / Staff Support	£5,973,150	£5,820,192	152,958
Procurement Savings	-£158,900	0	(158,900)
Total	£41,608,030	£41,707,669	(99,638)

The budget for 2018/19 is provided in the table below and includes a number of grants that were transferred into the Revenue Support Grant totalling £1.3m and additional funding awarded for the cost pressures identified of £0.5m which included funding for the increase in fee levels to Providers and LAC.

Social Services Budget 2018/19		£
1	Commissioning & Social Work	3,381,920
2	Children Looked After	6,659,770
3	Family Support Services	198,100
4	Youth Justice	233,160
5	Other Children's and Family Services	2,150,850
6	Older People Aged 65 and Over	5,530,530

Social Services Budget 2018/19		£
7	Adults under 65 with Physical Disabilities	39,500
8	Adults under 65 with Learning Disabilities	3,899,900
9	Adults under 65 with Mental Health Needs	672,570
10	Other Adult Services	346,590
11	Community Care	14,990,350
12	Support Service & Management Costs	1,187,460
13	Corporate Recharges	4,899,060
14	Procurement Savings	(25,070)
Grand Total		44,164,690

Conclusion

Throughout 2017/18 there has been substantial progress in the implementation of our priorities but we recognise that there is still further work to do to fully implement our aims and objectives.

The Social Services function remains high on the Council agenda, with a strategic priority for Social Services identified within the Corporate Plan. The Council is looking to address the areas that will have a long term benefit, ensuring that the needs of people of all ages and future generations are at the centre of service design and delivery.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 was a response to the Welsh Government review of Social Services in 2010 (Sustainable Social Services) which recognised that without radical change to the way we worked, services would become unaffordable in the near future as a result of demographic pressures and the changing expectations of the public at a time of financial austerity.

The Act looks to build and strengthen on existing arrangements by involving service users, carers and other key partners, where possible, in helping to shape and influence future design of services. This is supported by the Directorate who look to promote a preventative approach to practice through early identification and intervention.

It is recognised that in the current financial climate there is a need to work smarter and in partnership. The Population Needs Assessment and Regional Area Plan supports this approach and identifies the benefits of further regional working, joint commissioning and maximising of resources.

Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Useful Documents

Social Services and Well-being Regional Area Plan - http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/images/att7919.pdf

Reports to Social Services Scrutiny Committee – http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=SSS

Council Corporate Plan – http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/images/att8386.pdf

Blaenau Gwent Council Budget Monitoring - http://democracy.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/aksblaenau_gwent/users/public/admin/kab71.pl?cmte=JBM

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

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

Useful Websites

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

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

Data Unit Wales - www.dataunitwales.gov.uk

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

Gwent Wide Adult Safeguarding Board - www.gwasb.org.uk

Population Needs Assessment - <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/resident/health-wellbeing-social-care/social-services-well-being-act/population-needs-assessment/>

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

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

Welsh Government Childcare Offer - <https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/childcare/talk-childcare/pilot-areas/?lang=en>

Providing Feedback

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

Fersiwn Gymraeg

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

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The Social Services Directorate is satisfied that the information given in this annual report is accurate based on the information available at the time of publication. This annual report has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment screening.