

# **Delivering**CHANGE

a Single Integrated Plan  
for Rhondda Cynon Taf

[www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan)

Review  
2014-2016

# FOREWORD

In March 2013, the partner organisations of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Board published 'Delivering CHANGE': a Single Integrated Plan for the County Borough. For the first time, this plan represented an agreed joint direction for the public and voluntary sector organisations of the area.

Since that time, our organisations, and the context we work within, has changed significantly. Over the last three years, we have faced extreme financial settlements and increasing demand on our services. On a national level, the unprecedented budget situation and the changing needs of the population has brought a different lens to public service delivery in Wales. On a local level, all of our organisations have had to change the way we work.

Although this has been challenging and difficult at times, we are also on a path to becoming a more innovative, effective and efficient public service - providing the best essential services, helping people to help themselves and creating a sustainable place to live, work and visit for residents now and in the future.

We published an Annual Report in 2014 of 'Delivering CHANGE', detailing the specific actions taken by partners against the SIP and reflecting on whether these actions were having the intended impact on priorities and outcomes. The evaluation of our work to that point showed positive work contributing towards tackling our priorities, with some examples of excellent practice that was having real impact. But, despite the amount of effort and activity going on, we were not delivering the outcomes necessary to improve people's lives. Coupled with the challenging environment public services have been working within, this evaluation prompted a change in focus for the Local Service Board and for partnerships across the County Borough.

This review is a follow-up piece of work to capture how we have worked together over the last two years (2014-2016) and how we want to work together in the future to continue to create a safe, healthy and prosperous County Borough.

As interim Chair of the Local Service Board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has worked towards a safer, healthier and more prosperous County Borough and I will personally make sure we keep working together to achieve our desired outcomes and deliver change where necessary.



*Christopher Bradshaw (Chair of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Board)*

## **A continued thanks to the organisations of the Local Service Board:**



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Cwm Taf  
University Health Board



# THE SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN

## *Our vision*

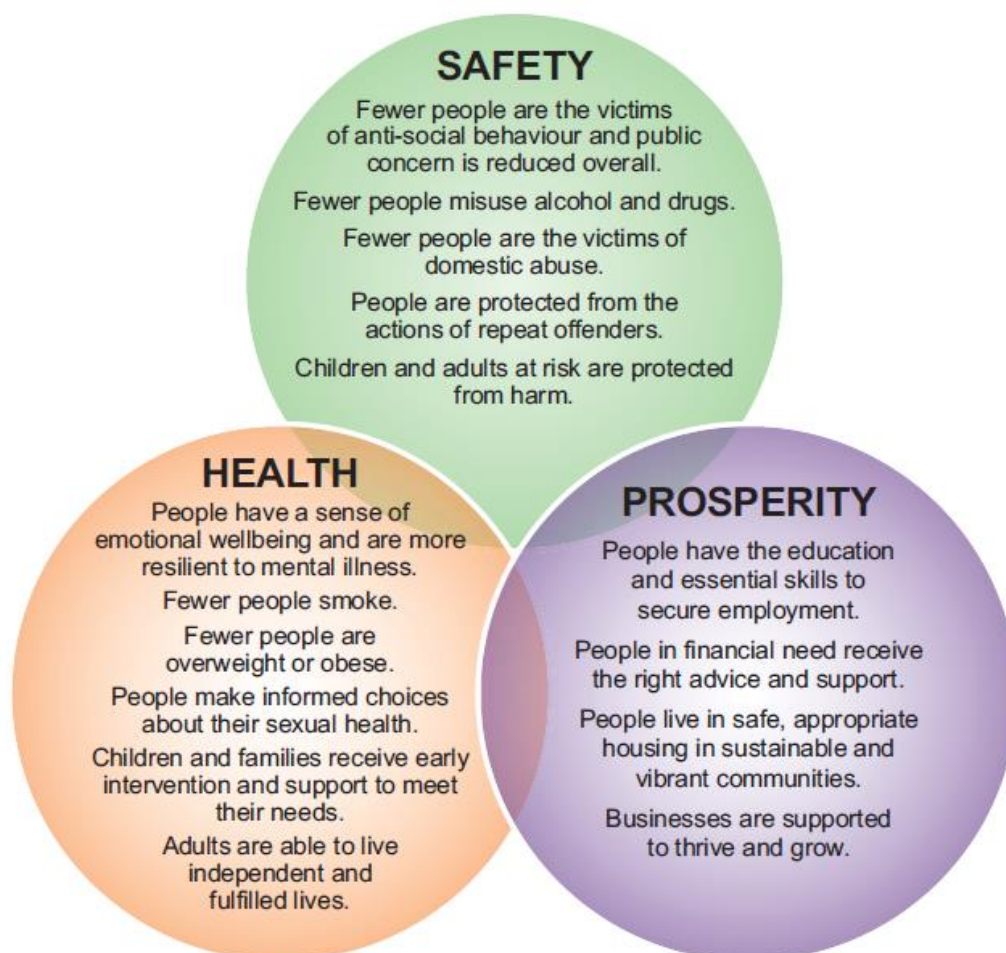
The Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan, or 'SIP', is called 'Delivering CHANGE'. It was published in March 2013 and set out our vision for the area, that:

***People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are  
safe, healthy and prosperous.***

This vision became the three *outcomes* of the plan - what the public services that make up the Local Service Board want to achieve for the future generations of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

With the help of people living and working in the County Borough, and by looking at the most up to date and relevant statistics, we agreed on the *priorities* that organisations need to focus on now to help make Rhondda Cynon Taf a safer, healthier and more prosperous place in the future.

## *Our outcomes and priorities*



## ***Annual Report 2013/14***

A technical report and summary published in Summer 2014 outlined progress so far against 'Delivering CHANGE'. The technical report detailed each action set out in the original plan and noted what had been done in 2013/14, how we knew whether we were making a difference and what was planned.

This report showcased the admirable effort that officers in public and voluntary sector organisations contributed to achieving the outcomes of the SIP and highlighted some improvements in services and population measures. However, the priorities the Local Service Board had selected were long-term issues and, although some initiatives were proving successful, to solve such problems would require different solutions.

The Annual Report (2013/14) proposed a new focus for working in partnership, designed to change the way we work in partnership with each other and the community. This was based on working in a more targeted way together, understanding communities and working with people to commission services based on the place we were focussed on.

In June 2014, the Local Service Board agreed that they would use evidence and local intelligence to:

- narrow our focus to a smaller number of priorities which will have a greater impact;
- target geographical areas to pilot our approach, focusing on those communities with the greatest need and greatest opportunities;
- crucially, improve engagement with our communities to help inform initiatives, using our Joint Public Engagement Strategy as a guide;
- improve the gathering and analysis of local intelligence and levels of data-sharing; and
- reflect this in the way the Local Service Board, partnerships and scrutiny work.

This review captures what progress has been made in the interim, including the factors that are influencing how we work together in partnership, and looks ahead to our approach for the future.

# WHERE ARE WE NOW IN 2016?

## ***Locally...***

Since publication of 'Delivering CHANGE' and the Annual Report (2013/14), the organisations of Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Board and our wider partner agencies have changed significantly. Individually, we have seen cuts to budgets, changes in leadership, large-scale service change and new demands placed on us by the consumers of our services, regulators and government. Against this challenging backdrop, collectively, the way we work has begun to change.

Although the pace of change has been rapid, it has meant we are on a path to becoming a more innovative, effective and efficient public service together and the next few years bring an opportunity to further strengthen partnership working in the area.

## ***Nationally...***

On a national level, Welsh Government have recognised that public services cannot continue to deliver in the same way. This has been reflected in a number of publications over the last three years; most notably for the Local Service Board has been the [Social Services and Wellbeing \(Wales\) Act](#) (2014); the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) (2015) and the White Paper on '[Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People](#)' (2015). These pieces of legislation are encouraging leaders to look at public service delivery through a different lens, working with communities and each other in a new way.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act is intended to guide everything we do as public bodies in Wales. It will create 'Public Service Boards', made up of the leaders of key public, voluntary and private sector organisations in an area, which will replace Local Service Boards from April 2016. By April 2018, Public Service Boards will be required by law to have assessed the state of environmental, economic, social and cultural wellbeing in an area and agree a joint Wellbeing Plan on how they intend to maximise their contribution to seven national wellbeing goals (in the context of their local area).

Preparation work for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act is already underway. This Act is about transforming health and social services, helping people to help themselves, through promoting people's independence and giving everyone more voice and control in the services they receive. The Act is part of the wider culture change facing public services in 2016 and beyond, and is being implemented across Wales on the regional footprints of Health Boards.

## ***Regionally...***

We have always worked closely with colleagues in Merthyr Tydfil and other areas of South East Wales and, increasingly, we have formed partnerships, joint procurement and commissioning arrangements and received funding on a regional footprint.

Merthyr Tydfil Local Service Board and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Board have met jointly to discuss common issues since 2009. More recently, this became the Cwm Taf Regional Collaboration Board and is made up of leaders from the key public and voluntary sector organisations that work within the region of Cwm Taf (Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil). The members of the Cwm Taf Regional Collaboration Board have agreed that working together on a regional basis makes sense for the communities of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

Many of the organisations involved are already responsible for both Local Authority areas and the opportunities across both Local Authorities are very similar. Recently, the Board agreed that the Public Service Board to be established from April 2016, as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, will be a Cwm Taf Public Service Board - working across Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil to tackle the key operational issues that prevail between organisations to work towards the best possible outcome for local communities.

# WHAT HAVE WE DONE IN 2014-2016?

## The Changing Partnership Landscape

Before the publication of the Single Integrated Plan, we completed a Strategic Partnership Review which identified 64 partnership boards operating in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As a result, the partnership landscape was reviewed, principles of partnership working adopted and the number of partnership boards reduced.

Following the publication of the SIP in 2013, we made some further changes to the partnership boards, focussing board meetings on the outcomes of the SIP - 'Safety', 'Health' and 'Prosperity', as well as the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children and Adults Board.

However, the way we work in partnership was already changing, with people coming together far more on 'ad-hoc' basis or through their day-to-day business, rather than through a structured board. Therefore, following the Annual Report (2013/14), aside from the Safeguarding Boards, the strategic partnership boards were stood down in their past form.

Over the last year, we have been working together across Cwm Taf to review partnership functions; including studying exact legislative requirements, considering the best commissioning arrangements, looking at how you ensure governance and accountability, and encouraging innovation; with the overall aim of streamlining the existing partnership meeting structure so it is effective and sustainable. As a result, meetings have already been cut down and the strategic partnerships (the Local Service Boards and steering groups beneath them) have agreed to merge and work regionally in future.

## Area-based partnership working

Following the Annual Report (2013/14), the Local Service Board agreed to a new approach to working in partnership and a structure based on three identified areas of the County Borough. This approach was coined 'area-based partnership working', as it is simply about linking people and initiatives around a place and the assets of that place (whether it is a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' approach). 'Assets' can mean the skills of local people, the power of local groups, the physical assets of a place (like buildings or land) and the resources of public, private and voluntary organisations.

The three initial geographical areas were selected using a range of data relating to education, skills, employment and health. Additional criteria was used to shortlist areas based on opportunity to leverage funding, a high level of work already being done in the area, organisational priorities, how the areas contribute and relate to one another and external factors, such as legislation or neighbouring Local Authorities.

The selection process of the areas proved an unanimous result of the *Rhondda Fach area* (specifically Tylorstown, Maerdy and Ferndale); *Pontypridd* and *Upper Cynon* (specifically Aberdare, Penywaun and Hirwaun 2.)

During April 2015, a workshop for strategic managers of all partner organisations was held to communicate this approach, explore successful initiatives and possible opportunities for further partnership working. The Chair of the Local Service Board also wrote out to all senior management



teams of partner organisations requesting that this approach be adopted. A vision for the approach was adopted, that:

***" Partnership working within a given area is well established between organisations and the community. Staff work with local people in identifying, prioritising and addressing local social, economic, health, environmental and cultural issues to foster a sustainable and resilient community. Opportunities are co-ordinated effectively and actions add value."***

During 2015/16, engagement with community members and professional stakeholders have taken place in the *Rhondda Fach* and in *Pontypridd*. There are already a number of projects now working in this way, including the Rhondda area based trial, led by Natural Resources Wales; a Housing & Health Action Areas initiative in Tylorstown, the Dementia Friendly Communities project in Maerdy, the Business Improvement District in Pontypridd and the environmental resilience project in Pontypridd. More information on each of these projects is provided in the next sections.

An evaluation model for the approach has also been developed, which will be used in the future to look back on whether focussing efforts on the assets of an area is effective and improves outcomes for people living in the community.

### **'RCT Together'**

In March 2015, a new way of working with partner organisations, the voluntary sector and community groups was launched called 'RCT Together'. The approach is about a new way of engaging with the community on the challenges of public service delivery, working with communities and the voluntary sector to explore alternative models of service delivery for maintaining services and facilities.

The approach has already seen success through transfers of Maerdy Library to the community group, 'Friends of Ferndale', who have transformed the facility into a Community Hub; the Muni Arts Centre in Pontypridd, which is run through a community enterprise; and Abercynon Paddling Pool, which has re-opened thanks to the dedicated work of volunteers.

**Find out more:** <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/RCTTogether/RCTTogether.aspx>

### **Welsh Government 'Vibrant & Viable Places' funding**

During 2014/15, we successfully secured over £6 million through Welsh Government's 'Vibrant & Viable Places' regeneration programme. This has helped to introduce improvements to Pontypridd town centre through the Townscape Enhancement Programme and introducing housing above retail premises, initiatives to help residents heat their homes efficiently and 'Homestep Plus', which enables empty properties to be renovated for sale and occupied through a shared equity approach . The funding also enabled RCT Council to acquire the dilapidated Taff Vale site, which is now being regenerated with the input of residents and business owners; and regenerate the site of the Lady Windsor colliery so that is available for housing development.



### **Cwm Taf Data Observatory**

To make decisions in an integrated and collaborative way, we need easily accessible information about the area. Along with Merthyr Tydfil Local Service Board and the Data Unit~Wales, we launched the Cwm Taf Data Observatory in 2013.

The Observatory is a website that pulls in up-to-date information on the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil, broken down into small geographical areas (where possible). This is helping us to understand where communities may have challenges, need support or are an area of opportunity in becoming a safer, healthier and more prosperous place.

This work has really helped us in gathering and sharing information and is playing an important part in the production of a wellbeing assessment, which will inform the future Public Service Board of the state of wellbeing in the area, and a population assessment, which will help commissioners and service managers to make decisions on the care and support provided to people in the area under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

**Take a look!** <http://cwmtaf.infobasecymru.net/IAS/>

### **Cwm Taf Community Engagement Hub**

The joint Engagement Hub is a website enabling partner organisations across Cwm Taf to consult and engage with the public. Through working together, we have minimised the amount of surveys, focus groups and questionnaires we send separately as organisations. The Hub is a ready-made platform for you to reach hundreds of people, as the Cwm Taf Citizens' Panel are sent every engagement bulletin.

**[Have your say!](#)**

### **Cwm Taf Public Engagement Network**

As well as the Community Engagement Hub and the Citizens' Panel, we have set up a public engagement network of officers across Cwm Taf to share best practice, information and co-ordinate activity. The network also has a regular newsletter - '*The P.E.N.*'. Contact us through the Hub if you'd like to find out more.

### **Community Voice**

The Community Voice programme is in its fourth year, with Interlink RCT coordinating eight organisations to work together to deliver projects to engage people and communities in public service design and delivery. The programme is all about coproduction. The approach follows:

- Meaningful engagement of people and communities;
- Considering all people as assets and recognising people's existing skills and attributes;
- Working together from the start to agree a common purpose and agreed outcomes;
- Developing greater understanding between those who receive and those who deliver services.

In total, the programme will engage with 6335 individuals, of which 2315 will be engaged in more detailed work. The projects will aim to increase public engagement and influence 47 services in RCT.

# SAFETY

*People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe and feel safe*

## ***Our priorities:***

- Fewer people are the victims of **anti-social behaviour** and public concern is reduced overall.
- Fewer people **misuse alcohol and drugs**.
- Fewer people are the victims of **domestic abuse**.
- People are protected from the actions of **repeat offenders**.
- **Children and adults at risk are protected** from harm.

## ***What have we done during 2014-16?***

Some of the actions we have taken to help people be safe and feel safe are:

- The Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service was established during 2014, providing a consistency of approach across the region to prevent offending and reoffending of children and young people. The number of children and young people entering the Criminal Justice System for the first time has continued to fall from 463 in 2011/12 to 67 in 2013/14. This represents a 85% decrease.
- In May 2015, the First Minister launched the Cwm Taf Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (the 'MASH'). The MASH is a realisation of two years' hard work to improve the way partner organisations protect children and adults at risk of harm. For the first time, representatives of the different agencies across Cwm Taf are working together and sharing information safely to join-up the picture and take appropriate actions for the person at risk.
- The Spring of 2015 saw the highest number of deliberate grass fires in Rhondda Cynon Taf for many years, with 242 grass fires during April alone. Working together across partner organisations has prompted some different solutions to how the problem would have been dealt with in the past. Natural Resources Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service have established a group, that seeks to better understand why the area is so prone to wildfires. This has resulted in a dedicated Project Officer employed to co-ordinate a 'Healthy Hillside' project, focussed on proactively managing the land to lessen the impact of grass fires. An early example of this project is the introduction of cows grazing on the hillside, which not only act as a deterrent to arsonists but also graze the bracken, which is highly flammable.
- The RCT Access and Inclusion Service has introduced Restorative Approaches in schools. This is an ethos and value base for working with people rather than to or for them with the over arching aim is the building up, maintaining and repairing of relationships. It is a whole school approach, research evidence suggests effective implementation can result in improved outcomes in attainment, attendance, exclusions, bullying, NEETS and youth offending rates. All Attendance and Wellbeing Officers and Youth Engagement and Participation Service Reengagement Officers have undertaken Restorative Approaches in Schools (RAIS) project practitioner training.

- We have worked together to tackle domestic abuse – the IRIS (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) model has been rolled out to every Cwm Taf General Practice in November 2015, with funding and input from the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cwm Taf University Health Board. Over the two year period, all GP staff will receive training to help early identification of domestic abuse and pathways to refer patients on for advocacy and further support. Since the launch of IRIS in November 2015, 6 surgeries are now “IRIS Aware”, having received all stages of training; 137 people have received training and 27 referrals have been made. A high percentage of referrals had not disclosed domestic abuse previously and, when assessed, were identified as medium or standard risk and were able to be referred to support.
- We have worked together to tackle violence locally, through the multi-agency Violence Prevention group, established by the South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner. The group has taken an evidence-based approach to reducing non-domestic violence with injury by examining assault data from Cwm Taf University Health Board, South Wales Police and Welsh Ambulance Service Trust in order to identify trends and take preventative action. We will now be able to accurately establish what violence is known to the police and what is not known in order to keep people safe across the Cwm Taf region.
- Organisations are working towards fostering a culture of welcome within RCT for migrants and refugees e.g. refugee week, to help reduce instances of hate crime and the reasons for hate crime in RCT so that people are able to settle across the county.
- Data has highlighted that Emergency Department attendances linked to assaults and alcohol consumption peaked during rugby international dates and other key dates, such as Christmas and New Year. In order to reduce the impact on Emergency Departments and reduce violence, both taxi marshal schemes and a presence from St John's Ambulance have been piloted in areas such as Pontypridd and Aberdare. This has helped to reduce the frequency of violence late at night in the towns and treat those injured, reducing the impact of alcohol-related injury on resources at Emergency Departments across the Cwm Taf area.

### ***Have we made a difference?***

As well as the headlines above, strong partnerships in the area have meant that organisations have continued to come together to attempt to provide the best services for communities, that will have the greatest impact on our priorities.

The measures set out within 'Delivering CHANGE' provide information on our priorities at a level across the population in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This allows partners to understand the severity of the issue and, where information is available at a lower geographical level, target services appropriately. The services aimed at people affected by these issues are delivered in partnership with South Wales Police, Cwm Taf University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Merthyr Tydfil Council and several voluntary sector agencies.

- The number of **anti-social behaviour** incidents have fallen over recent years, but stayed relatively stable during 2013/14 and 2014/15 (7,028 incidents were recorded in 2013/14 compared to 7,238 incidents in 2014/15. A partnership collaborative, the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, identified that certain areas of the town centres were 'hotspot' areas and incidents were reported most frequently on a Friday and Saturday night. As a result, the unit were able to target disruption techniques at certain times and in particular locations.
- Survey data in 2013/14 revealed that 77% of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf **feel safe** walking after dark, compared to 95% who **feel safe** at home after dark.
- The Oasis Centre in Pontypridd opened in 2012 and provides a 'one-stop-shop' for those affected by **domestic violence**. Over 4,000 referrals were made to the centre last year with 66% of those being new referrals.

- 42% of adults in Rhondda Cynon Taf report that they drink above guidelines and 27% class themselves as 'binge-drinkers'. In 2014/15, over 1,600 people started treatment for **drug and alcohol misuse**. Out of the total cases dealt with, 63% of people reported a reduction in their substance misuse.

# HEALTH

*People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are healthy*

## ***Our priorities:***

- People have a sense of **emotional wellbeing** and are **more resilient to mental illness**.
- Fewer people **smoke**.
- Fewer people are **overweight or obese**.
- People make informed choices about their **sexual health**.
- **Children and families** receive early intervention and support to meet their needs.
- Adults are able to **live independent and fulfilled** lives.

## ***What have we done during 2014-16?***

Some of the actions we have taken to help people be healthy are:

- In December 2014, partner organisations in Cwm Taf signed the ['Time to Change'](#) pledge - a commitment to offer honest and supportive workplaces in which people can manage mental health conditions without stigma or discrimination.
- During 2015, the Alzheimer's Society were successful in obtaining Community Capacity funding, which has enabled an area based project to be set up in Maerdy focussed on supporting people with dementia and their carers to continue to be included and participate in society. Working with partners and local people, the steering group hope to award Maerdy as a 'Dementia Friendly Community' in 2016. A dementia-friendly community is a city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected, supported, and confident they can contribute to community life. ([www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/dementiafriendlycommunities))
- Throughout 2014-16, each locality area has benefited from an older person's Community Co-ordinator, employed by the Council Voluntary Councils (CVCs) in Cwm Taf; Interlink RCT and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (VAMT). The Community coordinators work with people over 65 and their carers to make community connections, support access to community services and networks and build resilience amongst the older population.
- The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health (2014) focused on understanding the impact of childhood obesity and the work that is being conducted across Cwm Taf. RCT has created strong partnership working links with Cwm Taf UHB and Public Health Wales to prioritise the combating of childhood obesity, including contributing to a national review on partner responses to the issue.
- The Housing and Health Action Area project (Tylorstown and Penrhys) is a joint working project between RCT Council, organisations based within the communities, Registered Social Landlords, Cwm Taf University Health Board and the local Public Health team. Residents in the pilot areas are entitled to a free 'healthy home check,' where hazards within the home are identified and associated work carried out through grant funding. At the same time, a health questionnaire is conducted with the homeowner, in order to highlight health needs and provide signposting and referrals to relevant services as appropriate. This has already resulted in targeted health interventions, such a 'Stop Smoking Wales' Development Worker funded by Public Health Wales in the Rhondda

Fach, to support and signpost smokers to cessation services and arrange clinics in the area, responding to demand.

- The [Together for Mental Health Annual Report 2014-15](#), outlines the progress made with regards to mental health issues, across Cwm Taf. The report acknowledges a number of strands of partnership work and prudent healthcare initiatives which are taking place across Cwm Taf, making a positive contribution to the improvement of mental health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.
- The 'Involve 2 Evolve' project supported the meaningful involvement of service users at various different levels within mental health services across Cwm Taf, including training, engagement and support for service users and carers to have a voice in how services are run.
- Cwm Taf is a pilot area of the 'Drink Wise Age Well' campaign, which aims to engage the 50+ population in education, risk reduction and prevention of ill health as a result of high alcohol consumption.
- Team Around the Family (the 'TAF' approach) was launched in 2013 across Rhondda Cynon Taf, with the aim of providing a more integrated approach to preventative services for children and families. Key workers support vulnerable families to access a coordinated range of Council and partner services and provision via a single point of access referral.
- RCT is part of the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), a partner project with Public Health Wales and the Local Health Board. GP patients who are at risk of developing chronic health conditions as a result of poor engagement in physical activity are referred to a high quality supervised exercise programme to improve health and wellbeing. Provision includes low-impact classes, water-based exercise and walking and is delivered by Sport RCT and RCT Leisure Services.
- The implementation of the Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund across Cwm Taf has meant a range of health and social care projects have been funded to support older people. A number of projects have been supported by the Community Capacity Fund through Interlink RCT to support older people, especially those at risk of social isolation. The Fund has also provided for Community Co-ordinators, supporting people aged over 65 years old to maximise their independence and wellbeing through connecting with local services. This is linked to the development of a Joint Commissioning Statement for Older People's Services 2015-25, put together by Merthyr Tydfil Council; RCT Council; Cwm Taf University Health Board and the third sector. This sets out the intention that older people are able to access a range of services that promote their health, wellbeing and independence, with the aim of promoting choice and control.
- Project 5 Ways to Wellbeing through Merthyr and the Valleys Mind is a volunteering project that enables older people to meet with friends and enjoy new activities, delivered at sheltered housing schemes across R.C.T. Volunteers also benefit from free Agored accredited training, achieving a qualification in care and work experience improving employability prospects.
- Nearly 300 'Carers' Champions' have been identified, working in libraries, hospitals, GP surgeries, community and leisure centres, schools and job centres. These 'Champions' ensure more front line staff are 'Carer Aware' and can provide information and advice to carers of all ages.
- There have been a number of promotions to increase referrals from front-line staff working with older people to access energy efficiency measures, such as information packs available on hospital wards and 'Winter Warm' packs for the most vulnerable older people.

### ***Have we made a difference?***

Working together in partnership, we continue to look for alternative ways of encouraging people to improve their health and wellbeing.



The measures set out within 'Delivering CHANGE' provide information on our priorities at a level across the population in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This allows partners to understand the severity of the issue and, where information is available at a lower geographical level, target services appropriately. The services aimed at people affected by these issues are delivered in partnership with South Wales Police, Cwm Taf University Health Board, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Merthyr Tydfil Council and several voluntary sector agencies.

- Across Wales, 20% of people report having fair or poor **general health**. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, 24% of people in 2013/14 reported having fair or poor general health.
- The rate of **smoking** has fallen over recent years in Rhondda Cynon Taf, from 29% in 2003/04 to 23% in 2013/14. The Welsh Government has set a target of only 16% of the population smoking by 2020.
- The majority of adults in the County Borough are **overweight or obese** (64%). Positively, 26% of the population reported in 2013/14 that they were **physically active** on five or more days in the past week, and 28% eat five or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day. However, this has stayed relatively constant over recent years and to improve the general health of the population, further effort is needed to support people to improve their wellbeing.
- Overall, the number of children aged 4/5 years old that are **overweight or obese** has reduced for the second year in Rhondda Cynon Taf (to 27.5% in 2013/14).
- Since 2005, **teenage conceptions** have fallen from 60.9% to 39.3% in 2013! **Live births** to females under the age of 20 have fallen from 42.9% in 2005 to 25.3% in 2014.
- Programmes aimed at tackling poverty in Rhondda Cynon Taf are helping hundreds of **vulnerable families** to improve their skills, look after their health and to become more resilient against crises. An example of this is the Models for Access to Maternal Smoking Cessation Support (MAMSS), which is a Families First funded low birth weight programme to address two of the biggest local risk factors for pregnant women of **smoking** and **obesity**. The rate of babies born at low birth weight (less than 2500g) has fallen over recent years but, at 6.7%, continues to be higher than the average across Wales of around 5%. But the programme is showing significant improvements engaging pregnant women with support and smoking quit rates. Watch the testimonial of one mother [here](#). Early results from the obesity programme also show that weight gain is within recommended limits.
- In 2014/15, 94% of the people who used our reablement services felt they had been helped to **stay independent** and 75% of the care packages we put in place resulted in people no longer needing long-term care.



# PROSPERITY

*People in Rhondda Cynon Taf are prosperous.*

## ***Our priorities:***

- People have the **education** and **essential skills** to secure **employment**.
- People in **financial need** receive the right advice and support.
- People live in **safe, appropriate housing** in **sustainable and vibrant communities**.
- **Business** are supported to thrive and grow.

## ***What have done during 2014-2016?***

Some of the actions we have taken to help people be prosperous are:

- Improving the attendance and attainment of children and young people is a task that can only be worked on in partnership. During the 2015 academic year,, attendance and attainment of the pupils were at their highest level and improvements for all key stages were faster than the Welsh average. This has been achieved by the schools and the local authority sharing best practice in building effective school leadership and improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has included identifying schools across the County Borough and neighbouring authorities that need extra support and 'partnering' them with high-performing schools.
- Working with a wide range of key stakeholders, we have continued to implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework with significant improvements made in each of the six strands of the framework. The Vulnerability Profiling model provides a means of early identification of those children and young people at risk of disengaging from learning as a result of socio-economic barriers they face outside of the school environment. It is now RCT Council's agreed single identification tool for potential disengagement from learning and a number of teams within the Engagement and Participation Service have successfully utilised the information to drive and shape targeted provision for children and young people aged 5-25 years.
- We are also involving a wide range of partner organisations and the community in improving the wellbeing of learners. For example, the Save the Children 'Families and Schools Together' project (FAST) brings together parents, children, schools and the wider community. A recent evaluation of the project in Rhondda Cynon Taf has found that family relationships have improved, children's behaviour at home and in school has improved and the support parents provide each other has improved by 22%. The project has encouraged the establishment of Parent and Teacher Associations in some areas and improved links with other services such as Team Around the Family.
- Through services like RCT Council Adult Education, programmes such as Communities First and working with partners like Job Centre Plus, Coleg y Cymoedd and the University of South Wales, more adults have been supported to improve their skills, gain qualifications and be confident in seeking employment. During 2015/16, 620 people started work after being supported by a work or enterprise club.
- The Council has established a strategic internal Generating Wealth Group, to provide the oversight required for the RCT approach to Tackling Poverty. In order to do this, the group includes services across the Council, with the function of coordinating effort, seeking opportunities to improve and challenging one another on their approaches to

generating wealth. The group will provide strategic direction to commissioning and monitoring across numerous Council services and report to the Cwm Taf Strategic Partnership Board.

- As a result of reviewing the three Welsh Government programmes aimed at 'Tackling Poverty' in Rhondda Cynon Taf, a new model for delivery of Communities First is currently being implemented and there is a phased approach planned to bring all three Tackling Poverty programmes (Communities First, Flying Start and Families First) together in one dedicated Tackling Poverty Service. The restructure of Communities First puts the programme and its targeted engagement function at the heart of community capacity building. Communities First is working with partners across the Council, partner organisations and the voluntary sector to develop a programme of low level community support, designed to increase individual, family and community resilience.
- In recognition of the fundamental link between health and housing, we launched our first Housing & Health Action Area in Tylorstown in February 2015. All residents are entitled to a free home check to see if their home could be made safer and warmer to reduce the risk of ill health or injury. Residents who come forward for the survey receive a free home pack, which includes a carbon monoxide alarm, thermometer and radiator key. Free safety packs are available for those residents who are vulnerable or at risk from intrusion and the team are rolling out a wider referral process to help other agencies refer in to this partnership project. Where hazards in the home are identified, grant funding has been made available by the Council to carry out the associated works for homeowners and loans are available for landlords. In 2015/16, 178 surveys were completed and 93 grants have been offered to residents, which will contribute to reducing 265 hazards when complete. The scheme will continue in other areas during 2016/17.
- In 2014/15, funding was successfully attracted through the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places programme for three housing projects in Pontypridd. This has included the 'Homes above Retail Premises scheme', which has delivered 18 flats above shops in the heart of the town centre. The 'Heat and Save' scheme has enabled residents in Pontypridd to save on energy efficiency measures, including boiler replacement schemes which helps to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes and reduce fuel poverty. The 'Homestep Plus' scheme, which enables empty properties to be renovated for sale and occupied at below market price, will also get underway in 2016/17. Within the funding programme, RCT Council has also committed to targeted investment in a series of regeneration projects across the Pontypridd area, including the Townscape Enhancement Programme, improving the appearance of the town centre and creating jobs, plus the regeneration of the Taff Vale precinct which the Council has recently spoken to business owners and the public on its future development.
- The [Welsh Government 'Cynefin' programme](#) has also been working in communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf to build community and environmental resilience. The approach has been based on the assets of communities, looking positively at what can be built upon to secure long-term environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits.
- In April 2014, Welsh Government funding to develop a Business Improvement District (BID) in Pontypridd was successfully secured. The establishment of a BID will mean that eligible business in Pontypridd invest a small amount of Rateable Value in to a programme of improvements, for the benefit of the local area. It is estimated to generate in excess of £375,000 over the next five years; capital that will then be reinvested in projects throughout the town centre designed support to economic growth. In February 2016, an overwhelming number of businesses voted in favour of the BID.
- The South East Wales Directors for Environment and Regeneration came together to commission a report, published in September 2015, setting out the ['Baseline Economic Analysis for South East Wales'](#). The main findings of the report will inform further work across the region to develop economic opportunity.
- In August 2015, the [National Lido of Wales](#) (Lido Ponty), RCT Council completed a £6.3 million restoration project of the grade II listed lido facility in Ynysyngharad Park. With funding support from the European Regional Development Fund, the Council was able to

restore this piece of national history to its former glory. Lido Ponty attracted more than 20,000 visitors to Pontypridd before closing for the season in November 2015, which had a noticeable positive impact on the local economy. RCT Council has committed to a full summer season of free admission to Lido Ponty, in the hopes of maximising the tourism potential in Pontypridd and RCT.

### ***Have we made a difference?***

Over the last three years, we have increasingly worked across geographical boundaries to improve the prosperity of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Most of our work in this area is based on learning, sharing information and taking opportunities with colleagues across South East Wales and wider. We are beginning to see the benefits of this way of working and aim to build on success for a self-confident and prosperous region.

The measures set out within 'Delivering CHANGE' provide information on our priorities at a level across the population in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This allows partners to understand the severity of the issue and, where information is available at a lower geographical level, target services appropriately.

- We have improved performance across many of the indicators used to measure success within **education**, for example, the percentage of young people achieving five GCSEs (or equivalent) at A\* - C grades has improved from 78% in 2013 to 85.5% in 2015. This is the best performance secondary schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf have ever achieved.
- The number of people of working age with no qualifications has fallen from 14.7% in December 2013 to 12.7% in December 2014.
- In some areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf, 21% of people have never worked. But **employment** has been rising steadily since 2009 and now, the latest data suggests that the percentage of unemployed people (who are able to work and aged 16-65 years old) has fallen from a peak in June 2013 of 14.5% to 6.4% in June 2015.
- To date (Apr 2013 - Dec 2015), 242 **jobs** have been created through grant support programmes direct to **businesses** funded by the Council and / or Welsh Government, excluding those created through the Pontypridd and Aberdare town centre regeneration. To date, 107 people have also been **employed** as a result of the community benefit clauses into major authority contracts.
- Likewise, during the period Apr 2013- Dec 2016, 240 **businesses** have been supported by Council and / or Welsh Government funding through grants such as the Local Investment Fund. This not only created a number of new **jobs**, but safeguarded over a 1,000 positions in local businesses.
- Over the last three years (2012/13 - 2014/15), we have brought 293 **vacant properties back into use** and delivered 219 **new affordable homes**. We also prevented 95% of households at threat of becoming homeless from losing their **home**.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

## ***Changing the way we work together in Cwm Taf:***

This review has showcased many of the excellent initiatives being undertaken in Rhondda Cynon Taf to improve people's safety, health and prosperity. Many of the priorities included in the Single Integrated Plan will take generations to change the population measures associated with them. However, since 2013 and the publication of 'Delivering Change', partnerships have grown stronger across the region and the next 5-10 years offer opportunities in how we work together and challenge each other to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Alongside the challenging financial situation affecting public, private and voluntary sector organisations in Wales, the way we work together and with communities is beginning to change. In Cwm Taf, we have an opportunity to build on strong relationships between partners, and use the strength of the communities we serve, to become an innovative, effective, responsive and efficient public service together.

Over the last year, officers across a number of partner organisations have been seeking a way of ensuring effective, sustainable and accountable partnership structures to ensure the best outcomes for people in Cwm Taf. The changes are already underway, with the partner organisations of the area agreeing to establish one Cwm Taf Public Service Board (as required by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015) from April 2016.

This Board will be responsible for setting out collective objectives on how they will contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals of:

1. *A prosperous Wales;*
2. *A resilient Wales;*
3. *A healthier Wales;*
4. *A more equal Wales;*
5. *A Wales of cohesive communities;*
6. *A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language;*
7. *A globally responsible Wales.*

The sentiment of the national legislation emerging from Welsh Government prompts a different way of working across our organisations. A wide range of services across the Local Authorities, Cwm Taf University Health Board and the third sector are already preparing for the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and this will inform our corporate strategies for improving the outcomes of people living in Cwm Taf.

The Public Service Board will be the statutory body responsible for improving the wellbeing of people in Cwm Taf. In order to do this, the organisations will need to understand each other's services, challenge one another's performance, share information, be held to account (and hold each other to account) and seek ways to provide the best public service for communities together. The Public Service Board will replace both Local Service Boards and Cwm Taf Regional Collaboration Board.

## ***City Deal for the South East Wales region:***

In March 2016, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Local Authorities across the wider South East Wales region signed a £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. With a focus on improving

transport infrastructure and access to employment opportunities, the City Deal will see nearly £750 million invested in the South Wales Metro, as well as increasing skills, giving businesses the support they need to grow and capital improvements across the area. Over its lifetime, it is expected the Deal could deliver 25,000 new jobs across South East Wales and attract £4 billion investment from the private sector.

### ***Understanding our communities:***

In preparation for the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we are required to assess the wellbeing of the population. Through gathering statistics, analysing information, engaging with professionals and speaking to communities, we must build up a current and future picture of the social, environmental, economic and cultural wellbeing of people in Cwm Taf. This evidence will inform the work of the partnerships and individual organisations in the area.

Similarly, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2015 requires us to assess the care and support needs, plus the future care and support needs, of our population. Both assessments are vital pieces of work in understanding the public services required for Cwm Taf in the future and in informing us how we support communities to build resilience, self-confidence and aspiration.

### ***Cwm Taf Wellbeing Plan:***

By April 2018, the Public Service Board will publish a 'Wellbeing Plan' setting out its intentions. From April 2016 onwards, the Board will be working on delivering essential services well and helping communities to help themselves. Building on their own organisational objectives, such as those that will be set out in the Council Corporate Performance Report, the Police & Crime Commissioner's Crime Reduction Plan and the University Health Board's Integrated Medium Term Plan, the Board members will be considering the long-term vision for the area and impact of their actions on future generations. In order to do so, they will consider integrating public services, transforming the way the organisations work so that services are more preventative, using the knowledge and experiences of a wide spectrum of our population to design and deliver services and, as always, working together to deliver change in Cwm Taf.

# INVOLVING PEOPLE

**YOU** are very important in helping us change the way we deliver services, helping us save money and allowing us to work with you to improve your community.

Across Cwm Taf, we have agreed a joint commitment to involving people in our services. We aim to achieve the kind of involvement that values people and communities and makes a difference, where everyone of all ages, whoever they are, can say:

*'My views are needed and considered in shaping services. I can easily get involved in services that affect my community and me if I choose to. My involvement is highly valued and it makes a difference'.*

As this review has demonstrated, we are moving ever closer towards asset based working, community led services and involving people more meaningfully in our work. We still have a way to go.

To achieve our aim, we have a Cwm Taf Public Engagement Group, set up to drive forward the changes in our organisations needed to achieve our aim. We will keep the National Principles for Public Participation and the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales at the centre of what we do and help others to understand the need to involve people.

## ***National Principles for Public Participation:***

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Engagement is designed to make a difference                  | 6. Make it easier for people to take part                        |
| 2. Encourage and enable everyone to be involved, if they choose | 7. Enable people to take part effectively                        |
| 3. Engagement is planned and delivered timely & appropriately   | 8. Engagement is given the right resources to be effective       |
| 4. Work with relevant partner organisations                     | 9. People are told the impact of their contribution              |
| 5. Information is jargon free, clear and understandable         | 10. Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement |

(Participation Cymru (2011))

## **The National Children and Young People's Participation Standards for Wales**

1. Children and young people have **information** about decisions that effect them
2. Children and young people have a **choice** to participate
3. Children and young people are **not discriminated** against
4. Children and young people are **respected**
5. Children and young people **get something out of participating**
6. Children and young people are given **feedback**
7. **Improving** how services work

(NAfW; 2007)

## Find out more / Tell us what you think

**Visit:** [www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/singleplan)

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