



SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

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Service Area	Social Services
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To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen

Focus on the Future (2019/20) - Living Well Theme Update

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 We have set Wellbeing Objectives for Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, and how we intend to achieve these objectives is set out in our plan 'Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community'. The focus of this report is on the wellbeing theme Living Well and using the most recent performance information, this report establishes the current position for the Living Well wellbeing objective: **People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.**
- 1.2 The Living Well objective is about building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to secure the best outcomes for themselves. It is about building resilience and providing the right level of support before problems materialise or escalate. This will help to reduce the need to be involved in a crisis and enable more preventative work. The Council is committed to support people to become more empowered and able to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health. The priority for this objective is to ensure people are able to live independently and safely within their communities
- 1.3 An annual review during 2018/2019 highlighted the need to further refine and refresh the key outcomes to the Living Well objective. This ensures that the outcomes clearly describe what the Living Well objective seeks to achieve. Therefore, for 2019/20 it was decided to refocus the outcomes to support:
- People live safe and independent lives within their communities;
 - Children and adults are safeguarded from harm and feel safe; and
 - Children and young people live safely with their family or close to home and have transitioned well into adulthood.
- 1.4 We will deliver these outcomes by focusing on our priorities for improvement:
- Improve early intervention and prevention (adults, children and families);
 - Reduce the number of children looked after; and
 - Enable a greater number of adults to live independently.

- 1.5 This report also includes information requested by Committee Members focusing on the impact of the pandemic on officers delivering both Children’s and Adult social services and of the services users seeking support. Members also seek to identify how lessons learned will help inform and shape services going forward to ensure identified needs can continue to be met in safe and responsive ways.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The content of this report be discussed and performance information scrutinised.
- 2.2 Scrutiny Committee Members offer any appropriate feedback to enable officers to consider when undertaking future service planning and delivery discussions.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Legislative Context

- 3.1 The [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) specifies that we must work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by maximising our contribution to the seven Wellbeing Goals.
- 3.2 We must do this in accordance with the sustainable development principle, which means that we act in a manner that seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There are five ways of working that we need to do adopt in order to show that we have applied the sustainable development principle. The five ways of working are:
- Long Term
 - Prevention
 - Integrated
 - Collaboration
 - Involvement
- 3.3 The [Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) specifies that we must seek to improve the wellbeing of people who need care and support, carers who need support and for transforming social services in Wales. The focus of this Act is on what matters to the person and how they can use their own strengths and resources to do those things, which is determined by an assessment that involves the person and the professional(s).

3.4 Strategic Context and Service Delivery

The Council is committed to delivering excellent services. It will do this by delivering its key strategies and through joint working with a range of partners. The key strategies that focus on delivering excellent services in Social Services are:

- Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board ‘Regional Plan 2018- 2023
- Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Annual Plan 2019/20
- Strategy for Early Help: People get the right help at the right time
- Strategy for Supporting Change: Evidence Based intensive
- Care Leavers Strategy – Make My Own Decision
- Strategy for Sustainable Children’s Services 2020-2023
- Strategy for Success, Sustainability and Transition
- Strategy for improving Information, Advice and Assistance

- Learning Disability Statement of Intent (Regional)
 - Older Persons Strategy (regional)
 - Learning Disability Day Service Strategy (regional)
 - Cwm Taf Supporting People Regional Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020
 - Carers Strategy (Regional)
- 3.5 The department works collaboratively with other departments both within the Council, with external partners via the Public Service Board (PSB) and the Strategic Partnership Board (SPB); with other local authorities on regional projects such as Stay Well @Home, as well as with multiple partner organisations across both the third and private sectors.
- 3.6 The Council's contribution to achieving the seven wellbeing goals is outlined in our plan [\[Focus on the Future: Wellbeing in our Community\]](#). On the 17th April 2018, Full Council approved a revised version of the Plan, which reduced the number of wellbeing objectives from 9 to 4. The new objectives can be found in [Appendix A](#).
- 3.7 The Chief Officer for Social Services reports on the wellbeing theme Living Well. The purpose of this report is to outline progress made against the objective set down under this theme: People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health and will identify challenges faced and opportunities identified and actioned. It will also identify the impact of the pandemic on officers delivering both Children's and Adult social services and of the services users seeking support. This report will also identify how lessons learned will help inform and shape services going forward to ensure identified needs can continue to be met in safe and responsive ways.

4.0 WHERE WE WERE

- 4.1 At the end of 2017/18 the Council published its [Annual Performance Report](#), which evaluated performance across all nine wellbeing objectives at the end of year one of the corporate wellbeing plan *Focus on the Future*. At this time Social Services led on the Living Well theme, which had three wellbeing objectives during this period; these were:
- LW1: Developing safer communities;
 - LW2: People have good physical and mental health; and
 - LW3: People live independently.
- 4.2 As a result of first year review the nine wellbeing objectives were reduced to four and the Living Well theme refined and simplified its three objectives in to one clearly defined objective going forward for 2018/19: *People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health*. The re-focused themes and objectives can be found in Appendix A.
- 4.3 The following 2018/19 annual review highlighted the need to further refine and refresh the key outcomes of the Living Well objective. This ensured that the outcomes clearly describe what the Living Well objective seeks to achieve. Therefore, for 2019/20 it was decided to refocus the outcomes to support the more integrated/collaborative approach being taken to meet these. The refocused key long-term outcomes for Living Well are:
- People live safe and independent lives within their communities;
 - Children and adults are safeguarded from harm and feel safe; and
 - Children and young people live safely with their family or close to home and have transitioned well into adulthood.

4.4 Our evaluation of performance at the end of the second year of the plan (2018/19) was **Adequate**. The rationale for this judgment reflected the positive outcomes that were achieved in both Children's and Adults Services. During 2018/19, Children's Services 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 were enormously proud of our looked after young people, some of whom achieved local, national and international recognition for their outstanding achievements. Within Adult Services we continued our 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. In 2018/19 the Stay Well @ Home Service received Social Care accolade awards. There were two awards on the same evening for the health care awards: 'working seamlessly across organisations'; and 'outstanding contribution to prudent healthcare'. The tackling poverty agenda continued to be a focus across the County Borough and was led through a strategic group of not only the council, but its partners in Health and the third sector. It was clear that early intervention and prevention in partnership with our communities provided the best possible solution to a range of the challenges we faced as a local authority. Early Intervention and Prevention was identified as a continued focus in 2019/20.

5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

5.1 Following a review of the *Focus on the Future*, the nine wellbeing objectives were reduced to four. As a result of this change, the Living Well theme now has one objective: *People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.*

5.2 The Living Well objective is about building the capacity of individuals, families and communities to secure the best outcomes for themselves. It is about building resilience and providing the right level of support before problems materialise or escalate. This will help to reduce the need to be involved in a crisis and enable more preventative work. The Council is committed to support people to become more empowered and able to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

5.3 The 2019/20 refocused key long-term outcomes for Living Well are:

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

5.4 We will deliver these outcomes by focusing on our priorities for improvement:

- Improve early intervention and prevention (adults, children and families);
- Reduce the number of children looked after; and
- Enable a greater number of adults to live independently.

5.5 The Living Well Strategy on a Page (SOAP) contains performance data for the key performance indicators over time (where available) to offer an opportunity to identify trends. The Living Well SOAP is attached as Appendix B.

5.6 The latest [Annual Performance Report \(APR\) 2019/20](#) was approved via delegated authority on 28th October; this provided an overview of the key corporate performance indicators. The judgement allocated for 2019/20 was **Adequate**. The key performance indicators for the Living Well theme can be found in Table 1 below along with the reported data from the previous years to provide some context.

Table 1

Key Performance Indicators ¹	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	
% of re-registrations of children on local authority child protection registers	4.7 (7/150)	6.7 (12/180)	6.0 (10/167)	↓
% of adult protection enquires completed within 7 days	89.1 (131/147)	83.1 (153/184)	75.7 (199/263)	↓
% of people that received the right information or advice when they needed it ²	68.7 (180/262)	69.3 (244/352)	-	-
% of the adult population who can live independently ³	95.85 (1962/47,217)	96.2 (1797/47,369)	-	-
% of adults who completed a period of reablement and have no package of care and support 6 months later	44.8 (151/337)	46.3 (202/436)	47.1 (150/318)	↑
% of people in receipt of specialist domestic violence support reporting an improvement in quality of life	88.0	88.0 (419/476)	89.9 (479/539)	↑
% of children supported to remain living within their family	77.7 (542/698)	72.5 (522/720)	69.8 (475/681)	↓
% of children looked after who have experienced one or more changes of school which were not due to transitional arrangements	9.7 (11/114)	10.9 (15/138)	4.9 (7/142)	↓
Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure centres per 1,000 population ³	7,808	7,276	-	-
The subjective well-being score of participants engaged in Active Merthyr projects (Start / End) ⁴	-	Start: 3.52 End: 3.79	-	-

5.7 The Social Services and Well-being Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act are now embedded into practice. Both required the Council to strengthen the governance arrangements and performance management. Both pieces of legislation required us to work more closely with our partners through collaboration. Excellent progress continued to be made on partnership working in 2019/20.

5.8 During 2019/20, demands within the service have increased with pressures evident in both Adult and Children's Services due to high demand for 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. For example, 80 more people received a reablement service in 2019/20 than in 2018/19. There has also been an increase in our children looked after population from 198 as at 31.03.2019 to 208 as at 31.03.2020. This has put huge pressures on us in respect of budgets. In addition to this, gathering performance data from the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) database still remains a challenge, although it is improving each year. The pandemic has also caused issues with the availability of some data. However, Safeguarding Adults and Children will always be our priority.

¹ There is no comparable information to the other Welsh local authorities for the social care measures, as this information has not been published to date.

² There was no requirement to collect this data for 2019/20 due to the introduction of the new Code of Practice in relation to the performance and improvements of Social Services in Wales.

³ Due to the Coronavirus, no returns have been submitted to Welsh Government for 2019/20. Therefore, this data is unavailable.

⁴ Based on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (0-5) where 0 is low well-being and 5 is high well-being. This data is collected at the start and the end of the financial year; however, due to the pandemic this process wasn't completed in March 2020.

- 5.9 Early Intervention and Prevention is key to sustaining services in the longer term. The Early Help Hub is live, and the Council is committed to continuously developing this area of work to make sure those children and their families receive the right help at the right time to prevent unnecessary escalation of need. Evaluation of the Hub has included feedback from families, which has been positive with the number of assessments leading to take up of preventative services higher than expected. The proportion of assessments undertaken by the Early Help Hub has allowed more effective signposting and greater utilisation of preventative services within our community. Following a reconfiguration within Children's Services in September 2019 the Supporting Change Team were established, the team deliver evidence based and crisis intervention support to promote children remaining safely within their family.
- 5.10 We continue to support adults within their own home and react promptly to safeguarding concerns for both children and adults. This is against a 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/respice provision at the end of the financial year 2019/20, which assisted us. Whilst additional short term funding is welcomed it poses difficulties in managing longer term financial requirements.
- 5.11 In July 2020, the Council published its Recovery, Transformation and Improvement (RTI) Plan. The Social Services Directorate was fully committed to ensuring that the input into the reflected the needs of the service and was aligned to our priorities and other plans. We adapted the corporate template to more suit our needs in terms of setting out the context and explicit links to the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. As partnership working is embedded in our practice, we also wanted to be able to identify our key partners for each element of the plan.
- 5.12 The focus of the social services elements of the RTI plan is on improving resilience. The main overarching aims of the projects in the RTI plan are to improve outcomes for people, to prevent needs escalating, to give choice and to support wellbeing. For Social Services, the Plan has been broken down into three main areas:

Recovery. Under this we have the following actions/projects identified:

- Review, reset or renew all service models across social services;
- Review existing programmes for impact of pandemic and risk mitigation.

Resources and Service Improvement. Under this we have the following actions/projects identified:

- Develop Advocacy Services;
- Continue to work with Housing colleagues to develop an additional extra care facility for adults;
- Launch the new service to support people with dementia in collaboration with Meaningful Care Matters;
- Increase the number of foster carers in Merthyr Tydfil and implement the Placement Commissioning Strategy Action Plan;
- Analyse and understand our children looked after cohort (CLA) and continue implementation of the CLA strategy and closer to home project;
- Implement the action plan for the Care Leavers Strategy including Pathway to Work;
- Work with partners in the council and the Third Sector to finalise revised transition arrangements;
- Develop further support for carers;
- Develop a cultural change programme across social services that fits with the wider council transformation.

Resilience and Sustainability. Under this we have the following actions/projects identified:

- Work with the Third Sector and social enterprise organisations to improve the range of community based support available;
- Agree with partners how we need to commission accommodation services in the future that reflects the needs of the people living here;
- Strengthen MTCBC's contribution to, and benefits from, working within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership.

5.13 The Directorate has corporate support to help us monitor progress. There are Corporate Governance arrangements in place and senior managers have ensured that staff are aware of the contents of the Plan.

5.14 Further to the Children's Services inspection in April/May 2018, CIW carried out focused activity on site in August 2019, which looked at the post-inspection action plan. There as not be a published report; however, a letter has been received which outlined CIW's findings and included the following summarised observations:

Strengths Areas for Development (extracted)

- There were some improvements in the quality of assessments since the last inspection.
- Staff were positive about both their support and training, the culture within teams and the accessibility of managers and senior managers
- Improvements in the standard of assessments particularly in relation to personal outcomes.
- Some good examples of multi-disciplinary work with Health, Education and Police in case file sampling.
- People who had received an assessment were happy with the response they received
- People said they appreciated the time that social workers spent with children.
- Need to continue to review case-load numbers for social workers.
- Need to ensure that planned improvements to assessments are effectively implemented, alongside the planned improvements to the management and monitoring of assessments
- Formal supervisions were not always taking place because of the volume of work.
- Need to continue the quality assurance work underway to achieve consistently good standards
- The provision of the active offer of Welsh was not always recorded on casefiles

This CIW feedback was reported to Cabinet in November 2019, and progress will continue to be monitored in these areas.

5.15 In October 2020, CIW undertook a Performance Evaluation Inspection, which included both Adult and Children's services. The focus of the inspection was the safety and well-being of people who use or may need to use services, and people who work in services. The inspection also included a national review of early help, care and support and transition for disabled children, which was paused due to COVID-19. The initial feedback was largely positive and the formal letter is awaited.

6.0 RESPONSE TO INFORMATION REQUEST OUTLINED BY THE COMMITTEE RELATING TO THE COVID PANDEMIC

6.1 Committee outlined in its Work Programme a requirement for officers to provide specific information the impact of the pandemic on officers delivering both Children's and Adult social services and of the services users seeking support. Members also requested to know how lessons learned will help inform and shape services going forward to ensure identified needs can continue to be met in safe and responsive ways. This section of the report will offer Committee Members an overview of the key developments in respect of these areas.

Children's Services

- 6.2 The pandemic has not altered our duties to vulnerable children, although Children's Services have been required to make a range of adjustments in line with Stay At Home Rules and changing measures in place. Throughout the pandemic we have always operated a system that has needed to include face to face contact. Managers and staff have worked closely together to look at ways in which we can ensure we discharge our duties to the public, whilst promoting both public and staff safety.
- 6.3 When the Stay At Home Rules⁵ were announced, Children's Services Management Team (CSMT) developed the following in response to corporate direction and in pursuit of maintaining essential statutory services:
- CSMT daily dial in to note new information about staff capacity in the service, agree, prioritise, manage risks and share information.
 - Held staff briefings prior to 23.3.20 to support, inform and involve staff.
 - Consultation with foster carers.
 - Develop 1-minute Guides for staff in relation to:
 - Telephone Triage and PPE
 - CP Conferences and Core Group Meetings
 - Keeping in touch with CLA and Contact
 - Working from Home
 - Contribute to Silver and Bronze command to coordinate work with partners in relation to safeguarding children.
 - Develop and distribute resource packs for CLA, foster carers and families with care and support plans.
 - Develop a process for providing urgent support to families where a parent requires in-patient treatment.
 - Maintained Resource Panel on a weekly basis to ensure families and staff can access the resources required to support families.
 - RAG rated cases and dip samples at week 4 to provide independent assurance that children and families are being seen appropriately.
 - CMT agreed the Outline Business Case for additional resources including social worker, support workers and foster care placements for cases where a parent or parents are in hospital.
 - Worked to ensure that staff had the necessary IT equipment to work from home.

Since this time Children's Services Management Team have made necessary changes in line with advice and guidance from the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales.

- 6.4 Whilst Children's Services have continued to adhere to its duties there has been a significant change in ways of working. These changes in working have required a balance of undertaking our duties in the most effective ways for families, whilst maintaining staff and our community's safety. In line with guidance that has resulted in increased digital communication, whilst there are benefits to this way of working, however, it is important to be clear that there are negative consequences to a reduction in face to face contacts also.
- 6.5 Staff are increasingly working in an agile way; it is important that we utilise our learning on both the benefits and consequences of this way of working to ensure an appropriate balance is gained. Having a sound balance will be imperative to ensuring that staff are well supported in managing the complexities of their role to support our most vulnerable families.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

6.6 Moving forward Children's Services, while adhering to current guidance, will endeavour to increase the level of intervention work being undertaken with our vulnerable families. The success of this work will also be reliant on the effectiveness of partnership agencies and the ways they will be working. Please see Appendix C for a summary of the Children's Services continuing services to the public during the pandemic.

Adults Services

6.7 Due to the nature of requirements of delivering direct care to the most vulnerable people we support Adult Services were not in the position to advise staff to remain at home. In order to maintain the safety of the workforce and the people that are supported there was a need to revise working practices in line with guidance issued by Public Health Wales. Adult services had commenced moving to a recovery plan and opening elements of service delivery to support the most vulnerable however since mid-September the position has deteriorated and we have reverted to a reactive position.

6.8 When the Stay At Home Rules⁵ were announced, Adult Services implemented the following actions to continue to meet essential statutory services and support vulnerable adults:

- Worked with IT to ensure that all care management staff had the ability to work remotely.
- Revised working practices to incorporate symptom checking as part of the assessment arrangements.
- Developed individual team arrangements within the assessment teams to enable them to socially distance.
- Participated and contributed to regional joint health & social care bronze and silver planning groups to develop a response.
- Worked in partnership with CTMUHB, RCT & Bridgend to increase bed capacity, which in Merthyr Tydfil included the re-commissioning of the former Glan-Yr-Afon nursing home as a step-down facility (Marsh House).
- Implemented daily calls to care home providers.
- Worked with Procurement team to obtain a supply of PPE for use across directly delivered and commissioned Adult Social Care Services.
- Discontinued the commissioning panel meeting and implemented alternative mechanisms for the commissioning of services.
- Liaised with RCT to revise arrangements for Deprivation of Liberty responsibilities.
- Worked with our commissioned domiciliary care providers to agree an approach to ensuring that the most vulnerable individuals continued to receive support.
- Developed a contingency plan for assessment services should there be a significant reduction in available staff as a result of the pandemic.
- Requested contingency arrangements from commissioned providers.

Please see Appendix D (below) provides a summary of the Adults Services continuing services to the public and revised operating practices.

6.9 Due to the vulnerability of majority of the people who are supported by Adult social care, a number have chosen to cancel services to limit the number of people who have access to their home.

6.10 Services have needed to adjust in line with changing guidance. This continues to be the case moving forward and any planned re-introduction or increases in service provision needs to be considered in the context of managing the risk to staff and people who use the service and ensuring that services can be returned safely.

6.11 A number of the adjustments that were introduced early such as splitting staff groups to manage social distancing and maintaining the work force remain in place with office based

staff working part of their week at home and part in the office. Whilst this was initially implemented at short notice we are now establishing the longer term implications of working in this way in line with the agile working element of the recovery and improvement plan.

6.12 Staffing Implications

It was expected that there would be a reduction in the availability of staff throughout this period and plans were put in place to manage high levels of staff absence and initially there were a considerable number of staff self-isolating due to other family members presenting with symptoms. The data available shows there were 19 Social Services staff members not able to work week commencing 16th June, however, this has improved and only 1 member of staff is recorded as not able to work as of week commencing 17th August.

6.13 There was also a number of staff self-isolating due to other family members presenting with symptoms. However, these have diminished and the length of time absent has also decreased due to the improved access to staff testing which has enabled people to return earlier as a result of a negative test result. There were a cohort of staff who have needed to shield themselves in line with guidance and wherever possible these staff have been provided with the necessary IT equipment to enable them to continue to work from home. The shielding period is now over.

6.14 Staff have been recognised for working well together, being also available during the evenings and at weekends and prioritising their response to those who are most at risk, using PPE if necessary. Some staff have been naturally anxious about the implications of the virus and information and support has been provided on a case by case basis. Although the longer-term impact on staff is yet to be determined, many staff have continued to work throughout this period providing essential services to vulnerable people

6.15 We have seen more of an impact on staffing within the care home sector within the second wave of COVID 19. As numbers have been increased in the community we have seen numbers increase within our local hospitals and within the care home sector. This has had a huge impact on us as we have to rely on agency staff to cover shifts where appropriate, and also there have been delays in discharging patients from hospital into the care home sector due to the 28 day rule (i.e.) we cannot make a placement into a care home until they have been free of Covid for 28 days.

6.16 You will be aware that the numbers of positive cases within Cwm Taf Morgannwg been high in recent weeks, which resulted in there being a local lockdown. Due to numbers increasing nationally a national firebreak was introduced for two weeks to try and prevent further increase in figures. There are signs of the numbers stabilising following the firebreak and people are cautiously optimistic, but we cannot be complacent as people need to follow Public Health Wales guidance of wearing a mask, social distancing and hand washing.

6.17 Financial Implications

Children's Services have worked with the Service Accountant and have quantified the projected financial impact of this period until December 2020 as being currently estimated at £85,720. However, as nationally we are unaware the future extent of the pandemic and the impact of any future restrictions this figure could be subject to significant change. £11,922 has been reclaimed from the general Social Services Hardship fund for Covid19 to date.

6.18 Initially it was anticipated that lower levels of staffing would have implications on delivery and the meeting the needs of our service users, staff have worked hard to migrate this as much as reasonably possible in line with restrictions. The numbers of referrals have declined which is believed to be linked to a number of key referring agencies practice changing in their frequency and nature of contact with families. The referrals received by Children's Services have proportionately been at an increased safeguarding level meaning that a lower level of

referral has not decreased the demands in allocations to Children’s Services. It is anticipated that following schools returning and a number of key partners business continuity plans resulting in more contact with families that between September 2020 and December 2020 there will be a surge in demand. Ensuring we have the resources to meet a rise in demand will have potential future financial implications.

- 6.19 The full financial impact is not yet determinable at this stage for Adults Services. Whilst some areas have seen an increase in costs to support staff replacements due to cyclic self-isolation such as our own care homes, other areas such as care management have remained relatively stable. However, it is recognised that there have been additional cost pressures on the commissioned care home sector and support is being facilitated through the allocation of £40 million across Wales. The financial position will continue to be monitored and separate cost codes have been established to support this. The following table is the latest Covid19 details for Adult Social care.

Adult Social Care Summary		
		No of Providers Supported
Void Funding Support - Ind Sector	£269,494.40	7
Void Funding Support - Own Homes	£1,287.00	2
Additional Funding Support - Care Homes	£135,172.73	41
Additional Funding Support - Supported Living	£8,684.58	7
Additional Funding Support - Dom Care	£92,617.80	11
Additional Funding Support - Other Services	£62,079.66	5
Additional Funding Support - Own Homes	£35,723.01	3
TOTAL	£605,059.18	

- 6.20 Each of the seven health boards are working closely with local authorities and other partners to put in place and deliver **local COVID-19 prevention and response plans** for their areas. They describe how health boards, local authorities and other partners, such as the Test Trace Protect regional teams, businesses and other organisations in the area will work together. The plans set out the measures taken locally to prevent the spread of the virus, drawing on evidence of areas of high transmission risk. They describe how any rise in local cases and clusters will be identified and what the local response will be.

6.21 **Lessons learned and moving forward**

Short-term

The impact of Covid and how we work are still very much at the forefront of what we do, much of which is subject to clear guidance by WG and PHW an example of which is the admission to Care Homes. Timescales for any further amendments are difficult to establish as they will be dependant of changes to guidance and we will continue to review as soon as guidance is issued.

- 6.22 We need to establish how effective agile working has been and which elements require amended working processes, which will be part of the agile working element of the recovery and improvement plan.

- 6.23 Whilst the extreme pressure associated with the pandemic have alleviated services are not yet fully operational in addition, we are approaching the winter period which under “normal” circumstances increases the pressures on health and social care services. Each year the Local authority works with the health Board to establish how some of these pressures can be alleviated through the provision of additional resources in key areas. This work has now commenced, and a winter plan is being produced that will also consider the impact of further Covid spikes. Work is also underway in planning the mass vaccination of the population should a vaccine become available and this is being aligned to the flu vaccination program.
- 6.24 We will need to ensure that adjustments are made to our way of working in line with any changes in guidance or policy directed by Public Health Wales and/or Welsh Government. We will also need to ensure there is clear communication with partner agencies to promote robust planning for our community to reduce the likelihood of escalation in need.

Long-term

- 6.25 Longer term plans will be dependent on the outcome of the short-term analysis and any revised guidance on social distancing.
- 6.26 In the medium to longer term we will need to monitor the impact of the seasonal flu virus as many of the symptoms are similar to Covid 19. This could potentially result in an increase in short term staff absences as they need to self-isolate if they become symptomatic. Though this will be mitigated in some way through access to testing it could still mean an increase in short term unplanned absences which will be difficult to plan for. We also need to assess the efficacy of the agile working arrangements on delivery of service and staff wellbeing and strengthen some of our processes to ensure that agile working meets the requirements of revised working models.
- 6.27 The care home sector has been affected with several care homes having a significant number of deaths, which has had an impact on the financial viability. At this time and until the end of March 21 financial support provided by Welsh Government through the “Hardship Fund” is covering some of the financial risk however, the longer-term impact will need to be monitored.
- 6.28 The longer term impact of the pandemic on the people we support will need to be monitored there are already emerging examples of chronic symptoms associated with the disease and examples of delays in accessing health services both of which will have an effect on a person’s ability to manage their own care.

7.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE

- 7.1 Aligned to the tenets of the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales (Wales) Act, 2014, Social Services in MTCBC continues to work in ways that aim to:
- improve the wellbeing of the people of Merthyr Tydfil;
 - make sure people have control over their own choices and achieve the outcomes they choose for themselves;
 - find ways to support people in their local communities/supporting and enabling people to be more independent;
 - use the “what matters” strength based approach, involving service users in their care and support plans;
 - work with partners to deliver outcomes; and
 - provide good quality information, advice and assistance to the people of Merthyr Tydfil; and
 - Stabilise our position in response to the pandemic.

- 7.2 The Director of Social Services identified some priorities in her Annual Report 2019/20, which was taken to Council on 7th October 2020. Some key priorities which are in addition to those identified as part of the RTI Plan in paragraph 5, are listed below:
- Develop a quality assurance process within our assessment services to ensure that people are appropriately involved in identifying their wellbeing outcomes.
 - Embed the Supporting Change Team and track improvement plan and outcomes
 - Continue to enable care experienced young people to inform service improvements via our contract with Voices From Care
 - Fully implement the Stay well @ Home 2 element of the transformation program when it becomes operational during the year and we plan to evaluate the impact of the service.
 - Form part of the new Community wellbeing team, which are multidisciplinary teams working within GP cluster areas to provide support to people who are at risk to deteriorating and support them to be as independent as possible.
 - Continue the work of the Regional fostering front door.
 - Evaluate and adjust the Early Help Hub based on evidence of need and effectiveness making improvements as data and feedback from family experiences becomes more evident.
 - Consider the implications of the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) requirements and what we need to do to make sure that people make the most of the opportunities provided through this
 - Continue to work with our regional partners to enhance learning disability services that support people to access employment opportunities.
 - Work with carers and the Third Sector to identify priorities for carers and co-produce a local carers plan
 - Review and monitor the Ageing Well in Wales plan through the 50+ steering Group (Merthyr Tydfil) and Older People's Advisory Group (RCT) on an annual basis to prioritise implementation and review progress.
- 7.3 The Director's Annual Report also included the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board key priorities, which are in addition to the core statutory safeguarding functions:
- To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board
 - Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice
 - Improve the way in which we engage and promote participation with our communities.
 - Ensure the new Wales Protection procedures are embedded into safeguarding practice
 - Progress work to fully implement the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) guidance

7.4 Progress continues in all of these areas.

8.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT

- 8.1 This is a particularly challenging time for the council and social services with the unprecedented difficulties of responding to the coronavirus pandemic, the climate of austerity, increasing demand and demographic changes. We believe the actions contained in the RTI plan, the Director's Annual Report plus the response and plans to manage the impact of the pandemic, set out an ambitious and robust set of priorities for the Directorate.
- 8.2 There are regular management meetings, performance meetings and specific project meetings where progress is reported, monitored and discussed.
- 8.3 The Director reports into the council's Improvement and Assurance Board regularly to update on progress and to highlight risks and issues. This ensures a transparent monitoring process.

- 8.4 We will respond to recommendations from the recent CIW inspection and ensure that any improvements required are incorporated into the Improvement Plan.
- 8.5 We will continue with regional and partnership working.
- 8.6 We will consider and review lessons learnt from COVID working and look to improve services as a result.
- 8.7 The skills of our staff has ensured safe models of working during this unprecedented time, we will continue as a service to support our staffs emotional wellbeing.
- 8.8 We will continue to work in a person centred way to best support the people who access our services achieve their personal outcomes.

9 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 The improvement activities identified in this report directly contribute to our wellbeing objective:

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

- 9.2 The planned next steps for *Focus on the Future* and Tackling Poverty will ensure that the activities of Social Services will more robustly impact on the 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.

Working Life: People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing, safe infrastructure that establishes Merthyr Tydfil as an attractive destination.

LISA CURTIS JONES
CHIEF OFFICER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

COUNCILLOR CHRIS DAVIES
CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Focus On The Future: Well-being in our Community - Annual Performance Report 2017 - 2018		MTCBC Website - Annual Performance Report 2017 - 2018
Statement of Wellbeing – 2019/2020		MTCBC Website - Statement of Wellbeing – 2019/2020
Focus On The Future: Wellbeing in our Community 2017-2022 (Updated 2019/20)		MTCBC Website - Focus On The Future: Wellbeing in our Community 2017-2022 (Updated 2019/20)
Focus On The Future: Well-being in our Community - Annual Performance Report 2019 - 2020		MTCBC Website – Annual Performance Report 2019/20
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Corporate Wellbeing Plan Focus on the Future:

Confirmed themes and wellbeing objectives for 2018/19

Theme	Wellbeing Objective
Best Start	Children and young people have the best start to life and are equipped with the skills they need to be successful learners and confident individuals.
Working Life	People feel supported to develop the skills required to meet the needs of businesses, with a developing safe infrastructure making Merthyr Tydfil an attractive destination
Environmental Wellbeing	Communities protect, enhance and promote our environment and countryside
Living Well	People are empowered to live independently within their communities, where they are safe and enjoy good physical and mental health.

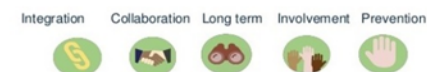
CHIEF OFFICER: SOCIAL SERVICES

Contribution From:
 Children Services
 Adult Services
 Community Development
 Leisure Culture and Sport Development

Living Well

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

How will Merthyr Tydfil CBC work?



Outcomes

People live safe and independent lives 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

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	2021/22
	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Achieved	Target	Target
No. of Children Looked After at 31 March	N/A	141	N/A	145	N/A	156	N/A	198	N/A	206	N/A	N/A
Number of Children on the Child Protection Register at 31 March	N/A	101	N/A	113	N/A	123	N/A	132	N/A	167	N/A	N/A
Percentage of children supported to remain living within their family (Measure 25)			N/A	66.2 (284/429)	N/A	77.7 (542/698)	>78	72.5 (522/720)	>78	69.75 (475/681)	>78	>78
The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year (Measure 33)			11	11.72 (17/145)	12	13.46 (21/156)	12	12.63 (25/198)	11	6.31 (13/206)	10	10
Percentage of adult protection (Section 126) enquiries completed within statutory timescales (Measure 18)			N/A	91.8 (156/170)	N/A	89.1 (131/147)	≥ 92	83.15 (153/184)	≥ 92	75.67 (199/263)	≥ 92	≥ 92
The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over			TBC	0.64 (3/4720)	TBC	1.04 (5/4787)	TBC	6.24 (30/4810)	TBC	3.09 Q3 (15/4855)	TBC	TBC
The percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement and have no package of care and support 6 months later (Measure 20b)			N/A	50.58 (87/172)	N/A	44.81 (151/337)	≥ 40	46.33 (202/436)	≥ 40	47.17 (150/318)	≥ 40	≥ 40
Percentage of people in receipt of specialist domestic violence support reporting an improvement in quality of life	N/A	89	N/A	80 (335/418)	85	89	88	88 (419/478)	**TBC	89 (479/539)	**TBC	**TBC
The percentage of the adult population who can live independently			N/A	95.99	N/A	95.85	N/A	* Pending MYE	* Pending MYE	Annual Data	* Pending MYE	* Pending MYE
People reporting they feel safe (Measure 3) ***			N/A	80% (229/287)	N/A	71% (186/262)	N/A	74% (262/352)	N/A	-	N/A	N/A
Number of visits to local authority sport and leisure facilities during the year per 1,000 population where the visitor will be participating in physical activity ****	>9,245	8,594	>8,594	8,137 (Rank 13th)	>8,137	7808	>7808	7276	>7808	Annual Data	>7808	>7808

* Due to the Coronavirus, no returns have been submitted to Welsh Government for 2019/20. Therefore, this data is unavailable.

** TBC – The level of funding is due to change in relation to domestic abuse and subsequently, the targets will be confirmed when the updated situation has been confirmed.

*** It is important to note that this data is obtained as part of a statutory annual survey with set criteria. Data reflects all people that have stated they feel safe. Those that have stated that they 'sometimes feel safe' or 'don't know' have been excluded from this figure. As the cohort changes each year, annual figures cannot be compared. More detailed data is available from the Performance and Scrutiny Team. Due to the Coronavirus, no returns have been submitted to Welsh Government for 2019/20. Therefore, this data is unavailable

**** Based on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (0-5) where 0 is low well-being and 5 is high well-being. This data is collected at the start and the end of the financial year; however, due to the pandemic this process was not completed in March 2020.

Appendix C – Children’s Services: Summary of Our Continuing Services to the Public During the Pandemic

Early Help Hub	Business as usual - operating by phone, video call and IT. Staff will be operating a mixed system of working from home and being office based to ensure essential duties are covered.
Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub	Business as usual - staff will be operating a mixed system of working and being home based to ensure essential duties are covered.
Intake	<p>Initially cases were assessed and RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated. A duty system was in operation with other staff working from home.</p> <p>The Team have now adapted to a new way of working. A Business as usual model with a mixed model of office working and working from home is in place. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call. Visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide which outlines the assessment process to inform decision about whether PPE should be used.</p>
Supporting Change	<p>Manager and consultant social worker are coordinating essential work with families wherever possible. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.</p> <p>Initially a number of the staff group were working across the service to cover business. However, as we have adapted to a new way of working the team have been able to increasingly undertake their core business, operating a mixed model of home and centre based working.</p> <p>Contact is in line with the Interim 1 Minute Guide.</p>
Children With Disabilities Team	Cases have been assessed and RAG rated. The Team have now adapted to a new way of working. A Business as usual model with a mixed model of office working and working from home is in place. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call. Visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.
Child and Family Support Team	Cases have been assessed and RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. The Team have now adapted to a new way of working. A Business as usual model with a mixed model of office working and working from home is in place. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.
Children Looked After Team	Cases have been assessed and RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. The Team have now adapted to a new way of working. A Business as usual model with a mixed model of office working and working from home is in place. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.
Fostering	A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call. Staff prioritising support to foster carers and placement searches.
Care Leaver’s PA Service	Cases have been assessed RAG rated. A duty system is in operation with other staff working from home. Work is being carried out by telephone and video call with visits in line with Telephone Triage 1 Minute Guide.

Appendix D – Adults Services: Summary of Our Continuing Services to the Public During the Pandemic

Adult Duty	Continues to provide phone access to Adult Social care Services for the general public and professionals. The service has seen an increase in calls and has adjusted the number of staff allocated to undertake this work. Wherever possible assessments have been undertaken via telephone, however where this is not possible and staff are required to undertake the assessment in people's homes they have been provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and ensure social distancing. Staff have been split into two teams with half working in the office and half working from home to ensure that they are able to socially distance.
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub	Business as usual - staff will be operating a mixed system of working and being home based to ensure essential duties are covered.
Assessment and Care Management	Wherever possible assessments are undertaken by telephone and again where this is not possible and there is a need for Social Workers to visit then they have been provided with the relevant PPE to enable them to do so. The staff team has been divided into two groups with 50% of the team working from home for part of the week to enable social distancing. Social work staff have continued to provide urgent responses to situations such as carer breakdown and have been undertaking reviews via telephone contact.
Community Mental Health Team	The Social Work staff within the Community Mental Health Team have continued to provide support either through telephone contact or face to face where people have been in crisis or require a Mental Health Act Assessment. Where face to face contact has been required staff have been provided with PPE.
Initial Response Team	The initial response team have continued to provide packages of care with staff wearing PPE for each visit they undertake. To limit staff contact with others sited at the Health Park, staff are going to visits directly from home.
Community Occupational Therapy Service	<p>The service has been triaging referrals and wherever possible have been undertaking a limited assessment over the telephone. There have been emergency situations where they have needed to visit home and PPE has been provided. All staff have been working a mixture of office based and home working to enable social distancing within the office. The provision of equipment has been affected as a number of staff within the Joint Equipment store has been significantly reduced and they are only able to continue to deliver emergency equipment.</p> <p>Low level assessments for adaptations under the Disabled Facilities Grant arrangements have been placed on hold as these cannot be completed at this time as it would require builders to access properties to complete the adaptation work.</p>
Care Homes	There has been a joint Social Care & Health approach to the support provided to the care home sector both directly delivered and commissioned. In March all care homes were advised to restrict visitors to the care home to limit possible infection. Unfortunately, whilst a number of homes have not had any instances of

	<p>COVID-19, others have not fared as well with some having significant outbreaks quite early on in the pandemic.</p> <p>The support has consisted of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of advice to the whole sector based on PHW guidance. • Daily contact with commissioned providers within Merthyr Tydfil via the contract monitoring team, which has now reduced to twice weekly. • Increasing distribution of PPE provided via WG from the pandemic stock. • Working with CTMUHB to implement access to staff and resident testing, initially for individual cases and now through the proactive mass testing of care homes on a 2-weekly basis. • Establishing a mechanism to facilitate financial support through access to WG funding.
Domiciliary Care	<p>This is commissioned from the independent sector and has continued to operate, though there have been fluctuations in capacity due to staff needing to self-isolate. People using these services have been RAG rated to identify those most at risk to ensure that the most vulnerable continue to be supported.</p>
Day Service	<p>In line with the guidance in respect of social distancing and shielding a decision was made to close Day Services as the facilities were not suitable to support this. Prior to this decision being made a number of people who attend the day service had already made the decision to withdraw as they were self-isolating. Where possible alternative arrangements have been made to support those most at risk.</p>
Supported Living	<p>The Supported Living service is commissioned in the main from Drive and this has continued to operate with increased commissioned hours to support people living there to remain at home.</p>