

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council  
Social Services Department



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
**MERTHYR TYDFIL**  
County Borough Council

# Annual Report on Social Services' 2018 / 2019

This Report is available in other languages and  
formats upon request.

Email: [ACRF@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:ACRF@merthyr.gov.uk)

[www.merthyr.gov.uk/ACRF](http://www.merthyr.gov.uk/ACRF)



# Contents

<b>Section 1: Welcome and Introduction</b>	<b>3 - 5</b>
<b>Section 2: Director's Summary of Performance</b>	<b>6 - 7</b>
<b>Section 3: How are people shaping our services</b>	<b>8 - 9</b>
<b>Section 4: Promoting and Improving the wellbeing of those we help</b>	<b>10 - 27</b>
■ Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve	10 - 14
■ Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being	14 - 16
■ Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm	17 - 22
■ Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society	22 - 24
■ Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships	24 - 25
■ Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs	25 - 27
<b>Section 5: How we do what we do</b>	<b>28 - 34</b>
■ Our workforce and how we support their professional roles	28 - 30
■ Our financial resources and how we plan for the future	31
■ Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability	31 - 34
<b>Section 6: Further information and key documents</b>	<b>35</b>

## Section 1: Welcome and Introduction

As our Council's Chief Officer (Statutory Director) of Social Services, it is part of my job to report to you every year on how well our Social Services department is working and how well we are performing in helping to provide services to those who need care and support.

This year's report for 2018 to 2019 sets out our achievements in promoting and improving the well-being of those people needing our support. As part of this report, I set out how we are performing, the developments and challenges we have encountered and our priorities for the next 12 months.

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 was implemented in April 2016 and the changing practice, policy and service delivery required is progressing well and is being embraced locally and regionally.

During 2018/19, children's services staff have continued to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people in Merthyr Tydfil under the duties of the Social Services and Well-being Act. We are enormously proud of our looked after young people, some of whom have achieved local, national and international recognition for their outstanding achievements. Within Adult Services we continue to be committed to support people to live fulfilled lives in their own homes and communities and have worked in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board and neighbouring authorities to this end. This year the Stay Well @ Home Service received Social Care accolade awards. There were 2 awards on the same evening for the health care awards;

- Working seamlessly across organisations
- Outstanding contribution to prudent healthcare

The tackling poverty agenda continues to be a focus across the County Borough and is led through a strategic group of not only the council, but its partners in Health and the third sector. However, we are clear that early intervention and prevention in partnership with our communities provides the best possible solution to a range of the challenges we face as a local authority. There will certainly be a focus on Early Intervention and Prevention as we move forward into 2019/20

As in previous years, local authorities continue to face significant financial pressures. We have continued to work hard to achieve the savings the Council needs to make whilst doing our best to ensure that the services we provide to you are not adversely affected.

Despite a reduction in the budget areas for both Adult & Children's Social Care Services we have continued to deliver services to those who have been assessed as being the most vulnerable in our community. To date we have achieved this through focussing the limited resources on those areas that will have the maximum impact in maintaining people's independence to ensure that they can remain in their own community and reduce longer term demands on services.

Whilst every effort has been made to deliver services within the funding available the increasing numbers of children and older people that we need to protect has meant that this has not always been possible. There has been higher demand in 2018/19 in both Adults and Children Services, with an increase in packages of care to maintain adults within their own home and a big increase in our Looked After children population. This has meant pressures on the budget within Social Services. There has been the availability of grants from Welsh Government in respect of winter pressures and prevention work, which has assisted the Council.

However we continue to want to help people to achieve a higher level of well-being. It also means helping people to help themselves, to make better choices and access different types of support. Following the introduction of the 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act the Council has adopted 5 ways of working which are designed to ensure we are in a position to provide sustainable services now and in the future. These principles ensure we take a '**Long Term**' view to plan for the future, a focus on '**Prevention**', ensuring our services are '**Integrated**' with local communities and other partner agencies, that we '**Collaborate**' with and '**Involve**' the people who use our services and our partners in their development.

We continue to be committed to implementing the 'Five Year Welsh Language Promotional Strategy for Merthyr Tydfil (July 2017)' and actively encourage staff to attend Welsh Language courses which we provide in order that the residents of Merthyr Tydfil have the opportunity to communicate and receive services in Welsh.

As part of the 'Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act; the information we collect and the way in which we collect it has changed. We have been gathering additional information and reporting on the difference we are making on peoples' lives which has contributed to how we are judging our performance. The use of "well-being standards" means that we take a wider account of the impact that our services are having on people's lives, their place in their communities, family relationships, access to work and education and protecting people from harm. Because of doing things differently we are recording different information and considering the impact of services on people, asking ourselves "*what difference have we made to people's lives?*"

Doing different things, working smarter, making better use of our assets has never been so important. The Council intends to make effective use of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to safeguard the well-being of Merthyr Tydfil now and over the long term. The Council has identified four key wellbeing objectives – details of which are set out in our 'Statement of Wellbeing'. In addition to this, we have also documented what we will do and how we will work to deliver our objectives ('Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community').

In my role as Chief Officer Social Services, I play a key role in ensuring the successful delivery of the Council's well-being objectives. This includes responsibility for the 'Living Well' objective which seeks to ensure 'people are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health'. Our priorities for 2018/19 were:

- Safeguarding children and adults who are at risk of harm
- Tackling adverse childhood experiences and developing community resilience
- Promoting health behaviors and increased levels of physical activity
- Promote good emotional wellbeing and improved mental health
- Provide clear and accessible information and advice
- Services that provide people with the ability to live in their own home.

We are in the process of reviewing and rationalizing these priorities to ensure they are more focused. Children and Adult Services will continue to work on their specific strategies and plans and overall Social Services for 'Living Well' will focus on three main priority outcomes for 2019/20:

- People live independently within their communities.
- Children and Adults are safeguarded from harm and feel safe.
- Children and young people live safely with their family or close to home and have transitioned well into adulthood.

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my personal thanks to all the dedicated staff who have continued to work very hard to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our community. Staff continue to work extremely hard and strive to do the best for the people in Merthyr Tydfil. It isn't always easy with budget constraints, regional working and other pressures, but staff are our best asset and I cannot commend them enough for all their hard work and continued support. Within 2018/19 Children Services were inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales and they recognised the 'competent well qualified work force that was committed to achieving good outcomes for children and families.' Also in March 2019 the CMHT underwent an inspection which was again positive. The whole staff team were praised for their work and they were extremely positive about the leadership styles of both managers within the service and how this impacted positively upon the health, positivity and ethos of the team (across health and local authority).



**Mrs Lisa Curtis-Jones**

Chief Officer (Social Services) - Statutory Director of Social Services

## Section 2: Director's Summary of Performance

As outlined in Section 1 last year saw the introduction of two new major pieces of legislation - the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Both required the council to strengthen the governance arrangements and performance management, and as a result the council undertook a significant programme of preparation which was embedded this year. Both pieces of legislation required us to work more closely with our partners and collaboration. I feel that excellent progress continues to be made on partnership working in 2018-19. The Regional Partnership Board involving all partners and elected members from both authorities (MTCBC & RCTCBC) meets on a monthly basis, and officers meet at the Transformational Leadership Group aside from this. In this arena plans are formulated on a regional basis and as a result new initiatives have been developed across Cwm Taf Morgannwg. We have the Stay Well @ Home Service (SW@H), this service works to ensure people are not staying in hospital longer than necessary and they can return home in a timely manner with the required package of support. This prevents bed blocking within the hospital and provides better outcomes for patients. It should be acknowledged that the Integrated Community Fund has allowed us to be innovative across the region, as it has provided an extra financial resource.

In respect of SW@H patients have given positive feedback about their experiences of the service. This year we have engaged with a number of people to gather views about their experiences of various services. Views not only show what type of service is being offered, but also assists us in developing plans for the future. One of the key areas of engagement last year was the 'care leaving service', asking them 'what services they would like in the future?' This work was completed in collaboration with Voices from Care. This has assisted us in developing how the service should look moving forward.

The WCCIS database is now embedded into Social workers day to day work and all staff have been trained to use this system. Staff have worked hard to get to know the system and use it fully, as issues arise these are being raised with the performance team and improvements considered. Gathering performance data still remains a challenge, although it has improved since 2017/18. Staff within the performance team have worked hard to develop programmes to enable the services to have the data they require for their day to day roles.

Social Services continues to work alongside colleagues across the Council and in partnership with others to deliver effective services to a wide range of people. As part of this the Tackling Poverty Strategic Group and Tackling Poverty Board was established within the last eighteen months. This work is well established and has allowed us the opportunity to look at all the grant funding received into Merthyr Tydfil and consider where monies can be re-invested and try and prevent duplication. There has been improvements in this area this year in that there has been a review of our 'Team around the Family' which is helping to develop an 'Early Help Hub'. An operational group has now been established to focus on Early Intervention and Prevention and to look to work together across the council on this agenda.

Prevention and Early Intervention is key to sustaining services in the longer term. Last year we had the introduction of the 'Edge of Care' grant which we used effectively to support children who are in crisis and need extra support. Further reviews of this service have been completed in 2018/19 with a view to services being changed moving forward to enable us to offer support at an earlier opportunity. In some circumstances children have required to be looked after but we work hard to match them to the most appropriate placement and are given the right support early on.

This year there has been lots of positive work undertaken in Social Services. We continue to support adults within their own home and react promptly to safeguarding concerns for both children and adults. This is in the backdrop of continued financial pressures, as demand is increasing in the service but funding reducing. We have been supported by grants being paid, for example Winter pressures, domiciliary care/respite provision at the end of the financial year 2018-19 which assisted us.

Again 2018/19 has been a busy year. Demands within the service have increased with pressures being seen on both Adult and Children Services due to high demand with packages of care for people leaving hospital and requiring support to live in the community, and with an increase in our numbers of Children being looked after. This has put huge pressures on us in respect of budgets. However Safeguarding Adults and Children will always be our priority.

There have been two CIW inspections this year, with Children Services being inspected in April 2018 and the Mental health Service being inspected in March 2018. Welsh Audit Office also audited 'Safeguarding' during the year. There will always be areas we can learn from but overall the feedback has been positive, which I feel is a major achievement when you consider the budget position and increasing demands for our service.

I feel overall we have made achievements, which are outlined within the main body of the report and we will endeavor to continue this good work moving forward in 2019/20.

## Section 3: How are people shaping our services?

We continue to place a high value on the engagement we have with local people, not just in evaluating how successful we are in delivering services that they need but in helping us to design what we are able to provide at the start.

During 2018/19 we engaged with people in the following ways:

- We have involved Care Experience young people in developing practice standards. They helped us develop clear and achievable standards such as:

At my Best	Not at my Best
Take time to get to know a looked after young person for who they really are.	Base my knowledge of looked after young person only from reading records.
Looked after young people feel that their social worker should believe in them and is fighting their corner.	Going through the motions of what is expected ... visits, write ups, reviews and reports... with no intrinsic interest in the individual and their well-being.
When talking to looked after young people keep it real, be straight forward and say things as they are.	Avoid giving negative information because I don't want to upset somebody or I make promises that cannot be kept.
Understand that because of looked after young people's experiences, they need second chances.	Criticise young people for 'bad behaviour'.

- Care Experienced young people have co-produced the specification for the revised Personal Adviser service for Care leavers, including in the requirements the ways of working that are more effective to them.
- Foster Carers have met with us to give us a clear steer in what matters most to foster carers in terms of their support, training and recruitment.
- Care Experienced young people continue to meet with support from Voices for Care Cymru and advise each meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board what their most pressing issues for change. Recently they took part in research that calls for regional partnership boards to establish services to improve the emotional well-being and mental health of looked after young people.
- Parents who have worked with the Early intervention Team have been involved in presentations to Social Care Wales about our way of working in Merthyr Tydfil Social Care and the achievements and outcomes for their children. In each case the work of staff and parents had prevented their children from becoming looked after. Their comments included the following:

*I trusted her (social worker).*

*Brilliant help, felt listened to - (and we the parents) listened to her.*

*Hard at the start.*

*(the social worker) built good relationship.*

*(the social worker) got the family into action.*

- We have continued to work with People First and carer representatives to develop the implementation plan for the Statement of Intent for People with a Learning Disability. A workshop was held in February to seek the views of people with people with a learning Disability on how we implement the service changes included in the learning Disability Statement of Intent.
- We have commenced consultation in respect of domiciliary care services as part of the development of a regional domiciliary care strategy which will be completed in 2019/20.
- We regularly engage with Older People through the 50+ forum and have undertaken consultation on Public toilets and bus passes.
- We undertook focused consultation and engagement with service users, families and carers in relation to the implementation of Dementia Care Matters across the Dementia Day Service within Keir Hardie Health Park. This also included feedback from other stakeholders including staff and the third sector.
- Consultation is undertaken within the Local Authority Care Homes as part of the Annual Report process. Overall feedback is positive – these are some of the comments received:
  - *The staff look after the residents very well. They treat them like family and know everything about them. I am so confident that each and everyone is cared for with compassion – thank you.*
  - *All the staff are friendly and nothing is too much bother.*
  - *It is a pleasure to have my family member here being well cared for. Lovely staff. Clean home. Friendly place. Nothing is too much trouble. We can see the manager at any time.*
  - *We always feel welcome. The staff are very helpful and polite at all times. It's always a pleasure to attend this building.*

## Section 4: Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help

The well-being of those we help and outcomes that people want to achieve are at the heart of our approach to delivering sustainable social services. We have continued to work hard and do our very best to meet the well-being outcomes of people who need care and support and carers who need support. We want to ensure that citizens have a voice and real control over their own lives, where they can inform us about those things that matter to them. This means working in partnership across other council departments and with external partners; shaping local services according to local needs and circumstances.

This section is the main part of the report setting out our performance in promoting and improving the well-being of local people who need care and support. All local councils are required to demonstrate how their work is linked to the six National Quality Standards for wellbeing, and in doing so set out the priorities we identified for delivery over the past 12 months, plus additional priority actions related to new ways of working. Importantly this is about outlining how we have made progress, provided evidence and real life examples of the impact on people, as well as setting out priorities for 2019/20.

Our main goal is to *“Ensure people are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they feel safe and enjoy good physical and mental health”*. This means that we will always strive to work with you to identify “what matters” to you, to avoid crises, and how we and our partners can help you achieve your personal outcomes. Importantly we will continuously strive to improve the quality of services we provide.

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

We want to make sure that we make a real difference to people’s lives. This means helping people to solve their problems as quickly and effectively as possible. For example, we gave Information, Advice and or Assistance to people and helped them find their own solutions.

#### **What did we plan to do last year?**

We identified the following priority areas of work for 2018/19;

As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring that we work with people of all ages and involve them in determining what matters most as a way of identifying personal outcomes and working alongside people to co-produce care and support plans we will:

- Following further consultation with stakeholders; develop and implement our plan for improving the Information, Advice and Assistance Service for children, young people and their parents or carers.
- Re-design the service for care leavers and enhance the pathway and support that is available to all carers including young carers.

- Develop the support that is available to families on the Edge of Care and ensure that we have the right evidence based support available and that children can grow up with their families wherever that is safe and appropriate.
- Improve the information and support that is available for Special Guardians ensuring they have timely advice and support which will prevent placement breakdown.
- To ensure the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) system remains fit for purpose since its implementation in July 2017; we will carry out a review of what is working well and identify opportunities for further improvement.
- We will continue to develop and improve the range and quality of performance information available to aid management decision making and satisfy our statutory and internal reporting requirements.
- Work with health colleagues and evaluate GP support worker pilot impact on Information Advice and Assistance (IAA).
- Undertake a strategic review of the services supported through the Integrated Care Fund.
- Re-Register directly delivered services such as our residential homes and domiciliary care and monitor their requirements under the new regulations.
- Implement the broader requirements of the social services functions contained within the 'Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act'.
- Implement the new arrangements for calculating grant allocations for Supporting People.

### **How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?**

- Having carried out a review of our Team around the Family Service called MIA, we have decided to develop an Early help Hub. The review itself considered the views of families about the service, received input from partner organisations and considered 7 different models across Wales. The Early Help Hub will bring together our staff from children's services and grant funded preventative services with a view to identifying need earlier and connecting families to early help. In this way we hope that the public have confidence in and take up of early help services will increase. We know that by providing the right service at the right time we can, in many cases, prevent problems from developing or getting worse. We will make sure that the Early help Hub also works to enhance the information, advice and assistance that is available to Young Carers and families of children with disabilities along with linking into service at the Gurnos Community Zone.
- With the help of care leavers we have re-written the specification for the Personal Adviser care leavers' service. We have also worked with colleagues in the housing department with a view to improving the supported accommodation and suitable accommodation options that are available for care leavers. Progress has been made under the Pathways to work.
- During the year we have evaluated the outcomes of our offer to families who need the most help to prevent children from becoming looked after (Edge of Care). We have built on the success of the Early Intervention Team's ways of working, and consulted with research about what works to develop a new team with additional skills and resources including family group conferencing. Through this work we aim to further strengthen intensive work with families, and make progress with our aim of ensuring children live with their family wherever that is safe and appropriate and making the right decision at the right time. We know that early intervention is important and also that we are better able to achieve successful and stable lives for looked after young people if we make the decision that they need to be looked after **earlier in their childhood**.

- Foster Carers have told us how helpful it can be to receive support from other foster carers. We have taken this on board and will continue with the Fostering Well-being Champions who are foster carers who work closely with the fostering team to provide advice support to carers that doesn't need the input of a social worker. In year we have finalised the development of a key project – the Multi-agency Permanence Support Service which is a regional service which will provide consultation and support to foster carers and therapy to looked after young people who need it.
- Colleagues have worked hard in developing a new offer to support Special Guardians. Special Guardianship Order allows a relative to care for a child who might otherwise have been in the care system. During the year we have evaluated our demand for support services and developed an offer in line with the new Code of Practice that will see us improve our offer to Special Guardians with an emphasis on early help and supporting Special Guardians when young people experience difficulties link their family background.
- Since the implementation of the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS) in July 2017, we have undertaken a user survey to understand what is working well and what needs to improve. This information was invaluable and has been used to help us develop a WCCIS programme of work that will ensure ongoing improvement and ultimately customer experience. In addition to this, we have continued to develop the range and quality of information available to aid decision making and satisfy our statutory performance / data reporting requirements. Despite good progress being made, work to further improve the system and availability of information will remain ongoing.
- We worked with health colleagues to evaluate the GP support scheme that has been operating in each of the GP Cluster areas and identified that this is supporting people earlier in the care pathway in line with the principles of IAA. This scheme has been extended until March 2020 in order to establish whether the service can be rolled out across the region.
- We said we would re-register our directly delivered care homes and domiciliary care services with Care Inspectorate Wales in line with the new Regulation and Inspection requirements.
- The cost calculator pricing policy was implemented across our floating support programmes in April 2019 to ensure a consistent and transparent pricing policy across all SP programmes, as well as a newly commissioned Supported accommodation Contract. Any efficiencies as a result of this has been used to fund innovative projects based on areas of local need, this includes a 50+ Dementia Housing Related Support Project and work towards a regionally commissioned hostel project across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.
- We have also committed funds for a complex needs Mental health worker to be co-located in our Housing Options Office to support those presenting with complex mental health issues and will work on a self-neglect – Hoarding project part time also.
- The final projects which will be commissioned on the cost calculator pricing policy will be our fixed site provision with Llamau – our Young Peoples Garth Newydd Court and Flocks Supported accommodation for young people with support needs.

In an annual survey of people receiving support from us, we asked how those services and support could be improved, what you would like us to do more of and what you would like us to do differently. In the boxes below are some of the questions we asked you about your experience.

Collecting this information is important to us so we can try and put it right when you tell us you are not happy with your services or experience or you would like them to be different. We also need to know when we are successful to ensure that the services you are receiving are effective.

**Key:**

			
People were happy with the service	People were sometimes happy with the service they received	People were unhappy with the service they received	People weren't sure about the quality of the service they received, or didn't answer the question

Those that replied said;	You said you were:    
knew who to contact about their care and support.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
had the right information or advice when they needed it.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
had been actively involved in decisions about how their care and support was provided.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
were treated with dignity and respect.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
were happy with the care and support they had.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>

Those that replied said;	You said you were:    
they had the right information or advice when they needed it.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>

**What are our priorities for next year and why?**

In 2019/20 it is our intention to:

- Enhance person centered planning for people with a learning disability.
- Engage with people who use our day services that support people with a dementia as part of our implementation of the Dementia Care Matters model of support.
- Increase take up of early help services to prevent problems from getting worse.
- Reduce the number of children in Merthyr Tydfil who need to become looked after.
- Reduce the number of looked after young people whose placement (the place where they live and are cared for) changes.
- Increase the number of care leavers who are in work, employment or training.
- In consultation with system users and managers, continue to improve the accessibility, range and quality of information available via the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS).

**Progress and priorities for 2019/20 will contribute to delivery of the following Council Wellbeing Objectives:**

**Best Start to Life**

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.

**Living Well**

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

**Working Life**

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.

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

### **What did we plan to do last year?**

Last year we said we would:

- Implement the review and re-design of Adult Day Service provision.
- Undertake a formal evaluation of year 1 impact of the Stay Well @home Service.
- The Merthyr Tydfil Supporting People (SP) Team commission services based on local need to provide housing-related support to vulnerable members of the community to promote independence and prevent homelessness. Future work is planned in consultation with multiple departments and sectors to identify areas of greatest need in our communities in which to commission services providing housing-related support.
- We said we would continue to implement the learning Disability Strategy with following priority outcomes:
  - Preventing loneliness and isolation by increasing community inclusion.
  - Looking at how we meet the range of housing needs now and in the future.
  - Improve and increase the options for further education.
- Develop the services that are available to families on the 'Edge of Care'.
- Improve the placement options and support that is available to looked after young people and care leavers.
- Develop our offer to Special Guardians.

### **How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?**

- The re-designed edge of care service is described above. Our development work in this area demonstrated how many families, where in order to improve parenting and children’s resilience in the long term we need to have evidence based and focused interventions and therefore the new service will be supported by a part time psychologist.
- In order to recruit more Merthyr Tydfil foster carers, and this year we have sharpened our approach by developing a regional team with Rhondda Cynon Taf whose work will focus on attracting more skilled and suitable foster carers.
- We have reviewed and evaluated our work with families who need most help at the edge of care and as a result we have a plan to improve our interventions and increase the resources that are available.
- During the year we have worked towards a Placement Commissioning Strategy and achieved some of the cations aimed at improving the availability of suitable placements for children and young people in the care system. This has included the establishment of a regional front door for new enquiries for foster care and recruitment of a marketing officer. We have also appointed a Placement Officer who is helping us improve our work in relation to finding the right resources for looked after young people whose needs cannot be met by Merthyr Tydfil foster carers.
- We have carried out a review of our offer to Special Guardians and found that we can make improvements by keeping in touch with Special Guardians, offering training and providing information advice and assistance form the Early Help Hub. A proposal will be brought to Cabinet about this in the late Spring.
- We have not fully implemented the re-design of Adult Day Services, however we have completed significant supporting work to place us in a more favourable position to take this forward which includes the Valley Life initiative and work with Dementia Care Matters to enhance the experience and support for people with a dementia.
- We have completed a formal evaluation of the Stay Well @ Home service that identified that it is achieving improved outcomes for older people across Cwm Taf. The service was also successful in reaching the final of the Social Care Accolades and won the two awards in the Health Care awards including the overarching Prudent Health Care award. We are hoping to build on this success and seek opportunities to develop our community responses earlier.
- We have worked with Social Care, Health Colleagues and Independent Care Home Providers to revise the care home contract so that it incorporates the requirements of the Social Services & Wellbeing Act and revised Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Wales Act 2016.
- Within Supporting People, services have been commissioned, reconfigured and decommissioned to meet needs. Further detail is available in the Supporting People Local Commissioning plan.

**Information we received when asking adults about their care and support plans:**

We asked you if...	You said you were: 
you can do the things you like to do.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
you know who to speak to about your care and support plan.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>

you were actively involved in decisions about how your care and support was provided	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
you were treated with dignity and respect.	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>

## What are our priorities for next year?

In 2019/20 it is our intention to:

- Continue to work with Dementia Care Matters to implement the model within our day services that support people with dementia.
- Continue to work with Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB to take forward the development of the Valley LIFE work to enhance community services for people with a dementia.
- Work with our regional partners to develop new models of community support for Adults as part of the transformational program.
- Implement any actions identified as part of the inspection of Adult Community Mental Health Service in partnership with our health colleagues.
- Implement the Early Help Hub for children, young people, parents, carers and families.
- Establish the new revised offer to families at the Edge of Care.
- Conclude and implement our offer to Special Guardians.
- Establish a multi-agency permanence support service for looked after young people and their carers.
- Enhance the offer of support to adopted children and parents.
- Receive higher numbers of enquiries about being a Merthyr Foster Carer.

**Progress and priorities for 2019/20 will contribute to delivery of the following Council Wellbeing Objectives:**

### **Best Start to Life**

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.

### **Living Well**

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

### **Working Life**

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.

## Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

In Merthyr Tydfil we believe that all children, young people and adults at risk have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve to be free from abuse. We have a range of duties to help safeguard: adults and children, including people with physical, visual mental or learning disability; older people who are frail or ill, people in households or relationships where there may be domestic violence; and, children who may be sexually exploited.

In collaboration with our partners in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region we ensure that:

- We respond promptly to new concerns about adults and children at risk.
- Our staff are trained to spot the signs of abuse and know what action they need to take.
- We ask people who have experienced the safeguarding service for their views and how it could be improved.
- We regularly review what we have done and challenge ourselves to find ways in which we can improve.
- All staff who are employed by us are safe to work with children and adults at risk.

## **What did we plan to do last year?**

### **The Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - Strategic Outcome 1**

- Improve the co-ordination of information sharing, decision making and integration in order for the MASH to continue being effective in safeguarding children and adults at risk.
- Review information sharing systems to ensure they are effective and identify future requirements.
- Through the MASH Quality Assurance Group, support the development and improvement of MASH safeguarding processes to ensure that multi-agency working is improving outcomes for children and adults at risk. This includes a review of guidance, development of a performance framework and program of auditing, use of outcomes to improve learning and aid/develop prevention strategies specific to Cwm Taf.

### **Performance of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (CTSB) - Strategic Outcome 2**

- We will ensure that the Board demonstrates how it is making a difference to the lives of children and adults at risk by strengthening the Performance Management Framework, improving methods of evaluation to measure the impact of our work and identify areas of good practice in other areas to help improve our work.
- Ensure the production of relevant, accurate and timely multi-agency data.
- Improve challenge of safeguarding performance at Board level, identify areas for improvement through multi-agency audits and individual agency inspection or annual reports to support service improvement.
- Contribute to the development of a national self-assessment tool to assess the effectiveness of the Board in safeguarding children and adults at risk.

### **Development, implementation and monitoring of protocols and procedures - Strategic Outcome 3**

- Contribute to the development of National Protection Procedures for safeguarding children and adults.

- Undertake a review of existing local safeguarding protocols. We will involve and consult with the public in the development of new local protocols and procedures.

#### **Identifying and understanding widespread safeguarding concerns in the area - Strategic Outcome 4**

- Ensure that learning identified through safeguarding activities supports the development of prevention strategies specific to Cwm Taf.
- Develop a set of principles for transition and identify young people who are likely to be at most risk and ensure that partner agencies work together to safeguard and support them through transition from childhood to adulthood.
- Contribute to the national work around managing the process whereby Cwm Taf children are placed out of the area and where there are children from outside the area being placed in Cwm Taf.
- Ensure awareness raising, training and a robust reporting structure is in place to safeguard children and adults at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Partnership working, training and awareness raising with staff and the community to recognise early indicators of extremism.
- Ensure staff are made aware of the National Referral Mechanism process which provides a framework to identify, refer and record potential victims of modern slavery.
- Work in partnership to tackle the issues around violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

#### **Communication - Strategic Outcome 5**

- Build better relationships with our community and share information and learning on issues that improve awareness of safeguarding.
- Improve communication and information sharing with staff and professionals.

#### **Practitioners in Cwm Taf receive or have access to good quality and up-to-date safeguarding training - Strategic Outcome 6**

- Ensure that training is provided on an inter-agency and individual organisational basis to assist in the protection and prevention of abuse and neglect of children, young people and adults at risk of harm. This includes identifying training priorities and exploring the delivery and quality of training we provide.
- We will share learning and examples of best practice with all partners via the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board.
- We will utilise the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board website ([www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org](http://www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org)) and E-Bulletin to provide up to date information to practitioners and the public.

#### **Ensure the protection of people who, for their own safety and in their own best interests, need care that may deprive them of their liberty but who lack the capacity to consent - Strategic Outcome 7**

- Through the Quality Assurance Sub Group, we will monitor, audit and quality assure the effectiveness of the Deprivation of Liberty Standards (DoLS) work carried out by partner agencies. This includes implementation of an audit program to identify themes and lessons learned, analyse available data to provide the Board with a better understanding of the performance in relation to DoLS.

- Ensure that training provided to staff is implemented effectively and learning from cases is shared and used to improve practice.
- We will involve people in the DoLS process – this includes seeking opportunities to involve people (public, carers etc) and make best use of providers of advocacy services and involve these in the management of the DoLS process.
- We will also evaluate how we are engaging with the people we support to ensure that the voice of the person is heard.

## **How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?**

We have been working hard to further develop our early intervention and preventative services for both adults and children. Within the Council we work to ensure that all Council departments have an active understanding of their safeguarding duties via the Corporate Safeguarding Steering Group.

### **The Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) - Strategic Outcome 1**

The quality of Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub information sharing and safeguarding processes have been evaluated through a program of auditing focusing on learning outcomes and developing the early intervention and prevention strategy. There is evidence of focused work leading to a high level of safeguarding being achieved.

### **Performance of the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (CTSB) - Strategic Outcome 2**

The Performance Management Framework has been in development since the introduction of the Wales Community Care Information System (WCCIS). This has brought benefits of improved information access across local authority boundaries. The challenges of further developing this system are already showing increased benefits to our work. Multi agency audits help to assess Board effectiveness and have highlighted areas for priority improvement helping to clarify the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board's priorities for the coming year.

### **Development, implementation and monitoring of protocols and procedures - Strategic Outcome 3**

Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board is actively engaged in the process of reviewing and updating the National Protection Procedures alongside its local authority partners. It is hoped the procedures will be complete by the end of 2019.

Cwm Taf Safeguarding protocols are subject to a rolling program of multi-agency reviews.

### **Identifying and understanding widespread safeguarding concerns in the area - Strategic Outcome 4**

Safeguarding activities have informed Merthyr's preventative strategy which is currently being strengthened as a result of learning identified.

A new Successful Transition into Adulthood policy has been developed identifying a set of principles and promoting increased inter agency partnership working.

National work has continued around managing the process where children are placed outside their own local authority.

The Corporate Safeguarding Reference Group and close work with the Police and the Home Office has resulted in an increased awareness, a better understanding of and improved performance in managing criminal exploitation, extremism and potential victims of modern slavery.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 has had a specific focus this year with an action plan being developed to take this forward.

### **Communication - Strategic Outcome 5**

A communication strategy is under development in Merthyr to further improve sharing of good practice, important learning and new policies and guidance. Work continues in Merthyr to raise community awareness around the importance of safeguarding.

### **Practitioners in Cwm Taf receive or have access to good quality and up-to-date safeguarding training - Strategic Outcome 6**

Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board and regional activity feed into training development where both learning and best practice are shared. E-learning is increasingly used and safeguarding e-learning is being developed that can be available on an all council basis.

### **Ensure the protection of people who, for their own safety and in their own best interests, need care that may deprive them of their liberty but who lack the capacity to consent - Strategic Outcome 7**

Merthyr Tydfil CBC work in partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC to deliver the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and the performance of the service is monitored at both a Safeguarding Board level and regular Local Authority Partnership meetings.

In 2018/19 The DoLS Quality Assurance Sub-Group completed a programme of audits to re-assure to the Board and both Local Authorities that assessments produced under the Safeguards are completed to the highest practice standards to ensure that adults living in care homes, who lack mental capacity to decide on their residence and care arrangements, have their Human Rights protected.

There continues to be a waiting list as demand for assessments under the DoLS far outstrips the Council's ability to respond which is a national position.

Legislative change is expected within 2019/20 that may ease the burden on local authorities, although it is not yet clear exactly what the impact will be. In the meantime, requests for assessments are closely monitored and risk-managed to ensure that those cases where the adult's Human Rights are most in jeopardy are given highest priority and early attention. In fact, Merthyr

has successfully delivered an increase in the number of new assessments, although the number of re-assessments in 2018/19 has declined.

Training on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the DoLS is provided by the joint Social Care Training Unit and consists of 4 levels of training commensurate to specific staff roles and responsibilities. Evaluations of training delivered are consistently excellent and the annual training plan is informed by a training strategy.

There has been a significant increase in referrals for professional advocacy to support individuals and their appointed family Representatives in 2018/19, with an increase of almost 50% in this 12 month period.

**Additional work has been carried out in Merthyr Tydfil:**

- The new National Protection Procedures for both Adults and Children are still in development.
- Children’s Services Quality Assurance Framework has been key to driving improvements in quality. This has particularly been the case in relation to highlighting the importance about the age of children when they become looked after. Children’s services are much better able to meet the needs of children who are young when they become looked after which means that decision making should bear this in mind along with a range of factors. As part of our performance reporting we track the age of a child who becomes looked after.

**Survey with service users in respect of ‘if they felt safe following intervention’:**

We asked you if you ... felt safe	You said you were: 
Children	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
Adults	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>
Carers	<i>This information will be available in May 2019.</i>

**What are our priorities for next year?**

- Our priorities for the year ahead are set out in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Plan for 2019/20. These include:
  - *Reducing the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and adults at risk.*
  - *Improve the way we communicate with our communities and partner agencies.*
  - *Ensure that the transition to the new regional footprint for safeguarding is managed effectively.*

- In the coming year the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will implement a joint consistent approach to business support across both Merthyr Tydfil and RCT local authorities. It is envisaged that this will be further enhanced by a review of the information sharing systems to support MASH activity, which is being led by the Police and Crime Commissioner. There will be a continuation of training and awareness raising activities to improve staff engagement, via the MASH bulletin and bespoke training sessions. Finally, the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board's priority to address the impact of domestic abuse on people of all ages will be supported by the alignment of MASH and MARAC functions, to include the development/improvement of performance management frameworks for both areas.
- In addition to this, children's services will ensure an effective interface between MASH and the Early Help Hub which will allow us to offer information, advice and assistance to more families who may benefit from early help services

Safeguarding is not just seen as a priority for Cwm Taf Morgannwg. Safeguarding is also a key priority across all Social Services Plans and the Council's plan for wellbeing (Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community). A copy of the Council's 'Statement of Wellbeing' and 'Wellbeing Plan' can be found in the 'Strategies, Plans and Policies' section of our website ([www.merthyr.gov.uk](http://www.merthyr.gov.uk)).

**Progress and priorities for 2019/20 will directly and indirectly contribute to delivery of all Wellbeing Objectives – in particular:**

**Best Start to Life**

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

**Living Well**

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

**Working Life**

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.

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

### **What did we plan to do last year?**

Last year we said we would:

- Implement a draft work plan and engage with children and young people to ensure they are involved in the work that we do and able to reflect their concerns more extensively.
- Following further consultation with stakeholders; we will develop and implement our plan for improving the Information, Advice and Assistance Service for children, young people and their parents or carers.
- Agree and start to implement our future model for Day Services provision across learning disability day services and for people with dementia. We intend to achieve this through

implementation of the Learning Disability Statement of Commissioning Intent and the Valleys Life Initiative.

- The Valley LIFE project aims to deliver Local Integrated services for the Frail and Elderly, in particular those with early to progressive dementia. Valley LIFE aims to build a new dynamic Health and Wellbeing Hub for older people with cognitive and memory problems on the Keir Hardie Health Park site.

### **How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?**

- Our looked after Children's Education team (LACES) has worked with schools and foster carers to make sure that ensure that all children and young people in care have access to a good quality, appropriate education and the necessary support to fulfil their potential. Arranged in a cluster model, there is an allocated LACES officer for each Merthyr Tydfil CLA pupil. A key function of the team is to monitor and review the progress of CLA in conjunction with schools, social workers and foster carers, supporting and challenging when necessary. The team is able to offer a range of well-being, transitional and academic interventions and their training includes Trauma Informed Schools, Emotion Coaching, ELSA, SAP and Lego therapy. The team is responsible for delivering training to schools to ensure that they are working in a CLA Friendly model, this includes attachment awareness training, CLA Friendly Schools training and Trauma Informed Schools training.
- Through our work with Voices from Care, Merthyr Tydfil looked after young people have contributed to research called Listen Act Thrive which highlights the need for more support for looked after young people and care leavers to improve their emotional well-being and mental health.
- Two Care experienced looked after young people have joined the Merthyr Tydfil youth cabinet
- A Merthyr Tydfil care experience young person supported democratic services in a recent by-election.
- The Pathway to Work for care experienced young people has been concluded.
- We have continued to work with our partners to improve day service provision and have commissioned Dementia Care Matters to support the implementation of the model in our services that support people with dementia. We have supported Day service staff to attend the Leadership in Dementia Care Matters (DCM) training and offered opportunities for a range of staff including care management, day service and health staff to attend a DCM conference held in January 2019.
- We have continued to work towards developing the Valley LIFE project however we have needed to revisit our plans as the site that we had identified on which to build the proposed Wellbeing Hub was not suitable and we are continuing to work with partners to explore alternatives.

### **What are our priorities for next year and why?**

In 2019/20 it is our intention to:

- Develop support to schools to ensure that they are working in a Looked after Friendly model, this includes attachment awareness training, Looked After Friendly Schools training and Trauma Informed Schools training.
- Support Merthyr Forum members' links to the youth Cabinet.
- Implement the Pathway to work with a view to increasing the number of care experienced young people who are in education, employment or training.
- Continue to develop the Valley LIFE project to improve services for people with dementia.

- Continue to work with partners to implement the actions identified in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Dementia Care Strategy, which includes supporting more Dementia Friendly Communities.

**Progress and priorities for 2019/20 will contribute to the delivery of the following Wellbeing Objectives:**

**Best Start to Life**

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

**Living Well**

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

**Working Life**

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.

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

We are committed to ensuring that children and young people can have the best start in life. We do recognise that some families need support from us and our partners to support families to remain together in a healthy domestic environment. We also know that on occasion we must intervene where issues arise when it is in the best interest of children to do so.

### **What did we plan to do last year?**

Last year we said we would:

- Develop the Valley life initiative to redesign services for people with dementia.
- Progress the recommendations of the regional report for carers.
- Continue work aimed at preventing placement breakdown and improving outcomes under the Strategy for Success Stability and Transition for looked after young people and care leavers.

### **How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?**

- Our early help services have continued to support families to improve their circumstances and better relationships is key to that. During this year the number of vulnerable and looked after children and young people who have accessed therapeutic services has increased.
- We have also been busy finalising the regional Multi-agency Permanence Placement Service which will be established during 19/20 and will provide a pathway of support to carers and young people seeking to meet their emotional well-being with a view to preventing worsening emotional and behavioral problems and changes in placement. The same service will provide consultation and support to foster carers whose work in improving the emotional well-being of looked after young people is transformational in the way it changes lives.

- We have continued to work with our partners to develop the Valley Life Initiative to improve services for people with a dementia and will continue to work towards the implementation throughout 19/20
- We have undertaken some of the recommendations of the carers report and will continue to develop services for carers

### **What are our priorities for next year and why?**

- Establish the regional multi-agency permanence support service.
- Progress the recommendations of the regional report for carers.
- Continue work aimed at preventing placement breakdown and improving outcomes under the Strategy for Success Stability and Transition for looked after young people and care leavers.
- Continue to work with partners to develop the Valley Life work.

**Progress and priorities for 2019/20 will contribute to the delivery of the following Wellbeing Objectives:**

**Best Start to Life**

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

**Living Well**

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

## **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 the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health and Social Care Partnership we emphasise prevention, early intervention and the promotion of independence. We want to bring down the demand for long term managed care including care home placements. We will place a continued emphasis on meeting people’s needs in peoples own homes and extra care housing facilities and we expect that this will reduce the demand for placements in residential care homes significantly.

We recognise that individuals may still choose to move to a residential care home. Where appropriate we will meet older people’s nursing care needs in the community. However, we expect there will continue to be a significant need for places in nursing homes including (and especially) for people with dementia and other mental health problems.

Generally, we will continue to regard care homes as an important part of the range of services that are available to people and communities. We expect to commission significantly fewer residential care home placements over the next 15 years.

### **What did we plan to do last year?**

Last year we said we would:

- Roll out the use of Cost Calculator and associated pricing policy across the Supporting People floating support services within Merthyr Tydfil. The process establishes a clear and transparent way to fund Supporting People services ensuring parity and transparency. It also ensures that what is being provided is of high quality and is delivering meaningful housing related support for citizens of Merthyr Tydfil. This implementation has enabled efficiency savings to be realised for investment in other areas of strategic relevance to better meet the needs of our community. It is the team’s intention to implement the pricing policy work across static schemes over the next 18 months.
- The 2018 Cwm Taf Regional Strategic Plan set out the future strategic aims and priorities for the Regional Collaborative Committee. The current plan is an update of the three year Regional Strategic Plan (2017-2021). The Strategic Plan details the needs of service users identified in the region, the wider national policies that need to be incorporated into service provision as well as the priorities the RCC have adopted for the forthcoming financial year. These include regional commissioning, consultation and participation in the full-flexibility pathfinder pilot scheme. The strategic plan includes the most recent outcomes analysis, details of services which have been newly commissioned, remodeled or decommissioned and a regional spend plan.
- Improve the arrangements across the council for transition planning, ensuring that early identification maximises opportunities to prevent homelessness, enhance planning and stability and improve outcomes.

### How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

- We have now agreed and implemented a new Joint Care Home Contract across the Cwm Taf region with the care home providers. The revised contract places greater emphasis on meeting peoples Wellbeing Outcomes and the requirements of the new Regulation & Inspection legislation. We have also implemented a pooled budget for these care homes across the region.
- We have submitted the necessary information to CIW to register our own homes under the new regulations and are awaiting the outcome of this.
- We have worked with Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Local Authority, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTUHB) and providers to revise the contract for Care and Nursing homes and are hoping to complete this in 2018/19. As part of this work we have now developed a pooled budget with RCT and CTUHB in line with the expectation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- During the year staff across the council have concluded the Pathway to work and developed links that will make Council apprenticeship available for looked after young people.
- The Placement Commissioning Strategy has revealed a pressing need for us to develop suitable supported accommodation options for care leavers

We have attempted to increase foster carers available to children in Merthyr Tydfil. However we have managed to recruit new carers following a successful advertising campaign but some carers have retired and numbers remain the same. This will be an area we need to continue to address in the future.

Standard	Yes	Sometimes	No	Don't know
Adults reporting that they live in the right home for them.	*	*	*	*
Children and young people reporting that	*	*	*	*

they are happy with whom they live with.				
People reporting they have received care and support through their language of choice.	*	*	*	*
Young adults (aged 16-17) reporting they received advice, help and support to prepare them for adulthood.	*	*	*	*
People reporting, they chose to live in a residential care home.	*	*	*	*

*\* This information will be available in May 2019.*

## What are our priorities for next year?

In 2019/20 it is our intention to:

- Increase the number of care leavers who are in education employment or training.
- Increase the supply of suitable supported accommodation that is available for care leavers.
- Continue to work with our housing colleagues to progress the identification and the development of a range of accommodation services to meet the needs of Older People and People with a Learning Disability.
- Undertake a consultation with service users and their families in respect of moving our learning disability long term and respite service to an alternative building.

### Progress and priorities for 2019/20 will contribute to delivery of the following Wellbeing Objectives:

#### Best Start to Life

Children and young people get the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals

#### Living Well

People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

#### Working Life

People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure which makes Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination.

## Section 5: How we do what we do

### Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

Supporting our workforce is fundamental to delivering good quality care to those in Merthyr Tydfil who need our help. The shared Cwm Taf workforce development service has been operational for 3 years. The Cwm Taf Social Care Workforce Development Plan continues to improve the quality and management of social services provision through a planned approach to learning, development and qualifications to increase the take-up of learning and development across the care sector. Last year we set out and met the following objectives:

#### What did we plan to do last year?

Last year we said we would:

- Continue the implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social (Wales) Act including:
  - Supporting the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and supporting knowledge/role of responsible individuals.
- Support the training, development and qualification of social care managers: including Step Up to Management; Middle Manager Development Programme; Team Manager Development Programme; and those requiring registration as managers.
- Ongoing development of approaches to outcome focused care and support practice.
- Support for both Social Work qualifying training and post qualifying training in Wales.
- Enable frontline social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and support introduction of the revised induction framework from April 2018.
- Enable the workforce to meet regulatory requirements for qualification and/or registration using guidance available in the [Qualification Framework](#).

#### How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

- During the year we continued to develop our workforce.
- We have supported a Social Worker to complete their consolidation.
- We have supported two Social Workers to undertake the Best Interest Assessment training.
- We have identified 2 staff members that will be sponsored on the OU Social Work Degree programme commencing October 18 and January 19.
- We have continued to sponsor 4 Social Work students in total, across years 2 and 3 of study.
- We have continued to provide Practice Placement opportunities for Social Work students in Merthyr Tydfil across years 2 and 3.
- We have seen the success of the sponsorship and hosting of placements resulting in a number of the students being successful for employment in Merthyr Tydfil when qualified – ‘growing our own’ model.
- As part of our Post Qualifying Training arrangements opportunities have been available for qualified Social workers to undertake their mandatory consolidation programme within the first three years of practice.
- Other opportunities for development have included:
  - Enabling Practice – for Practice Assessment.

- Continuing Professional Education & Learning.
  - Team Managers Development Programme.
  - Middle Management Development Programme.
- Training programmes have been continually updated to ensure the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act are embedded within the content. This has included extending the safeguarding program to include training in respect of Adverse Childhood Experiences and Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence
  - Registered Managers in adult social care services are starting to make considerations about how 'wellbeing' needs to be central to the care that they are delivering. However, this represents a significant cultural shift and more work is needed to re-focus the workforce away from the delivery of physical task based care.
  - When undertaking the Award in Social Care Induction, new staff are expected to demonstrate an awareness of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. This is formally assessed as part of the qualification. Registered Managers in the care homes are mandating that all new staff undertake this qualification as a quality benchmark
  - There has been focused attention in respect of supporting adult care home managers to learn about tools that measure quality of life.
  - Two cohorts of outcome focused care and support planning training were commissioned by Dementia Care Matters, a cutting edge change management consultancy. DCM specialise in the use of outcome focused tools in dementia care for leadership and quality assurance purposes. 36 places were made available and accepted. 31 managers completed the required 5 day attendance. Further development work is required to check that skills learned are used and embedded at a practical day to day level. Cwm Taf supported a DCM Disrupting Dementia Care conference in January 2019 that was well attended by the sector. 23 workers attended from a range of agencies and service in Merthyr Tydfil.

## What are our priorities for next year?

In 2019/20 it is our intention to:

- There will be collaborative arrangements with Bridgend CBC throughout 2019/20.
- The priorities for workforce development remain similar to last year and are outlined below:
  - Continue the implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social (Wales) Act including:
    - Supporting the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and supporting knowledge/role of responsible individuals.
    - Support the training, development and qualification of social care managers: including Step Up to Management; Middle Manager Development Programme; Team Manager Development Programme; and those requiring registration as managers.
- Ongoing development of approaches to outcome focused care and support practice.
- Support for both Social Work qualifying training and post qualifying training in Wales.
- Enable frontline social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and support introduction of the revised induction framework that was implemented in April 2018.

- Enable the workforce to meet regulatory requirements for qualification and/or registration using guidance available in the Qualification Framework. This will include implementation of the new qualifications at Levels 2 and 3.
- Rollout of Carers E-learning programme and carers assessment training programme.

**Additional priorities include:**

- Continuation of the Attraction, Recruitment and Retention project across the region and to work closely with Social Care Wales on their national campaign.
- To coordinate a regional registered manager's forum across all three Local Authorities.
- Work with Community Occupational Therapists to plan learning and development needs in accordance with their learning and development framework.
- Develop and deliver a learning and development plan with IAA services across the three Local Authorities.
- Jointly plan to deliver a specialist mental health programme for approved AMHPs.

## **Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future**

During 2018/19 we have continued to face financial pressures. We have been working hard to achieve the savings the Council needs, whilst doing our best to ensure that the services we provide to you are not adversely affected.

During 2018/19 Children' services responded to increased demand for children needing to be safeguarded by being looked after. There was also a need to provide more intensive support to a smaller number of looked after young people whose needs increase. This led to additional care costs which the Council has supported in line with its duty to safeguard and provide suitable care and support for looked dafter young people.

Wherever possible we have been utilising available funding streams to develop and enhance services. We have continued to use the Integrated Care Fund over the past year to support projects working across the region which will directly impact on the public and provide better services. This included the Stay Well @ Home Service that were finalist in the Social Care Accolades and were successful in winning the category of "Working Seamlessly Across Organizations" and "Outstanding contribution to Prudent Health" Care at the Health Care Awards.

The now established Tackling Poverty Strategic Group has oversight of the anti – poverty grants and has undertaken a review of the Families First commissioning plan and agreed the strategic direction of the Legacy arrangements post Communities First. This approach has seen greater investment in key priorities such as Early language Development and Parenting. The approach has also enabled funding to be united under a single contract across these areas and in conjunction with core funding for services including bringing together school based counselling and community counselling.

This approach continues to be developed through both the funding flexibility remit from Welsh government and now the 2 new grants for 2019/20 of Childcare and Communities and the Housing Support Grant.

A lot of our work is undertaken on a collaborative and regional basis which assists with cost pressures and assists with resilience of services.

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

On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017, Welsh Government commenced a consultation entitled ' Effective partnership Working in Bridgend, Proposed Health Board Boundary Change to align decision making across Health and local Government'. The consultation closed on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018. The consultation sought views on a proposal that healthcare services for people in the area of Bridgend County Borough Council should be provided by Cwm Taf Universality health Board. In June 2018 Vaughan Gething, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social services confirmed that following consultation,...' the Health Board boundary should be changed in accordance with the proposals'. This Boundary change took effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019. As a result of this we have been working in partnership with Bridgend Social Services Department for the past year. As from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 the Local Authority and Health services in Bridgend will formally move from the Western Bay region to the Cwm Taf regional partnership arrangements. The new Partnership Board will be the Cwm Taf

Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board. A partnership workstream commenced looking at all areas that would be impacted by these changes and Bridgend colleagues have attended the various regional meetings in that past year to provide information about their services and to learn about the service we provide. Some may be similar, some different but we can learn from each other.

Regional partnership working across Cwm Taf including Cwm Taf University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the third sector has remained strong. Whether it's planning our workforce needs and training requirements, integrating our service provision or responding to region wide challenges, we are doing more collectively to deliver better services. Moving forward in 2019/20 we will be known as Cwm Taf Morgannwg, as Bridgend will become a formal partner also. This year has been a transitional year for regional working and we are looking at further ways to integrate and develop service with Bridgend, for example, the development of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board-a joint development day was held in January 2019 in respect of this and it has been identified as one of the priorities of the Board moving forward for 2019/10.

The Council continues to provide strong leadership and support to staff at all levels, giving direction, undertaking scrutiny and considering how social services contribute to the promotion of wellbeing. Reports are presented regularly to the Scrutiny Committee and to Cabinet updating members on progress, how the financial and demographic challenges are being tackled and how the Council is transforming services with its partners.

The regional working through the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Board identified a range of priorities for us to deliver and over the past year the partnership has overseen and delivered the following work:

- Commitment to a multi-agency placement support service.
- Development of a partnership early help bid aimed at improving emotional well-being.
- The development of a common Contract and Service specification for Care Homes across the region.
- Implemented a pooled budget for care home placements.
- Commenced work under the Transformation Fund Initiative to re-configure community services to support cluster developments and mechanisms for accessing community services earlier in the pathway for people likely to move to crisis.
- We have appointed a regional commissioning manager and are in the process of appointing a regional commissioning team to support the regional developments.
- We have commenced discussions with Bridgend CBC in preparation for the revised regional boundary changes.
- The Membership of the Regional Wellbeing Partnership Board has been realigned to reflect the forthcoming boundary changes and revision of the guidance on membership issued by Welsh Government.
- Undertaken a regional; workshop to identify the priorities for the Regional Partnership for 2019-20.

In addition to carrying out the core statutory safeguarding functions, the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has agreed a number of key priorities for improvement for the coming year. These are specific areas that will enhance and support the Board in achieving its objectives and are as follows:

- Reduce the impact of domestic abuse on children, young people and adults at risk.
- Improve the way we communicate with our communities and partner agencies.

- Ensure that the transition to the new regional footprint for safeguarding is managed effectively.

A detailed work plan for the Board and its sub groups will sit underneath this strategic Annual Plan. The work plan will include the actions required to achieve the improvements required, who is responsible, timescales and measures of success. The progress of the work plan will be monitored and reviewed on a quarterly basis and will form the basis of the Annual Report for 2019/2020.

The Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board published the Regional Plan on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. This was followed by facilitated discussions which focussed on six key areas which reflected the overarching themes of the 2017 Population Assessment:

- Getting information, advice and assistance;
- Stopping problems before they start;
- Stopping problems before they get worse;
- Connecting you to your community;
- Seamless services; and
- Making it personal and working together with you.

The information gathered at each of the events provided a rich source of information to inform the development of the Regional Plan. It was felt that the priorities and issues identified were broadly the right ones. Running through all three events was the importance of communication, the need for good quality information and the value of community assets.

The Plan has been shared with colleagues in Bridgend and likewise their priorities have been shared within the Cwm Taf region. A workshop took place in February 2019 with colleagues across the new region in attendance from Local Authorities, health and the third sector with a view to looking at:

- Common needs; high level priorities; any differences.
- To capture aspirations and ambitions of the new Board and to form its vision for the future.
- To identify and agree the broad principles for the operation of the new partnership.
- To identify how the board should operate to ensure good governance, accountability and supporting structures, drawing on participant's experiences to date of what works well and what could be refined.
- To consider how the board can address issues relating to co-production, including the 'citizen voice' and 'social value'

It was clear from this workshop that everyone is invested in working together and making the new Regional Partnership Board a success. There was a strong desire of the board to be successful and to make a positive difference to people's lives by improving and, where necessary transforming the way services are delivered, and to be able to evidence this. Engaging with people, listening to what they want including 'what matters' conversations, and acting accordingly are seen as vital to the Board's success.

Additionally there is the Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB), which is a merged Public Service Board covering the areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The PSB aims to act as the principal strategic leadership forum for the planning, commissioning and delivery of public services across organisational boundaries to achieve better outcomes for the people of Cwm Taf. It will seek to understand the major issues faced by each partner organisation, to become a more transparent Board through publishing data and performance and will move from a reactive to a preventative

agenda. Further information about the work of the PSB can be found on its website ([www.ourcwmtaf.wales](http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales)).

The 'Our Cwm Taf Morgannwg' website brings together the partnership work of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board. It offers partners and citizens opportunities to engage with and further understand the key role of the board as it develops. Our Cwm Taf Morgannwg also contains a wealth of information about the region. Currently Bridgend has its own PSB but there are discussions taking place about whether there will be one or two PSB's in future, there is still work to be completed in this area.

## Section 6: Further information and key documents

This report has been written to give an overview of the success of the Council in delivering effective services, and we have used a lot of information, data, reports, surveys etc. to demonstrate what we have done.

This report is not the only source of information available to members of the public, key partners and service providers. We have a significant amount of background information that sits behind this report and that provides a lot of additional detail about what we do and how we do it. Importantly if something is not mentioned in this report as a key priority it doesn't mean we're not doing it, as there is a lot of activity across social services that play a part in helping us to provide for some of the most vulnerable groups in our community.

The following are just some of the documents that set out what we do in Social Services, as a Council and in partnership with others; why we are doing it; what we are doing well and what we need to improve on. Some of these documents can be found in the 'Strategies, Plans and Policies' section of our website ([www.merthyr.gov.uk](http://www.merthyr.gov.uk)).

- The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Population Needs Assessment ([www.ourcwmtaf.wales](http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales))
- The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Wellbeing Assessment ([www.ourcwmtaf.wales](http://www.ourcwmtaf.wales))
- [Statement of Wellbeing 2019/20 update](#)
- [Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community 2017 to 2022 \(2019/20 update\)](#)
- Wellbeing and Service Strategies
- Departmental and Social Services Scrutiny Committee reports
- Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) reports ([www.careinspectorate.wales](http://www.careinspectorate.wales))

### Getting in Touch

You can contact us in the following ways:

**Email:** [ACRF@merthyr.gov.uk](mailto:ACRF@merthyr.gov.uk)

**Write to:** Annual Council Reporting Framework  
Social Services Department  
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council  
Unit 5, Triangle Business Park  
Pentrebach  
Merthyr Tydfil  
CF48 4TQ