



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2018

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR HOPKINS AND COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires that the Director of Social Services publishes an Annual Report about the exercise of the Local Authority's social services function.
- 1.2 The first draft of the Annual Report was presented to Cabinet in July this year and has subsequently been taken to both the relevant Scrutiny committees, and circulated to partners etc for consultation and comment.
- 1.3 As a result of this consultation some minor amendments have been made to the report and a final version is now presented to Cabinet for formal approval prior to publication. Some suggestions made in the Scrutiny committees will also inform the production of reports in future years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the Rhondda Cynon Taf Director of Social Services Annual Report (Appendix 1) for publication.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To enable the Director of Social Services to discharge statutory duties in relation to publishing an Annual Report on the delivery, performance, risks and planned improvements of the Social Services function of the Council.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 includes in Part 8 a Code of Practice with regards to the role of the Director of Social Services.
- 4.2 This replaces Statutory Guidance issued in June 2009 regarding the Duties and Accountabilities of Directors of Social Services in Wales and includes an ongoing requirement for the Director of Social Services to publish an Annual Report.
- 4.3 The new code of Practice states that the Director of Social Services must prepare and publish an annual report about the exercise of the Local Authority's social services functions and that this annual report must be published as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of a financial year.
- 4.4 The annual report must evaluate the performance of the Local Authority in relation to the delivery of its social services functions in respect of that year and include lessons learned. It must also set out objectives in relation to promoting the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, for the forthcoming year.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report makes no change to operational service delivery.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The draft Director of Social Services Annual Report was presented for Scrutiny to the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee and to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee.
- 6.2 The draft Director of Social Services Annual Report has been amended as necessary in response to comments received.
- 6.3 Overall, feedback was positive and the draft report has required limited amendments.
- 6.4 A record of all comments received will be kept and is available on request.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 This report makes no change to operational service delivery.

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

9.1 The Director's report provides a view on the delivery of Social Services during 2017/18 and complements the Council's Corporate priorities.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 All comments received were considered by the Director of Social Services and staff working on the Director of Social Services Annual Report and appropriate changes made.

10.2 Feedback was constructive and positive.

10.3 Detailed action plans to support delivery of the Director of Social Services Annual Report are included within the Service delivery Plans of the individual Services which form the Community & Children's Services Group.

10.4 In summary I am pleased to report that the performance of Social Services in RCT continues to be good despite the level of financial pressure experienced. However, Cabinet will be aware that there are still areas that need further improvement and compared to other Councils we still support more adults in institutional settings rather than in their own home, and we still have a comparatively larger number of children who are 'looked after' by the Council rather than living with their families. Whilst there are a number of factors contributing to this situation, working with partners to strengthen community based support services to address these continues to be a key priority.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers:

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 Part 8 Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services (Social Services Functions)
<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160322part8en.pdf>

The Local Authority Annual Social Services Reports Guidance (ADSS)
https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/The_Local_Authority_Annual_Social_Services_Reports_Guidance.pdf

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Social Services Annual Report 2017 - 2018

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1. Introduction

As the Statutory Director of Social Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf, I am pleased to present my annual report for 2017/18 setting out how the Council's Social Services performed last year, building on this new style of report, and highlighting the direction and priorities we have set for the year ahead. In doing so you'll notice how we are linking the delivery of information, advice and services to the promotion of the wellbeing of those people who we support.

Social Services provide a wide range of activities across the County Borough that protect and support vulnerable children, young people, adults, families and carers. Helping people to be safe, independent and free from poverty is our aim as we know that this is how we can best support people's long-term wellbeing.

Whilst we continue to provide a good quality of service to people in Rhondda Cynon Taf we do so in a changing environment where more people are living longer, and whilst most people are able to live active and independent lives, a number need care and support to overcome the effects of long term illness, disability or family breakdown.

Although two years have passed since the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 we continue to focus on the individual at the heart of what social services delivers, with partnership and service delivery that emphasises earlier intervention and prevention, and new ways of delivering care to people.

I am pleased to be able to report that there have been many achievements during 2017/18. The Cwm Taf Partnership has continued to access the Intermediate Care Fund from Welsh Government supporting us to introduce new service models together, some of which operated throughout 2017/18 such as our enhanced Reablement service, for people with dementia, the Early Stroke Discharge service and the Community Coordinators. We have continued to make progress in introducing the Stay Well @Home Service and the Integrated Autism Service. These projects will play a significant role during 2018/19.

Social Services remains a core part of what our Council is responsible for, and we are key in the implementation of the 2016 – 2020 Corporate Plan, delivering health and social care services that are personalised and integrated, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes. To demonstrate how the Council helps to improve the wellbeing of those we provide services to, we are working more closely with other Council departments utilizing our professional expertise.

Our longer-term objectives as I set out last year are still guiding what we deliver, in particular that:

- Services for adults will be remodelled to focus on minimising intervention and maximising independence, with a greater emphasis on early intervention.
- Better manage the huge costs of A&E and hospital admissions, with social care commissioning integrated with health services, such as primary and community care thereby improving the experience of those using health and social care services.
- Ensure that more young people with complex disabilities will stay in Rhondda Cynon Taf, where they grew up, and live in their own homes, with opportunities to engage in education, training, culture and the arts, helping them to grow in independence.

- More people with mental health issues will receive support in the community to help them stay well, reengage in learning, get a job and remain active, with support focused on helping people with their whole life, not simply providing a diagnosis.
- Rhondda Cynon Taf's residents will be some of the most active and healthy in South Wales, benefitting from improved leisure facilities, visiting our theatres, libraries and heritage sites and making use of the County Borough's parks and open spaces.

2. Director's Summary of Performance

I said last year that I wanted to ensure that during 2017/18 we would continue to deliver good quality and consistent practice across all our statutory functions. I am pleased that our staff and partners working together have delivered what I had set out.

In looking at the key achievements of 2017/18 I am pleased to report that we have:

- Implemented the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requirements, focusing on developing our information, advice and assistance service for adults, making sure that residents have a voice and real control over their own lives, asking them "what matters?" and by working with partners to shape the support and services in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have also changed the way we work including our assessments and paperwork to make sure we focus on what matters to children and families.
- Continued to respond effectively to adults at risk, by raising awareness of safeguarding, and working with partners to ensure care and support is available to those at risk of abuse and neglect, enabling them to lead safe, confident lives.
- Introduced a new 'Stay Well @ Home' Service as well as working with others to develop community networks of support.
- Contributed to the Cwm Taf Health and Social Care winter planning arrangements to support patient flow in hospital settings and improve delayed transfers of care and the rate of delayed transfer of care attributable to social care decreasing from 4.95 (per 1,000 population aged 75 or over) in 2016/17 to 1.90 in 2017/18.
- Worked with partners to improve service arrangements for people with learning disabilities engaging with our service users and their families to help shape the service needed and to understand what matters to them.
- Worked with children and young people who need care and support so that they reach their full potential.
- Provided a single point of access for all our Children's Services so that all cases are dealt with in the same way and made sure urgent and emergency referrals happen quickly.
- With our partners, reviewed the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and concluded it is making a positive impact on outcomes for children, as well as identifying further improvements for the future.
- Helped children and families get the information and advice they need through introducing the DEWIS Cymru website.
- Worked with families experiencing difficulties to help children remain at home or return home more quickly, where it is safe to do so.
- Helped more children to stay with their extended families when they cannot live with their parents.

We have continued to improve the quality and management of social services provision by applying a planned approach to learning and development, and by seeking to increase the take-up of training across the social care sector. We have continued to build on last year's achievements where we focused on delivering quality training to frontline staff, continuing to embed the new social services legislation and reflecting the increasing amount of partnership working across the Cwm Taf region.

I am pleased that we can demonstrate progress since last year. In particular, our Corporate Performance Report for 2017/18 shows that we were in the top quartile for:

- Making sure that children in our care had less than 3 placements during the year, bringing more stability into their lives.
- Visiting children in our care, in line with regulations.
- Pupils leaving school with qualifications.
- Pupils in our care leaving school with qualifications.
- Assessing the needs of Carers of adults
- The high proportion of our older residents that we support in the community.
- Delivering disabled facilities grants quickly, so helping people to maintain their independence.
- Adult protection referrals where the risk has been managed.

We do know that we need to help people leave hospital and return to their home or care home more quickly when they are well enough and give them the confidence to better cope at home. Our preventative and early intervention work will help to reduce the numbers of our older residents being supported in care homes. Our new Extra Care facility 'Ty Heulog' in Talbot Green has provided its residents with greater independence and their families with peace of mind and forms part of a wider additional £50M Council investment to deliver modern accommodation to meet the changing need and expectations of the growing older populations in the County Borough. This preventative approach is also helping children to stay with their families, even though the number of children in our care remains comparatively high.

I am also pleased to report that we have continued to tackle other big issues which will take much longer to solve, for example:

- Helping children to move through to adult social services.
- Tackling substance misuse.
- Minimising the impact of poverty, including fuel poverty.
- Preventing violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

3. How Are People Shaping Our Services?

This year we have continued to make information easier to find and understand. By making sure that our information is clearer, more user friendly and easy to read we hope that everyone can better understand the issues and challenges faced by the Council.

We have continued to ensure that our reports include more information, with a greater focus on social media and our online Engagement Hub, which makes it easier to see what residents are being asked about in surveys. In building on our engagement as set out in last year's report we have seen some notable successes during 2017/18.

In February 2018 all children in care in RCT were asked to participate in an online survey, mainly through their schools and colleges. 146 children and young people responded to the survey: a response rate of 36% with boys slightly underrepresented.

- All (100%) young children (4-7yrs) felt settled where they lived. More young people (83%) reported feeling settled compared to looked after young people (73%) in other Welsh authorities.
- More young people (83%) reported feeling settled compared to looked after young people (73%) in other Welsh authorities.
- Overall, 88% of children and young people reported that they felt safe in their placements 'all or most of the time': a larger proportion than the 75% of young people in the general population who felt safe in their homes.
- More young people felt they could do the same things as their friends: 90% in RCT compared to 84% of looked after young people in other Welsh authorities.
- School is a positive experience for most children. A larger proportion of children and young people (98%) felt that their carers were interested in their education compared to peers (90%) in the general population.
- The proportion (75%) of children and young people (4-18yrs) who had a pet was higher than reported by children in the general population where 66% have a pet.
- None of the youngest children (4-7yrs) gave responses which suggested low well-being.

As a result, we will make sure that actions (Section 4 (e)) are picked up in in 2018/19.

In developing the Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board Regional Plan we held 3 Community Panels in Abercynon, Porth and Merthyr Tydfil in December 2017 to seek peoples' views, focused on six key themes which had been identified in the Population Needs Assessment and which the Regional Plan seeks to address:

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

Members of the Community Panels had an opportunity to respond to the Regional Plan which included:

- Identifying positive opportunities for co-production and building on community assets.
- Identifying good practice in relation to the provision of information advice and assistance that supports resilience and well-being.
- Exploring what outcomes people would expect from efficient and reliable community services.
- How they want to be kept informed on progress and the changes to the area plan.

The feedback from each event has provided a rich source of information that has informed the development of the Regional Plan.

This report has been shared with those responsible for developing and delivering the Cwm Taf Well-being Plan as there are many common areas of interest, particularly around the use of existing assets, working more effectively together with communities to build resilience and tackling loneliness and isolation. We are also continuing to conduct consultations and surveys so that we get views from as many residents as possible.

A Young Persons Forum across RCT has also been set up to improve how we engage with young people. This Forum will be made up of young people representing their schools who in turn will report back to their School Councils so that young people can be more involved in important issues that affect them. We are also continuing to work with the five Older Persons Forums across RCT so that the views of older people are known and considered.

In delivering the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 we continue to carry out qualitative surveys of those who use services. As a priority area of work for 2017/18 we will ensure that this information starts to impact on how we work. Overall our assessment of this year's survey returns tells us that:

- 87% of respondents felt that they live in a home that supports their well-being with 13% responding that their home sometimes or did not support their well-being.
- Only 50% of respondents felt that they can do the things that are important to them with 36% responding that sometimes they can do the things that are important to them.
- Only 52% of respondents feel part of their community. There was no significance of age with results averaging across all age groups.
- 84% of respondents reported being happy with the support from their family, friends and neighbours.

According to the 2011 census figures, 27,779 Welsh speakers live in Rhondda Cynon Taf which represents 12.3% of the total population. The Welsh Language Standards apply to all areas of a Council's work and mean that residents across Wales can expect the same approach to applying the Welsh Language in services across the country, to ensure that the language is treated the same as the English and that all Councils offer people the opportunity to receive their services from us, as well as from those funded by us, in Welsh.

In the past twelve months, services have been embedding new processes to meet the requirements, particularly those services which affect how things work within the Council, e.g. ensuring that staff can access Welsh language support tools on their computers and

rules such as making sure that all published material is available to residents in both Welsh and English, e.g. the Council's Website, Committee papers, Job Advertisements and Social Media.

All our work is integrated into the Council's wider priorities and policies, for example currently the Strategic Equality Plan and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-20. We now have a greater legal duty to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Rhondda Cynon Taf as well as actively promote the Welsh language more widely.

We are continuing to work on the implementation of the 'More than Just Words' action plan in response to the Welsh Government strategic framework for Welsh language services in Health and Social Care. Building on last year's annual report we continue to develop our active offer of contact through Welsh, promote and raise awareness of the language amongst staff and provide workforce development training through the language.

4. Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

An individual's well-being and personal outcomes continues to be at the heart of our approach to sustainable social services. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act has now been in force for 2 years and we have been working hard to ensure that we support the well-being of people who need care and support and carers who need support.

This section of the report describes our performance in promoting and improving the well-being of people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. We have linked the work we have been doing to the six National Quality Standards, including the priorities we identified in last year's Annual Report, plus additional priority actions related to new ways of working. This section of the report gives information on our progress and provides data, where available, with real life examples of the impact on people, as well as setting out priorities for what we want to deliver in 2018/19.

Following the publication of last year's Population Assessment, we have worked closely with our Partners to develop a Regional Plan 2018 - 2023 which supports the delivery of the Council's corporate priority "*promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*" by helping local people with care and support needs to stay living independently at home. Each of the partner organisations in Cwm Taf provides a wide range of activities and services across the region that respond to vulnerable children, young people, adults and families. Each partner is committed to promoting high quality, responsive services to the public but recognise that they also must work together if services are to be transformed to meet the challenges today and tomorrow.

The Regional Plan has now been developed and identifies key priorities that will be delivered with our partners over the next five years.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

We identified a range of priority actions arising out of our self – evaluation assessments of both adults and children's services and included these priorities in last year's Annual Report.

Our plans for last year included:

- Delivery of personalised and integrated services across Social Care and Health that promote choice, control and independence, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes.
- Ensuring that families have access to the right support and information, earlier, so that fewer children and young people require statutory Children's Services support.
- Developing and deploying the Wales Community Care Information Service (WCCIS) to provide more accurate up to date information to create and sustain a unified approach for people in need of care and support.
- Increasing the number of social care clients that receive direct payments to enable them to make personal choices to manage their own needs.

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

Personalised and Integrated Services – We have delivered personalised and integrated services across Social Care and Health that promote choice, control and independence. We have worked in a way that made the best and most sustainable use of our limited and decreasing resources, always looking at alternative ways of doing things, to limit the impact on the Council taxpayer.

We understand that older people are choosing to remain independent and be cared for at home, rather than go into residential care. We also need to meet the challenges of an ageing population, it is vital that older people's care and support services are sustainable and cost effective. We have developed alternatives to residential care to shift the balance of investment towards alternatives.

This year we have focused on the model of Extra Care Housing which supports the delivery of personalised and integrated services across Social Care and Health so that more people are supported to live longer in their own homes. The provision of this accommodation offers an opportunity for older people to lead more independent lives and prevent unnecessary admissions to residential care.

In October 2017, Cabinet discussed a plan to develop five new extra care facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf, with a £50m investment to deliver modern accommodation options to meet the needs and changing expectations of the growing older population in the County Borough. Linc Cymru, the largest provider of extra care in Wales, is the Council's chosen partner to deliver this ambitious plan.

Extra care helps older people live as active and independent lives as possible, enabling residents to live in their own homes and receive targeted support to meet their individual assessed needs. The Council has identified the need for 300 extra care housing places across Rhondda Cynon Taf as demand for new models of care and support increases.

The Aberaman facility, which has been developed in partnership with Linc Cymru, was granted planning permission in February 2018. It followed the demolition of the former Maesyffynnon Residential Care Home in October 2017, and the development is supported by the Welsh Government's Innovative Homes Programme.

The development will include the construction of 40 independent apartments (36 one-bedroom and four two-bedroom) for people aged 50 and over, within a single three-storey building on Club Street. There will be on-site assistance for residents with decreased mobility or other similar conditions.

It will provide communal facilities including a dining room and cafe, hair salon, therapy room, lounge, laundry room, winter garden room, activity room and guest suite. Ancillary areas such as a kitchen, staff room and offices will be provided, along with a 24-space car park and a garden area – which will be used in conjunction with Blaengwawr Primary School.

The Aberaman project is currently at a pre-construction phase, and the main construction of the new building is scheduled to begin during early June 2018. The homes will be built to a higher standard than required by building regulations to ensure running costs of the units are affordable.

The development will use Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) working in collaboration with the Welsh Procurement Service and F1 Modular Ltd, based in Powys. The company will construct elements of the development up to final fit-out stage – for instance kitchens and bathroom – in their factory. They will then be delivered to site, helping to reduce the construction period.

As part of our Extra Housing Development Strategy we commencement an independent review of in-house residential care home provision and day services for older people, which has included site visits to the relevant establishments.

We have worked closely with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Cwm Taf UHB, to develop a Joint Statement of Strategic Intent for Children, Young People, and Adults with Learning Disabilities (that includes autism and complex needs) and their families which describes a shared commitment to deliver a new model for health and social services. This Strategy focusses on the following key messages:

- Maximise the use of universal services
- Increase early intervention, prevention, information, advice and assistance
- Build community support and develop people's independence
- Sustain people in their own homes
- Enable people to live full lives and achieve their potential
- Keep people safe
- Make the best use of our resources

We have focused on timely discharges from hospital and recruited Health and Social Care Discharge Coordinators, through a partnership arrangement between Cwm Taf University Health Board, RCTCBC and MTCBC. These Coordinators continue to support hospital discharge arrangements for all four Cwm Taf hospital sites. 2017/18 has seen some changes to staff which has impacted on the work of this team. There has been good progress made and this service has made strong links with the Single Point of Access, the Stay Well @Home teams and the Third sector. Multi-disciplinary meetings are held twice a week to ensure people's personal well-being outcomes are considered as part of the hospital discharge process.

The Social Work component of the Complex Care Team has also been actively working to assess those people with complex care needs and facilitate the safe, seamless and timely discharge of patients from hospital with the right package of care that best meets an individual's personal outcomes. This team responds to referrals for social work support with discharges from hospital, where the individual doesn't have an allocated social worker. Significant improvement was made in 2017/18 to patient flow and in response to emergency situations during the winter, despite the complexity presented by the cases assessed. There has been an improvement in performance throughout quarter 4 for hospital discharges requiring social care assessments.

The rate of delayed transfer of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over is 1.90 for 2017/18, compared to 4.95 in 2016/17.

There are many case studies that support the work of these teams, here is an example:

Health and Social Care Hospital Discharge, Personalised and Integrated services

M was admitted to an acute hospital following an injury they were later transferred to a community hospital for rehabilitation. M was previously living alone at home with no Social Care input. The Hospital Discharge Coordinator was aware of M's circumstances via the multi-disciplinary meetings held twice weekly. During these meetings it was evident that M was medically fit and receiving ongoing Physiotherapy. The Hospital Discharge Coordinator was able to link in with multiple Health professionals including the Consultant, Physiotherapist and Ward Manager.

The experience and knowledge of the Coordinator combined with the skills of the Health professionals enabled discussion to be held regarding further rehabilitation in the home environment as opposed to inpatient therapy. The Hospital Discharge Coordinator was also able to link in quickly with the Reablement Team therapist based in Social; Care and provide accurate and up to date information from the Hospital therapist, sharing information effectively. Through this quick and effective collaboration between Health and Social Care staff we were able to determine that M could continue their recovery and rehabilitation journey at home.

This enabled M to return home safely in a timely manner and prevented an unnecessary hospital stay. These actions were positive to M's wellbeing and they quickly reaching their previous levels of independence and routine.

Improving Performance Information - One of the key challenges in evaluating our performance is developing the right suite of measures and mechanisms for reviewing the evidence of how well we are doing. In 2017, we have undertaken a review of performance information and monitoring systems across the Service Area and new improved arrangements are still being developed to ensure that we can report fully on all measures and capture the evidence that matters most in understanding the impact of what we do.

We have made good progress in developing and deploying the Wales Community Care Information Service (WCCIS) which is a national ICT system. Implementing the WCCIS will help us to deliver our key priorities and address the considerable technical and practice challenges involved in creating and sustaining a unified approach. During 2017/18, we have reviewed our business processes as part of the implementation of our revised operational model. The preparatory work for the transfer to WCCIS has presented some challenges and the data cleansing process has taken longer than planned. Once completed the system will provide more accurate up to date information to create and sustain a unified approach for people in need of care and support. This will help us to deliver our key priorities and address the considerable technical and practice challenges involved in creating and sustaining a unified approach. We will be going live with WCCIS in May 2018.

Improved Access to Services - Social Services has this year continued with the changes needed to deliver further improvements to services. This has included the review and implementation of new operating models, in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act both in Children's and Adult Services.

Adult Services have restructured the Short Term Intervention and Long Term (Locality) Assessment Service Areas and increased resources at the "front door" i.e. the Single Point of Access (SPA) to ensure all service users are offered a community response and assisted with third sector or independent services, where appropriate, rather than access traditional Adult Social Services. The SPA offers a proportionate assessment of each

person's individual needs and agreed outcomes. These changes have supported service users to achieve their agreed outcomes, supporting them where appropriate to find their own solutions or to find support from community resources. Where this is not possible service users have been signposted to the preventative or rehabilitative services provided by the Council. We have embedded a new approach to assessment in 2017 - staff have been improving and extending their skills in holding a “what matters” conversation with service users and their families. This involves working in partnership with people to understand what matters to them; by putting them at the centre and building on people’s strengths and abilities. This will better enable citizens to maintain an appropriate level of independence, a better quality of life and with a proportionate level of care and support.

The SPA team has access to a directory of services via the national website of DEWIS Cymru which links to the websites of the Council, UHB and other partner organisations. This directory of services has expanded in 2017/18 with a more comprehensive list of services available in the RCT area.

The waiting list for sensory assessments has continued to reduce and now over 90% of people are being seen within agreed standards.

Case Study – Improving Access to Services

Mrs X was referred to the Single Point of Access following the sudden loss of her husband. The Single Point of Access made contact and undertook a proportionate assessment to establish 'what mattered' to Mrs X. She reported that her husband was her carer and since his loss she felt lonely and in low mood, she was independent with personal care. Mrs X wanted to have greater social interaction and felt that her needs would be best met by moving into a sheltered complex or residential home in order to have company.

Staff discussed with Mrs X to see how she could be supported to stay in her own home and helped to be connected with activities in her community to build her support network. Mrs X agreed and a referral was made to the Community Coordinators who sourced activities that supported her previous interests. Mrs X was also linked with a counselling service to support with bereavement.

Children services have also reviewed its access points. There is now only one front door with resources having been increased and all requests for services whether for early Intervention prevention through Resilient Families or statutory services go to the same point of access. This allows for signposting to the correct services as soon as contact is made.

Direct Payments - We have increased the number of Direct Payments issued for social care clients in both Adults and Children’s Services as shown in the table below. This means that more people are being funded directly to make personal choices to manage their own needs.

Children’s Services		Adult Services	
2016/2017	127	2016/17	339
2017/ 2018	134	2017/18	358

A qualitative survey has also been carried out with people receiving care and support to assess if people knew who to contact about their care and support.

- 79% (624/795) of adults who responded to the survey reported **they know who to contact about their care and support**. This figure is the same as last years, although there is a 50% increase in the number of people who responded to this question.
- 91% (735/809) of adults receiving care and support who responded to the survey reported they had been **treated with dignity and respect**. This is a decrease of 1% on last year's return.
- 85% (152/178) of children with a care and support plan who responded feel **their views about their care and support have been listened to**. This is an increase of 4% on last years return.
- 92% (169/183) of children with a care and support plan who responded feel they **were treated with respect**. This is an increase of 1% on last year's return.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Prioritise the integration of services for: Older people with complex needs and long-term conditions, including dementia; People with learning disabilities; Carers, including young carers; Integrated Family Support Services; and Children with complex needs due to disability or illness.
- Deliver new accommodation models to improve outcomes for those individuals who need support to live independently and continue to work jointly with Linc Cymru to deliver the Council's Extra Care Housing Development Programme and enable more people to live in their own home rather than institutional settings.
- Conclude the review of existing residential care home (and day centre) provision for older people to support our future service needs supporting more people to live independently in their own homes rather than institutional settings
- Make better use of technology solutions to maintain people's independence in their home and prevent escalation of need increasing.
- Implement the resilient Families Service and secure the engagement of internal and external partners to deliver the Resilient Families Programme
- Promote engagement with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure coproduction and that the voice of the children and young people are heard.
- Implement the National Adoption Support Framework within RCT to ensure the children are placed for adoption reach their full potential and have opportunities to achieve.
- Ensure there is offer of a direct payment to all people with eligible care needs

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

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Delivering the Stay well @ Home Service to provide an integrated response with partner agencies to reduce the total number of citizens who experience a delayed transfer of care from hospital.

- Working with Health to review our future approach to community mental health, including working towards integration of CMHT's
- Bringing together a range of strategic work streams and priorities to provide a single focus for all partners to engage with and commit to the delivery of family focused early intervention and prevention services that make a difference to families in RCT through the establishment of the Resilient Families Programme.
- Better targeting the provision of universal Early Years services including the implementation of an Integrated Parenting Framework
- Working with partners to form a strategic board to support sport and physical activity in RCT
- Developing and delivering services that focus on building more involved and resilient communities to tackle poverty and promote well-being. This will enable individuals and their families to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating and reduce the demand for high cost specialist services and ensure that any adverse child experiences (ACE's) are identified addressed and their impact on children is minimised.
- Delivering the priority investments for Leisure, Parks, Playgrounds, Bereavement and Heritage Services. This investment in Leisure will allow the service to attract new customers from local communities to improve their inclusion in physical activity to benefit their health and well-being. The playground investment will provide more stimulating and safer play opportunities for children throughout the County Borough.
- Better delivery of the Sport and Health Development priorities of the Leisure Strategy to increase active participation in physical activity across all age ranges with the aim of reducing levels of childhood and adult obesity, increasing overall life expectancy and contributing to the general health and well-being of the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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

Stay Well@Home Service (SW@H) - We implemented the SW@H in April 2017 providing an integrated response with partner agencies to reduce the total number of citizens who experience a delayed transfer of care from hospital. This service operates at Prince Charles and the Royal Glamorgan acute hospital sites in A & E and on the wards from 8am to 8pm, 7 days a week.

The initial performance data for the SW@H is very positive:

- in the first 6 months, over 200 people have been discharged from hospital using this new service
- as at September 2017, there was a 5% increase in zero length of stay for patients aged 75+ in comparison with the previous year
- there are fewer patients staying 5 days or more in hospital in comparison to previous years
- the number of patients transferred to a community hospital has reduced by 50% since April 2017

Parenting Framework - We have developed the RCT Parenting Framework which provides co-ordination and support to a range of internal Council Services and external partners delivering parenting interventions to ensure our efforts are targeted to deliver improved outcomes for families.

Memory Project - We have supported the delivery of a Memory Project which is an integrated (Health & Social Care) Short Term Reablement Service for people with cognitive impairment or memory problems. This project has worked co- productively with people to define the well-being outcomes they wished to achieve and provided support for people referred from both hospitals and the community.

- **138** referrals were made to the memory project, **135** (39 from hospital and 96 from the community) referrals were accepted.
- Out of 135 referrals, we were able to provide **86** programmes of support as well as some additional 31 specialist occupational health assessments. In total we provided **4829** hours of support.
- **92%** of the people supported felt they achieved all their goals and **94%** said we had helped them remain living independently in their home environment.
- **73%** of people across both the Memory Reablement and Intermediate Care and Reablement services required no further ongoing services.

Case Study

Mrs. P's daughter in law contacted Social Services with concerns about her mother in law's memory and the impact it was having on her ability to carry out her personal care routine. There were concerns regarding Mrs P's memory and resulted in a referral by her GP to memory clinic.

Following an assessment by Mrs P's Social Worker, it was clear that she struggled with her personal care routine. Her husband had been undertaking the shopping, cooking and majority of household tasks for quite some time, however neither he or their family had been able to engage Mrs P in her personal care routine. Mrs P's family raised concerns that she was remaining in the same clothes for months at a time, refusing to shower or change as she truly believed she'd already done so.

Her family had attempted to support her to shower, however this resulted in Mrs P becoming agitated and verbally aggressive towards them. Mrs P and her husband are a very independent couple, previously resistive to accept help that had been offered by their family. Mr P recently suffered a period of ill health resulting in a hospital admission. During this time family supported Mrs P at home, it was then they realised how much support her husband had been providing.

It was requested that the Reablement memory service support Mrs P for 7 mornings a week to engage her in a personal care routine, with the aim of establishing her functional abilities. The goal was to support and encourage Mrs. P to re-engage with a morning routine to include showering and changing her clothes on a regular basis. Initially staff encouraged Mrs P to accompany them into the shower room; they would then turn on the shower, leaving the water to run. As part of the morning routine, a change of clothing would then be brought into the shower room. Once familiar with the new morning structure, staff then encouraged Mrs P to use the shower. Initially staff were required to prompt Mrs P with the sequence of events, however as the programme progressed the prompts required reduced.

Mrs. P engaged well with staff, however she remained unsure as to why they were calling, insisting she didn't require help. As her programme progressed so did her ability to re-engage with a morning routine, however without on-going support she would not retain this ability. Mrs P continued to require staff support in order to initiate the task, the level of prompts she required - both verbal and non-verbal, varied daily. Staff would allow Mrs P time to process the task before prompts were given. Mrs P become agitated at the level of support being provided so it was decided to reduce the calls to 4 x weekly and should Mrs P become more familiar with the routine, calls could be increased.

We have been working in partnership with Cwm Taf University Health Board to develop the Valley LIFE project which is delivering local integrated services for the frail and elderly. This service provides older people with dementia, their carers and families with timely support to improve their wellbeing and quality of life. A key part of this work includes developing two new health and wellbeing centres for older people who have cognitive and memory problems, and those with dementia.

This year we have been working hard to ensure the health and well-being centre at Ysbyty George Thomas is ready for opening in May 2018 and identified new revenue funding which will provide:

- Health and Wellbeing Centre for older people with cognitive and memory problems; Enhance Day Care services for people with dementia;
- Enhance mental health intervention teams to support people in care and residential homes;
- Increase staffing levels in Community Mental Health Teams;

We have committed more resources to support people with mental health issues find the right accommodation to meet their needs. A social worker is working directly with staff to find ways of improving well-being outcomes for "step down" individuals who were residing in specialist accommodation for people with mental health problems. Previously, the Local Authority was funding many placements at a significant cost and this did not always provide the best outcomes for the individuals. Demand for such placements was increasing and once people were in a placement there appeared to be limited options for people to move on to accommodation that better met their needs and was tailored for their personal well-being outcomes.

Seven individuals have been supported to "step down" to lower level supported placements and a further four individuals have stepped down from Social Care Well-being projects into their own tenancies in the community. These moves have taken considerable planning, working closely with the service users, providers, families and the support team to ensure the well-being outcomes people wished to achieve were met.

Case Study

Y has spent most of his adult years in a hospital setting, ranging from acute wards to rehabilitation units. Once discharged from hospital Y moved to a 24 hour specialist mental health placement where he lived for 5 years after which it was clear that his outcomes could be met in a less restrictive independent environment.

He was placed on the common housing register and was bidding for properties without success. Y was a single male and was therefore not classed as a priority for housing to have his own tenancy.

The housing system required him to bid weekly for potential properties which are then allocated on a priority basis. Y consistently bid on several properties but was always placed 20th or below on the list. Inevitably this meant that despite weekly bidding he was never offered a property and remained in the specialist placement at a cost of £1560 per week.

Discussions took place with the council's housing department to establish what support could be offered with regards to this. It was agreed that the support of Gofal could be utilised to support applications to "move on panel" who had the authority to prioritise Banding allocation. A referral was made to Gofal who assessed Y and submitted an application to move on panel.

This was accepted and Y was prioritised to Band A which resulted in him being accepted for a property. Y was supported by his care team and Gofal to set up utility bills and housing benefit and to settle into the property. Services were increased at this time to support Y with the anxieties of the transition of moving into independent living. Y is now settled in his own flat and continues to receive ongoing support from mental health services.

Performance in relation to the Mental Health Performance Measure remains positive overall and during August 2017, HIW and CSSIW undertook a joint inspection of the Cynon CMHT. Feedback from Inspectors was positive, with no areas of significant concern identified.

We have also worked with Innovate Trust to pilot the use of assistive technology to support people with learning disabilities living more independently in the local community. We have also worked with “Just Checking” and Supported Living Providers to trial the use of assistive technology to explore a new way of supporting individuals during the night-time according to need and to promote independence.

The Just Checking technology has been tested at 36 supported living properties to monitor the activity levels of all individuals to provide a better understanding of when support is required and confirm optimum levels through the most effective combination of staff and technology. Findings from the pilots will be trialed in partnership with Just Checking; Support Providers; social workers; supporting residents and their carers in early 2018.

We continued to redesign some existing learning disability day services provision as part as a wider programme of service transformation, for example:

- Secured WCVA ESF Active Inclusion funding to work with third sector partners to develop programmes of activity (from April 2018) that will focus on engaging with participants that are furthest from the labour market and offer them a 'first step' intervention to help them start their journey into employment.
- Worked with Cambrian Village Trust to develop and deliver an innovative healthy living and confidence building programme for individuals who current access learning disability day services.
- Worked with Artis Community to develop funding bids (decisions due in early 2018) to the Esmee Fairbairn Trust to expand arts based intervention programmes.
- Worked with Innovate Trust has as part of their “Greenday” project, helping adults with learning disabilities to gain skills and confidence to help them to lead independent lives within their local communities. The project is carried out in parks and green spaces across Rhondda Cynon Taf and carries out a wide range of activities from hands on conservation work, to nature walks and biodiversity surveys.

As part of our qualitative survey of children receiving care and support during the past 12 months we have been told that 74% (136/185) of children with a care and support plan who responded reported they are able to do the things they like all of the time whilst 25% (47/185) said they could some of the time. As part of our work engaging children across our services it is important to have this information to help us shape what we support and deliver.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

We have identified a range of priorities arising from our self –evaluations of both adults and children’s services:

- Work with Partners to develop a community response service (SW@H Phase 2) to prevent people being taken to hospital unnecessarily.
- Complete review of learning disabilities day services provision and prepare options analysis for the redesign of current provision to ensure that new models of support are high quality and cost effective.
- Develop the capacity and quality of specialist care home provision to ensure people with a dementia no longer able to remain in their own homes can access specialist care locally
- Continue the Valley LIFE project to develop a range of services for older people with dementia which helps to support people to stay well at home for longer.
- Continue the work between Adult’s and Children’s Services to improve the way we support young people transitioning into adulthood.

(c) Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Continuing to ensure that Children and Young People are protected from abuse and neglect and taking appropriate steps to protect and safeguard children and young people who need care and support and carers who need support from abuse and neglect or any other kinds of harm.
- Implementing a Risk Framework Model to ensure consistency in decision making relating to the lives of Children
- Reducing the number of repeat episodes where Children and Young People are placed on the Child Protection Register
- Equipping staff with the skills and knowledge to ensure groups with protected characteristics are not discriminated against and to identify safeguarding issues with the aim of preventing problems from getting worse or happening.
- Putting in place a greater choice of high quality local placements available for children who cannot remain at home, by increasing the number of Rhondda Cynon Taf foster carers.
- Undertaking a programme of audit and review work via the Adult Quality Assurance Sub Group (AQA) to identify themes and trends to inform best practice in relation to adult safeguarding
- Completing the review of the adult safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making, in line with the new Welsh Government guidance
- Ensuring that there is a robust performance management framework in place for the MASH which is aligned to the work of the Board's Quality Assurance Sub Group.
- Continuing to develop the multi-agency training calendar and identify any gaps in provision
- Developing a programme of Multi Agency Practitioner Events to share learning from audits and reviews with a wide audience of practitioners involved in safeguarding

- Increasing the pool of appropriately skilled reviewers/facilitators to carry out Child and Adult Practice Reviews

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

We are continuing to ensure that children and young people in RCT are protected from abuse, neglect or any other kinds of harm and this year have taken further steps to protect and safeguard children and young people. All children and young people have access to Advocacy and since the introduction of the National Advocacy Framework have an 'active offer'; which ensures that all children and young people who become looked after or whose names are on the Child Protection Register have a visit from an independent advocate. NYAS, the advocacy provider is a member of Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) and the issues they deal with are gathered together so that any emerging themes are addressed within the service.

We have also increased access to advocacy for people who need support to participate in safeguarding processes, particularly for people who do not qualify for Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy, but, who, nevertheless would benefit from such support. There has been a 50% increase in the use of independent representatives for people subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, which improves the service user's ability to access their Rights to appeal. We have also made improvements to working practices and performance of the Adults Safeguarding Team has continued to be made.

We have developed a Placement Strategy which will give children who cannot stay at home a greater choice of high quality local placements and also increased the number of foster carers.

A senior practitioner has been seconded for two years to work with Social Workers to improve adoption practice, processes and guidance and provide a clear link to the Regional Adoption Consortium for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff. This has allowed for consistency of service delivery across the services. We do know that the percentage of looked after children experiencing three or more changes to their placement during the year was 7.4%.

The Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board for Adults and Children has merged and a Joint Operational Committee has been established. A Multi Agency Risk Assessment Tool has been developed and is being used by all partner agencies.

We have through the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board developed a website that provides information, advice and guidance to the public and professionals whose work brings them into contact with children, young people, adults at risk and their families. The website is designed to help agencies, organisations and individuals working with children, including families and parents as well as members of the wider community, to help keep our children, young people and adults at risk safe. This site can be accessed via www.cwmtafsafeguarding.org/home

We have developed and implemented an audit programme and completed the following audits:

- Quality of strategy discussions audit
- S126 enquiries timescale audit

- Use of advocacy in Safeguarding
- Suspected Adult at Risk Reports from Independent Hospitals
- Review of Outcomes of Criminal Investigations
- Audit of Health-led Safeguarding Cases
- A range of Multi-Agency Individual Case Audits

The findings have reported excellent safeguarding practice and where improvement actions are identified these have been noted and will be prioritised for action in 2018/19.

- Working with partner agencies we also the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) processes with no significant issues identified
- We have completed the review of the adult safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making.
- New protocols have been developed to manage the interface between Safeguarding and the Escalating Concerns process and we now have a Cwm Taf Escalating Concerns Group that meets monthly and provides regular reports to the Adult Quality Assurance Group
- A new draft Management of Allegations against Professionals and a draft Strategy Discussions Protocol have been produced. This work will continue in 2018/19 and we will constantly review our processes to check for statutory compliance and best practice.

We have held several multi-agency practitioner events this year to share learning from the audits and reviews with a wide range of practitioners in safeguarding. These include:

- Feedback event to share the learning from two Adult Practice Reviews completed by the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board. The key areas of learning related to transition from childhood to adulthood and have resulted in the development of new transition principles.
- Pressure Ulcer Prevention conference
- Modern Slavery conference
- DoLS Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum: Learning from local Cases in the Court of Protection
- Feedback on three adult safeguarding cases (Multi–Agency Practitioner Forum).

We have increased the pool of appropriately skilled reviewers/facilitators to carry out Child and Adult Practice Reviews. Looking at the evidence we know that:

- The percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days was 93.78%
- The overall numbers of children on the child protection register has increased by 20%, from 418 on 31/03/2017 to 502 on 31/03/2018
- The percentage of re-registration of children on the local Authority Child Protection Register is 18.6%
- During 2017/18, 3 children become looked after on more than 1 occasion. This equates to 2% of all admissions

We have completed a qualitative survey of people who are receiving care and support which has confirmed that 79% of adults who are receiving care and support reported that they feel safe, with 15% reporting they feel safe some of the time. This is an improvement on 2016/17 when 76% reported they feel safe. 94% of children with a care and support

plan who responded reported they feel safe all the time. This is an increase on 2016/17 when 92% reported feeling safe all the time.

Adult's Safeguarding Case Study

A report was received by RCT's Safeguarding Team at MASH that a 32 year old woman appeared to be experiencing coercive control and domestic abuse at the hands of her husband. The report was made by a local charity where the person was a volunteer. The manager of the charity was extremely concerned for her safety and reported that she might have underlying mental health issues.

The person had recently been assessed by her local community Mental Health Team, but she had denied any problems with her home situation or that she had any mental health issues. Because of a meeting with MASH, the Safeguarding Officer could provide the person with information about domestic abuse services (although she continued to state that she did not experience any form of abuse). By meeting with her in a safe space, giving the person sufficient time to discuss her situation fully and build trust and rapport quickly using an empowering and supportive approach, the person also felt able to disclose to the Safeguarding Officer that she did, indeed, suffer with mental health problems because of adverse childhood experiences. She gave her consent for the Safeguarding Officer to liaise with her GP and other local services so that she could access appropriate treatment and support.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will:

- Strengthen our Quality Assurance Framework and further reduce the number of repeat episodes where children and young people are placed on the child protection register.
- Deliver the actions in the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel's Work Plan 2018/19 to ensure that children looked after and care leavers receive good quality placements that support them to live safe, healthy and fulfilled lives and to achieve their potential.
- Complete and deliver the Adults Quality Assurance audit schedule for 2018-19, focusing on the themes and trends that have become apparent from management information data and audits in 2017-18 and ensure this is aligned to the work of the newly-formed MASH Quality Assurance sub-group.
- Deliver the training opportunities identified in the multi-agency safeguarding training plan focusing on suicide and self harm; VAWDASV; Mental Capacity Act (MCA) and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS); Section 126 enquiries; County Lines, and; Domestic Abuse and Older People (in partnership with Elder Abuse Cymru)
- Develop the Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum model as an effective method to develop practitioner knowledge, skills and values in relation to Adult Safeguarding and DoLS with assistance from the Cwm Taf Learning & Development Centre, with the aim of delivering regular events over the year that use real case examples to explore practice.

(d) Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Working with communities and the third sector to build community resilience and capacity as a means of improving general health and wellbeing whilst facilitating and promoting social enterprise.
- Engaging with communities and third sector organisations to co-produce community hubs that can: offer information advice and assistance to people in their area; link to the wider network of community based activities and facilities; offer some simple community based solutions to meet some the low level support needs of the people living in the area (i.e. dementia cafe etc.)
- Working with key stakeholders to identify the optimum network areas and most beneficial locations for community hubs.
- Seeking third sector partners across the county borough and set out a critical path for development.

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

Developing Community Hubs - We have engaged widely with communities and third sector organisations to co-produce community hubs, building resilient communities that provide a range of citizen based services in priority neighbourhoods. These facilities will support a preventative approach that enables individuals and families to access support as early as possible to prevent problems from escalating.

This year we have consulted widely with the local communities in Mountain Ash and Ferndale to seek their views on the development of our first two Community Hubs. As a result, Cabinet were asked to approve a programme of investment across the County Borough for the development of these Hubs as part of the Council's approach to building resilient communities. Work has been on going to plan at Mountain Ash Day Centre and the former Ferndale Infants School.

The development of Community Hubs will encourage and support people to learn, develop and participate in society and will deliver the following outcomes:

- Better public services that are joined up, cost effective and accessible.
- A community in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised.
- A community that is well connected.
- A community that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.
- A community that promotes and protects its culture and heritage.

The Hubs will also provide:

- A single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice and assistance.
- A platform to develop community capacity and volunteering.
- Encouragement for older people to stay active and connected to delay or prevent them needing statutory services.
- Opportunities for people to improve their mental health, well-being and confidence.
- Opportunities for people to improve or maintain their physical health.
- Opportunities for parents and families to improve their relationships and parenting skills.

- Opportunities for vulnerable people to seek support and be signposted to other services as appropriate.
- Opportunities for people to learn and develop skills in support of employment.
- Flexible community space for people to meet, share interest and socialise, thereby tackling loneliness and social isolation

We have also been working with Age Connects Morgannwg (ACM) to transfer, via Community Asset Transfer, St. Mairs Day Centre. This transfer helped ACM access £1.1million of Big Lottery funding and they have commenced the redevelopment of the Centre which will give it a new identity as Cynon Linc, an intergenerational Community Hub for the whole community in the Cynon Valley, featuring specific activities and resources. The Hub will provide activities throughout the day and evening from arts and crafts, storytelling, reminiscing, music, education classes, gardening to concerts and films. There will also be a sensory room that can be used with people suffering from dementia alongside a dementia café and a social enterprise bistro providing affordable, healthy meals and snacks for the whole community. This facility is an excellent example of what working in partnership with the Third sector can achieve to further help people learn, develop and participate in society and achieve personal well-being outcomes.

We have also worked on delivering the Miskin Project to support young people and families across Rhondda Cynon Taf who may be vulnerable, looked after or at risk of becoming looked after. The Miskin Team have had a partnership working relationship with Cultural Services over a number of years. Various arts and music projects have been provided; this has included providing a resident artist– the artist was from Artis Community. Recently a Drama Group was provided through Community Music Wales, via Cultural Services; young people have received ASDAN accreditations for attending the drama group.

The Miskin Project also includes a partnership with the Tai Education Centre to provide a range of outdoor activities. The aim is to get young people re-engaged with education through these activities and achieve recognised qualifications.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 2018/19 our plans are to:

- Increase the number of Community Hubs via a phased development of consultation and the rolling out of further Hubs across the County Borough and neighbourhood networks over a three year period. This phased roll out of the locations of these Hubs will be based on the analysis of the consultations and evidence of greatest need.
- Develop new community based models of service with a focus on early intervention and prevention, choice, control and independence

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

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Reducing the need for Statutory Services by ensuring that children, young people and families have coordinated integrated family support earlier.
- Supporting children who cannot live with their own parents so that they are able to live in suitable accommodation within RCT to help them safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.
- Supporting children and young people who need care and support and carers who need support to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships.
- Implementing the Resilient Families Service to deliver an improved Team around the Family (TAF) Model across RCT and implement the Vulnerability and Resilience Model, to enable us to respond to the needs of families swiftly and effectively and reduce reliance on statutory services.
- Implementing the recommendations following a review into all Families First Commissioned services, with a focus on prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement
- Developing the Fostering Service to support children and young people who are in need of care and support so that they can maintain connections with their families
- Improving the safety of victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and reduce the impact this has on their lives of the victims and perpetrators and wider families

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

During 2017, Adult and Children's Services have worked together with health board and third sector partners across the Cwm Taf Region to review the existing model of services for carers and considered options for the development a regional integrated service to support carers.

Improved Fostering Service - The Fostering Services has been reconfigured and now comprises of two teams. These are a Fostering Assessment Team responsible for the connected persons assessment for potential kinship carers and a Fostering Support Team responsible for supporting all foster carers be they mainstream, short break or kinship.

We have piloted a Fostering Well Being Programme with Merthyr Council. This has improved the wellbeing outcomes for fostered children by encouraging everyone in the team around the child to work together to share learning and best practice. Foster carers, children and young people have been recruited as champions and have an important role in taking this work forward. The work we have carried out contributes to placement stability for children and young people within family type placements and has:

- increased the number of in-house mainstream carers (including increasing numbers moving over from the independent sector);
- enhanced support for foster carers;
- enhanced training and development to further develop skills, knowledge and experience (in particular in relation to caring for teenagers);
- strengthened kinship care provision.

We have carried out considerable development work this year with our foster and kinship carers, 3 consultation events are undertaken every quarter and support groups have been established, success celebrated with the engagement of our marketing colleagues. The

feedback received from carers shows this has been appreciated, as it demonstrates their value and contribution to children young people and the service.

Resilient Families Programme - A delivery model for the Resilient Families Service was approved in October 2017 and after evaluative reviews, research findings and consultation with service users and professionals this has delivered improved Team around the Family arrangements in RCT. The entire service is focused on quicker response times, sharper diagnostic assessment of need, the removal of barriers to increase resilience levels and to improve the delivery of family support services to residents. Both the Programme and the Service rely on the successful implementation of an Integrated Family Support Framework to organise, co-ordinate and govern the delivery of early intervention and prevention services by both Council services and partners across the County Borough. The implementation of the Resilient Families Service has resulted in the reorganisation of both the On-Track Team and the Family Aide Support Team (FAST) with staff consultation completed early in 2018.

The delivery of the new RCT Integrated Parenting Support Framework will be managed by the Early Years and Family Support Service from April 2018 and changes to staffing structures are underway to accommodate this arrangement. The Holiday Fun Time Scheme has also had an overhaul in August 2017 and is now operating as Care2Play - a supported engagement in play programme that seeks to provide additional support to children and young people in universal settings. The RCT Parenting Framework is in place and provides co-ordination and support to a range of internal Council Services and external partners delivering parenting interventions to ensure our efforts are targeted to deliver improved outcomes for families.

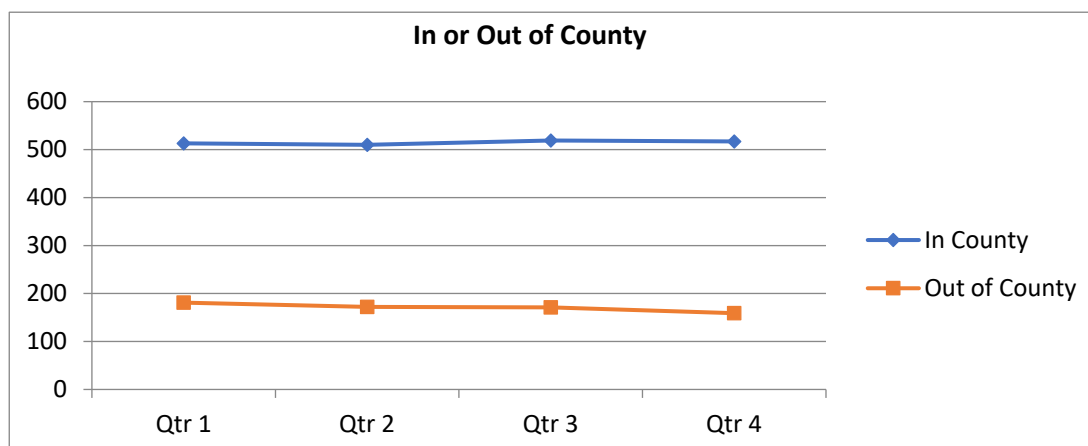
As we set out in Section 3 of this report, all children in care in RCT were asked to participate in an online survey. Your Life, Your Care: A survey of the views of looked after children and young people aged 4-18yrs.

Areas for improvement which will be reviewed as a priority included:

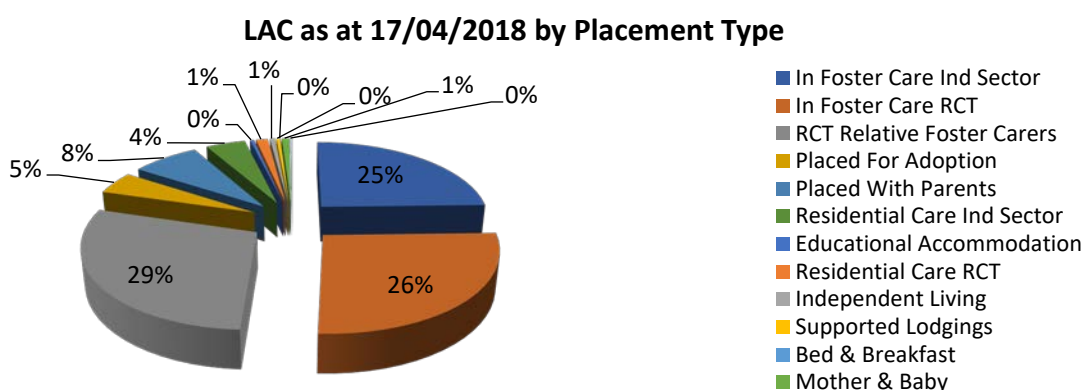
- The majority of children and young people (4-18yrs) trusted their social workers, but young people emphasised that they disliked social workers changing.
- Nearly all older children and young people (8-18yrs) knew who their social worker was and knew they could ask to speak to them alone. A quarter of the youngest children (4-7yrs) did not know who their social worker was.
- Most children and young people (8-18yrs) felt included in social work decision-making, but 16% of young people (11-18yrs) did not. Some young people wrote that they were not informed when decisions had been made.

We have reviewed the location and placement types for Children Looked After to reduce the number of Children that are placed out of county. At 31st March 2018 76.5% of our children looked after were residing within RCT. We are pleased that each quarter has seen a drop in the number of children residing outside RCT, with 26% reported on 30th June 2017 reduced to 23.5% on 31st March 2018

Location of Placements Types (in/out of County 207/18)



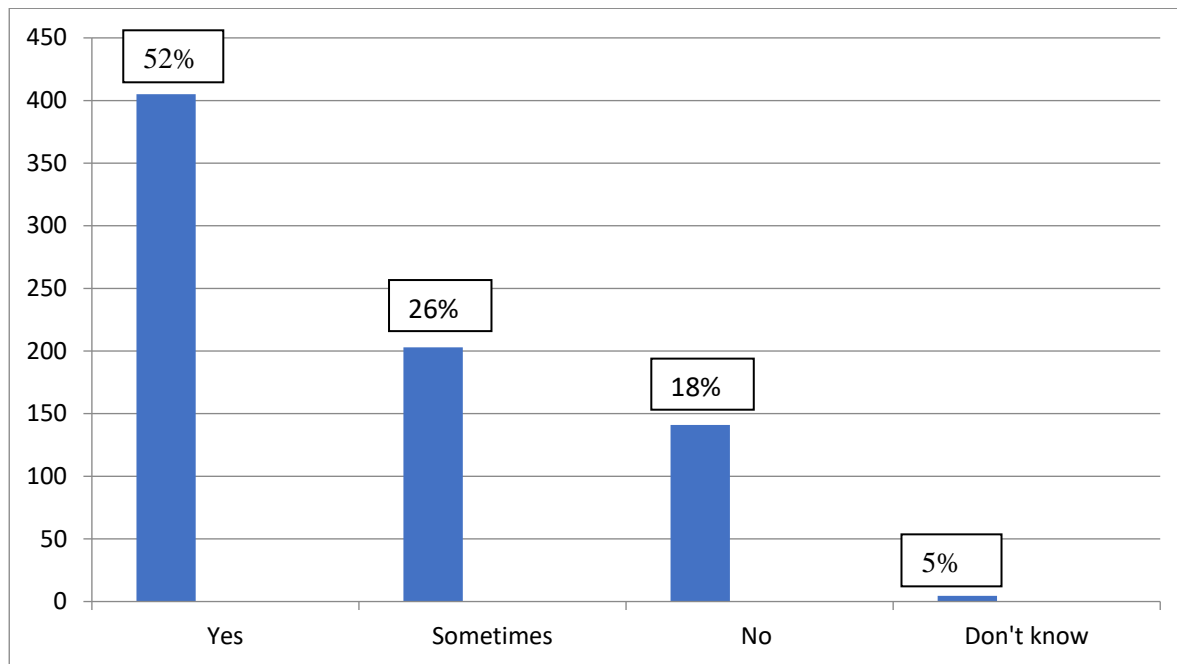
If we consider the location of the placements for Children Looked After, most children have been placed with Relative Carers (29%). This figure includes approved and non-approved kinship carers. The number has increased when compared to the same time last year where we had 175 (26%). In House Foster Care numbers are higher than Independent Sector Foster Care but figures have dropped in both categories when compared to last year's figures. Mother and Baby placements have also increased along with the number of children in Adoption placements.



During 2017, Adult's and Children's Services have reviewed the "transition" between both service areas and developed a common approach to understanding what matters, developing practice to enable people across the age range to live their own lives. The aim of this work is to remove the word (and process) of 'transition' between adult and children's services through a common model of practice, which is based on long term relationships and where services are organised around what support is needed. This work will continue into 2018/19.

Getting feedback on what matters to people: In our survey of 786 adults who are receiving care and support, 608 said that they sometimes or always feel part of their community, this is 4% more than last year.

I feel I am part of my community



We also know that 88% of adults (707/800) said they were happy with the support from family, friends and neighbours, and that 87% (163/187) of children with a care and support plan who responded to our survey reported they are happy with my family, friends and neighbours

What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 2018/19 we will:

- Continue to work with Children's Services to develop a practice - led approach that improves the way we work with young people and their families throughout their life and, in particular, at the critical time of the transition to adulthood.
- Develop a plan to implement a Regional Fostering Service in line with the recommendations of the National Fostering Framework.
- Develop plan to implement recommendations review of services for carers; including the provision and availability of respite services

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

What did we plan to do last year?

Our plans for last year included:

- Reducing the length of time Children and Young People remain within the Children Looked after (CLA) system.
- Reviewing the accommodation needs of Children who are Looked After (CLA), including those who have recently left care

- Ensuring that children that cannot live with their own parents live in suitable accommodation in RCT.
- Improving the integrated commissioning capacity of the Social Services and Wellbeing Regional team and deliver the statutory requirements of the Cwm Taf SSWB Partnership Board for 2017/8 to ensure that care is planned with organisations working together to fully understand peoples' care and support needs,
- Delivering Community Safety Services and Programmes that promote Rhondda Cynon Taf as a safe place to live with high levels of community cohesion to help reduce crime and the fear of crime.

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

We started working with housing providers and care providers to co-produce alternative and more modern, efficient ways of meeting assessed care needs in relation to supported accommodation. We have provided six units of additional modern supported accommodation for adults with a learning disability at the Old Vicarage in Tylorstown in partnership with Rhondda Housing Association. This has enabled us to relocate these individuals to a more suitable environment and free up their existing accommodation to step down more complex individuals in a more appropriate setting.

Work is on-going to convert of Penllew Court, sheltered housing scheme for older people in Aberdare, owned by Cynon Taf Housing Association, into new supported living accommodation for people with a learning disability. The redevelopment of Penllew Court would see the renovation of the scheme into a modern 19 bed facility for individuals with a learning disability, with each resident having a self-contained one bedroom flat with access to communal areas for activities and social interaction. The scheme will be accessible to wheelchair users and will support independence alongside providing appropriate support for residents, 24/7 where needed. It is proposed that the redeveloped scheme will include a community café facility for use by the residents if they so wish and, potentially, members of the public. Communal facilities at the scheme will also be reconfigure to support the remodelling and modernisation of our current day service provision within the Cynon Valley through, in particular, the provision of community based outreach opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

CSSIW external reports were received for the In-house Learning Disability Supported Living and Respite Services and In-house Residential Care Homes. These services were judged as performing well with no regulatory requirements in the past 12 months. Over the past year the Accommodation Service has continued to improve working practices and have reviewed and implemented changes to falls protocols, on-call arrangements and staffing rotas across residential care as well as modernising and developing service delivery to meet the changing service need and work with people to achieve their personal well-being outcomes.

An inspection by CSSIW in February 2018 of Home Care at Ty Elai reported that 'People have a particularly well-organised service that ensures they receive good personal and practical support to enable them to continue life at home. The service is highly developed both in the quality and quantity of support available and provided by staff and includes the quality monitoring systems'.

We have developed a Regional Market Position Statement (MPS) for care home accommodation as one of the steps in the process of delivering the statutory requirement

to establish a regional pooled fund for care home accommodation. The development of a regional MPS has clarified this position further and forms the basis for future dialogue and stronger partnership between commissioners and providers specifically with regards to:

- Sharing information and analysis of future population needs
- Providing a review of the current 'market' of services
- Describing our future approach to commissioning services
- Identifying the potential future shape of the market to enable providers to position themselves and meet future demands/needs
- Describing how commissioners can more effectively engage and support service providers to achieve a healthy and sustainable market.

We have been working with partners through the Cwm Taf Partnership Board regarding the establishment of a Regional Commissioning Team from April 2018. This Team will help us meet the future pooled budget requirements in line with Welsh Government's timescale and will mean that care is planned with organisations working together to fully understand people's care and support needs.

We have been reviewing the accommodation provision for Children Looked After and the number of children residential establishments within RCT has been reduced to three. The decision to close Treherbert Children's Home was taken in September 2017 following an independent review of the future accommodation and placement needs of children and young people looked after.

The Miskin and Rapid Intervention Response Teams have been relocated together and are fully integrated and now known as the Miskin Service Their primarily role is to provide an urgent intense family focused service to both children/young people on the cusp of becoming looked after and who are in the CLA system and need to be returned home quickly. This integration allows for a more consistent, focused service that delivers the same model of support to children young people and their families from aged 0 to 18.

The independent Review and Refocus of Accommodation and placement provision to Children Looked After found that:

- 81% of children with care and support plans who responded feel that their views about their care and support have been listened to.
- 91% of children who responded reported they had been treated with respect.

We have continued to focus on anti-social behaviour (ASB) as a priority within our communities. The emphasis has been on early intervention with perpetrators of ASB and increased support for vulnerable and repeat victims of ASB.

During 2017/18, a total of 1371 referrals were received for perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. Following intervention by our ASB team, 1077 of those (78.56%) did not engage in further incidents of anti-social behaviour (within six months of the referral). During the same period, the ASB team supported a total of 53 vulnerable / repeat victims of anti-social behaviour. Following a range of interventions from the team, 48 of the victims (90.56%) felt safer.

The Community Safety Team have also identified the importance of diverting people away from the Criminal Justice System, and therefore improving life prospects for those individuals. The Divert 18 – 25 project focusses on diverting first time offenders, aged 18-25 years old, away from the Criminal Justice System. A number of interventions are used, focusing on the needs of the individual. The project has been running for two years and a total of 141 individuals have been diverted on to the project. Of these individuals, 136 (96.45%) have not reoffended within six months of completing the intervention.

We are committed to promoting community cohesion within our communities, and a main focus for us is to tackle the issue of under reporting when it comes to hate crime incidents. During 2017/18, we have conducted a series of hate crime training sessions with a total of 372 individuals completing the training. Of those individuals trained, 365 (98.12%) report they have an increased awareness of hate crime reporting procedures.

Case Study - Supporting People to live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

L is 46 years old and she has bariatric needs which impact on her mobility and ability to manage her personal care. She lives with her partner in a housing association property. Prior to her hospital admission, L was unable to access all areas of her home and was restricted to living in one room. She rarely left the house.

L was admitted to hospital in May 2017 following a fall at home. L became medically fit for discharge in October 2017 and a referral was made for social work involvement, to assist in discharge planning. L's mental well-being had been impacted on by the length of her hospital stay; she had lost motivation in engaging with physiotherapy and this was exacerbating her physical problems. She was now nursed in bed for the majority of the time, and needed to use a bariatric wheelchair to get around. This meant that her home was no longer accessible to her. The width of the wheelchair caused significant issues in terms of securing accommodation for L. A number of potential properties were assessed but were unable to accommodate the specialist wheelchair. Temporary residential placements were also explored, but none within the county borough were able to accommodate the wheelchair. A purpose built bungalow had been identified as the way forward but this had a completion time of 9 months.

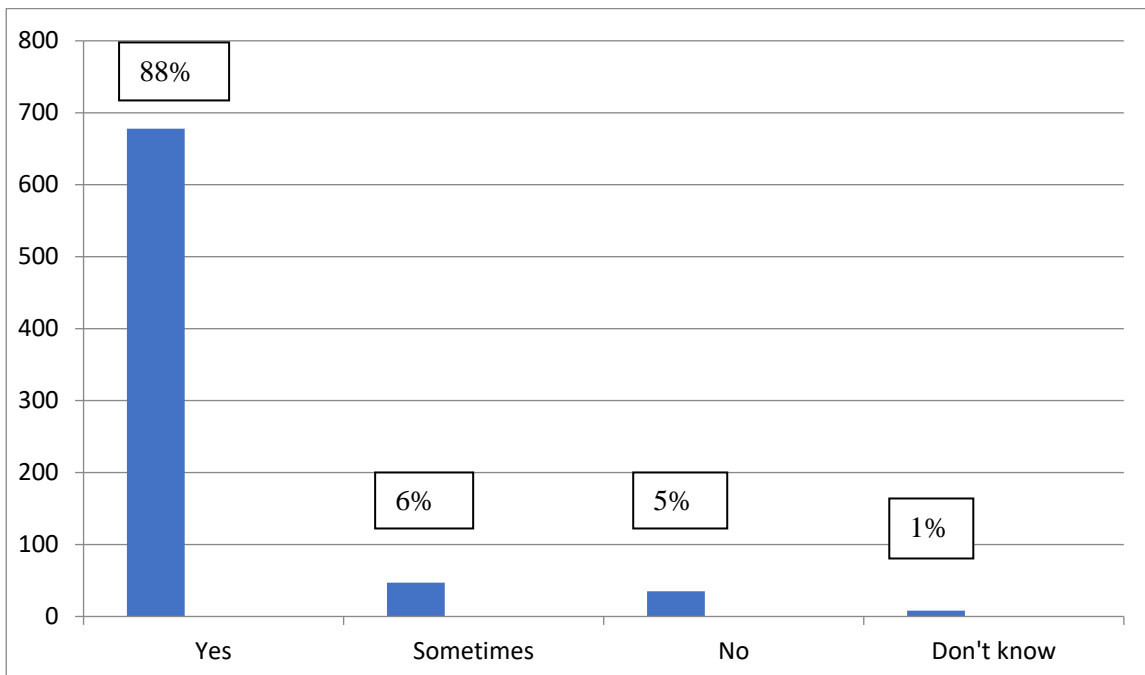
The social worker undertook a multi-disciplinary assessment, involving L and her partner, physiotherapist, nursing staff, occupational therapist and housing advisor. She made an application to the project so that L could secure temporary accommodation, pending completion of the adapted bungalow. L had agreed to support with her personal care via a commissioned care package. Health colleagues ordered specialist equipment (bed and hoist) and housing arranged to move furniture from L's existing property to the adapted flat.

L was able to leave hospital and return to her community to live with her partner. Further reablement support is being provided at home to try to support L in maximising her independence and regain some mobility. Without the availability of the adapted flat, it is probable that L would have remained in hospital until the purpose built bungalow was ready. This would have entailed a hospital stay of 18 months (including 12 months where L was medically fit for discharge).

During her 'what matters' conversation, L said 'I have been in hospital since May 2nd 2017 and I am looking forward to going home.'

We carried out a qualitative survey and 88% (678/ 768) of those adults receiving care and support who responded to the survey, reported that they live in a home that best supports their well-being. This is a 1% increase on last year's return.

I live in a home that best supports my well-being.



What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 2018/19 we will:

- Complete the redevelopment of specialist accommodation for people with learning disabilities
- Continue to ensure that there are appropriate levels of modern fit for purpose housing and accommodation available for vulnerable people that meets their needs and supported, where appropriate, by access to community facilities
- Implement the recommendations of the independent report: Review and Refocus of Accommodation and Placement Provision for Children Looked After and Care Leavers'
- Realign the Children Looked After Project to take account lessons learnt and ensure that children who cannot live with their own parents live in suitable accommodation within RCT.
- Identify a range of placements that support Children Looked After and care leavers to achieve positive outcomes and draft a new model of service provision within our residential establishments.

5. How We Do What We Do

(a) Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

We know that we cannot deliver the high quality of services to people needing our support without the right number of well trained professionals in our workforce with the mix of skills and experience. We have continued to ensure that all core learning and development, including induction and qualification training reflects the new legal framework, that we secure the development of, and enhance, the skills of the workforce especially in their partnership working across organisational boundaries, and that we understand the needs and wider context in which our workforce operate.

Across the Council we continue to face on-going challenges such as increasing pressure on services, changing demographics such as the growth in older cohorts, increasing public expectations, recruitment and retention issues in some areas and the requirements of greater collaborative working to achieve goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. To meet both the current and inevitable future changes we need the right workforce with the skills and ambition to meet the challenges that lie ahead. We want our staff and managers to ensure that work they do is always providing excellent service, improvements and value for money for our residents. We want a workforce that will embrace change for the better and uses their skills, and learn new ones, to work in different ways to help the Council achieve priorities.

We also want to strengthen the skills of our leaders and managers to lead the way through change to achieve the best for residents. The relationship between line managers and their teams is key to organisational effectiveness and success.

To ensure we have the workforce we need to achieve the best for our residents, over the next five years the Council will focus on the following five Council Workforce Plan delivery aims which apply across the delivery of our services:

- Developing a flexible and agile workforce that shares organisational knowledge
- Recruiting and retaining the best talent to create a diverse workforce
- Leadership and management development
- Enabling a high performing engaged and committed workforce
- Supporting health and well-being to maximise attendance

In reviewing our training needs in social services, one of our key objectives has been to maintain high levels of staff training and awareness of our safeguarding responsibilities across the range of children and adults who could be at risk of harm or abuse.

In doing so we ensured that colleagues could grasp the new Adult and Children Practice Reviews statutory guidance through a two-day training course, attended by 14 professionals from Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board agencies. We are developing a register of trained and skilled reviewers, and an E-Learning package which is in development will be rolled out across Wales, and we will use this in future staff development.

We will continue to further the scope and reach of the learning and development provision building on the initial approach of single service provision across the region and extend

this to working in partnership with other partner Regions to build on the strengths of collaborative and shared delivery.

Our objectives for the forthcoming year are that we will:

- Continue to support social care staff engaged in duties delivered under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to have the knowledge, skills and competencies to operate in the legal and cultural expectations of the Act
- Support the implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act by supporting the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and supporting knowledge of responsible individuals.
- Support efficient approaches by drawing upon and working with the Social Care Wales national plans/ programmes: including Step Up to Management; Social Services Practitioners; Middle Manager Development Programme; Team manager development programme; and learning and development programme for the Acts
- Continue the current support for both Social Work qualifying training and post qualifying training in Wales; support frontline social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and support introduction of the revised induction framework from September 2017; and support the infrastructure for learning and development across Wales, including local and regional partnership and joint working.
- Ensure the learning and development commitments made in response to the Older People's Commissioner 'Requirements for Action' are followed up (in relation to the report, "*A Place to Call Home*")

(b) Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

Even within this period of significantly reducing resources and hence financial pressure on all services, the Council remains committed to continue to deliver its key services, stronger communities and social justice. The Council's Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020 sets out that our key purpose is to provide a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all. Whilst demand for social services grows, in part due to the local challenges we face but also in response to the changing age profile of the area, the Council has worked hard to protect budgets for those in greatest need. Our key strategic priorities for the past 12 months have been around the themes of:

- Economy – building a strong economy;
- People – promoting independence and positive lives for everyone; and
- Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.

At the same time, residents are facing greater financial pressures from increasing energy bills, housing costs, continued wage restraint and benefit reforms. People expect better services and more prompt responses from the Council.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC alone has had to save over £100m from its revenue budget since 2011 as a result of reductions to public sector funding. We have also made decisions to support specific groups of people where resources are required, where the Cabinet decided in December 2017 to award 100% Discretionary Council Tax Relief to care leavers aged 18-25 from the 1st April 2018.

(c) Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

In our 2016/17 annual report we stated that our partnership working across the wider region was strong, and that the development of cross organisational working in the Public Service Board and the Social Services & Wellbeing Partnership Board was demonstrating a high level of collaboration in planning our workforce needs and training requirements, integrating our service provision and responding to region wide challenges. This last year has again demonstrated that we continue to be effective in enhancing our joint working arrangements and in particular have reached agreement on a pooled fund in response to the requirements of the new social services legislation.

In their Annual Improvement Report, the Wales Audit Office concluded in March last year that we are:

- collaborating effectively with a range of partners to achieve efficiencies and improve services to our citizens
- collaborating well with our neighbouring councils;
- a valued member of the Cwm Taf Public Service Board;
- seeking to modernise health and social care for the benefit of our citizens working with Cwm Taf University Health Board;
- leading on the City Deal initiative to primarily improve the economic performance and the transportation infrastructure of the region.

The report went on to say that:

“There are effective and established relationships with the Health Board around modernising health and social care that include joint officer posts and pooled budgets in relation to hospital admissions and discharge planning. The Council is also seeking to support modernising primary care provision through its asset management programme. Both partners are mutually well respected and valued but pace is an issue if the Council is to realise its efficiency savings and modernise the service for the citizens of RCT.”

Our political and corporate leadership continues to be effective, demonstrated by elected Members, with a focus on challenging the performance of cabinet members, and officers, driving service improvement and change. Our Cabinet Members are approachable, supportive and fully engaged in the delivery of services to children, young people, their families and adults.

Regular reports as part of our governance and accountability are presented to scrutiny committees to ensure appropriate challenge in relation to our priorities. The Leader is also engaged via service change update meetings and formal processes e.g. Cabinet and Council. All policy changes are taken through Cabinet for approval.

We have recently implemented a new electronic case management system which is the Wales wide “WCCIS” which has been designed to deliver improved care and support for adults, children and their families by facilitating better management of care through improved communication between partner agencies, less onerous assessment processes and increased opportunities for sharing information across multiple agencies.

6. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

The balance I have attempted to strike in this annual report is conveying the sense of direction and achievement in providing the sorts of services that people need to help them, but in doing so ensure that we rely on the most up to date and accurate performance reports, data and responses to surveys. We can't capture everything in this report and it is not the only way that members of the public, key partners and service providers can find out about what and how we are delivering across the county borough. We always say, and it's important to repeat that if something is not mentioned in this report as a key priority it doesn't mean we're not doing it, as there is a lot of activity across social services that plays a part in helping us to provide for a big range of people who at some stage of their lives needs us to help them.

There are a range of big strategic documents that support our direction of travel and others that back up what we have said in this report. The following sources of information will provide additional information that you might wish to look at:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020
- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Workforce Plan 2017 - 2022
- The Cwm Taf Population Needs Assessment
- Cwm Taf Social Services and Wellbeing Partnership Board Regional Plan
- The Cwm Taf Wellbeing Assessment
- Our Council's departmental reports
- Wales Audit Office Annual Improvement Report – March 2017