



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

ANNUAL DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT 2025-2026

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF

CHAPTER 1

DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT 2025-2026

Each year, the Council's Director of Social Services is required under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 to publish an annual report on how Rhondda Cynon Taf Council has delivered Social Services demonstrating how our work has promoted and improved the wellbeing of those that we support.

This report reflects a year of high demand and complexity along with strong delivery, and sustained reform across Social Services. During 2025/26, our services continued to protect the most vulnerable people in Rhondda Cynon Taf, improve outcomes for children, adults and carers, and progress transformation in how support is designed and delivered. We did this in a context of considerable financial pressure, increasing complexity of need, workforce challenges and a changing national policy environment. Despite these pressures, performance in many key areas remained strong, our preventative approach continued to make a difference, and we continued to make progress in reshaping services to be more person-centred, outcome focused and sustainable in order to meet need and our statutory obligations.

In Adult Services, we continued to take forward our multimillion pound care accommodation investment programme with a range of new extra care and dementia residential accommodation progressing across Rhondda Cynon Taf. Direct payments continued to rise, and the local care market expanded through Micro Care and community-based alternatives. Investment in prevention remains a clear strength. Reablement, assistive technology and community equipment all helped people retain or regain independence, reduce escalation of need and avoid unnecessary long-term care.

Good progress continued through support at home and hospital discharge pathways, reducing delays and helping people return home safely and quickly. Changes to home care commissioning improved service capacity and reduced delays in accessing care and support. However, we still need to work with our commissioned providers to address pockets of dissatisfaction about communication, frequent changes in care

workers, and concerns about reliability and staff preparedness.

In Children's Services, we continued to work closely with families and partners and saw a steady fall in the number of children looked after, continuing a positive longer term trend and improving our national position. This reflects our Children Looked After Prevention Strategy and Model of Practice, which focuses on evidence-based support to prevent escalation of need. Reunification work remained strong, and preventative services such as Resilient Families and Magu continued to deliver positive outcomes for some of our most vulnerable parents, children and families. More children were supported safely within their families or wider family networks. Only children for whom there is no safe alternative become looked after.

The Corporate Parenting Pledge was endorsed in 2024, and work continued to deliver its promises to young people. Employment and training opportunities for care experienced young people also continued through our Step in the Right Direction and Care2Work programmes, with positive outcomes in qualifications and work placements.

Providing enough foster families, children's homes and supported accommodation remained a priority in 2025/26, alongside our focus on keeping young people close to home. Currently, 73% of looked after children live in Rhondda Cynon Taf, reflecting new children's home developments and more local placements, although some reliance on unregistered settings remained due to limited supply. Despite continued efforts, foster carer numbers fell during the year, in line with a wider trend across Wales. We also continued to develop our Council-run children's homes.

While workforce remains a key challenge, we continued to improve staff skills, support and experience through ambitious workforce strategies across Adult and Children's Services. In 2025/26, we made further progress in recruitment and retention, particularly in children's social work, while continuing to embed our Social Work Academy and expand investment in our established "Growing Our Own" scheme to support more social care practitioners to qualify as social workers. We also continued to invest in workforce development, practitioner voice, wellbeing, Welsh language capacity, anti-racist practice and new ways of working, including digital approaches to reduce the administrative burden and improve productivity.

Financial pressures remain significant. Social Services ended the year with an overspend driven by demand, complexity and provider cost pressures, against a backdrop of wider local government financial constraint. These pressures will continue into 2026/27 and beyond, particularly in relation to commissioned

care, children's placement sufficiency, implementation of national policy on eliminating profit in children's care, and wider inflationary pressures across the social care system.

Looking ahead, our priorities for 2026/27 are clear and include: strengthening early intervention and prevention, delivering Connecting Care and other digital innovation, improving access to information and advice, increasing choice and independence, delivering sustainable workforce solutions, managing financial pressure, and developing and increasing local sufficiency.

Overall, this year's annual report again shows a Service that is ambitious, reflective and determined: clear about the pressures we face, honest about the areas we must improve, and confident in the direction of travel for social services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

I am proud of our achievements, the good news stories and case studies, that remind us of the positive impact we make to the lives to residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. None of this could have been achieved without the dedication, resilience and immense efforts of our social services workforce and I want to thank everyone who has ensured that our residents have received the care and support they need. I hope that this report shows the results of their hard and tireless work over the past year.

Neil Elliott

Director of Social Services

A large, rounded square graphic in a medium pink color. Inside the square, the word 'CHAPTER' is written vertically in a light pink, sans-serif font. To its right, a large, white, sans-serif number '2' is displayed. The graphic is positioned in the lower half of the page, overlapping a horizontal band of lighter pink and a solid dark pink background.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT 2025-2026

National Performance Measures

Adults Services

AD/001: The total number of contacts received for adults by statutory social services in 2025/26 were **14,869** – a 18.7% increase from 12,522 contacts in 2024/25.

AD/002: Of the total number of contacts received, **4,821** contacts (32% of total contacts) were provided advice or assistance in 2025/26, compared to 6,385 (51% of total contacts) in 2024/25. A 25.6% reduction in the total number of contacts received over the past year that were provided advice or assistance.

AD/004: **4,484** new adult assessments were completed in 2025/26 – a 8.7% reduction from 4,987 in 2024/25.

AD/005: Of the new adult assessments completed:

- a. **1,471** assessed with eligible needs (33%) were only able to be met with care and support plan – a 0.4% increase from 1,465 in 2024/25 (27.6% met with care and support plan).
- b. **2,567** assessed with eligible needs (57%) were able to be met by any other means – a 12% reduction from 2,931 in 2024/25 (57.9% met by any other means).
- c. **446** (10%) had no eligible needs to be met – a 13.4% reduction from 515 in 2024/25 (14.4% no eligible need).

AD/012: **4,195** adults had a care and support plan on 31st March 2026 – a 0.4% reduction from 4,210 in 2024/25.

Children's Services

CH/001: The total number of contacts received for children by statutory social services in 2025/26 were **27,406** – a 3.4% decrease from 28,372 contacts in 2024/25.

CH/002: Of the total number of contacts received, **10,337** contacts (38% of total contacts) were provided advice or assistance in 2025/26, compared to 11,662 (41.1% of total contacts) in 2024/25. A 11% reduction in the total number of contacts received over the past year that were provided advice or assistance.

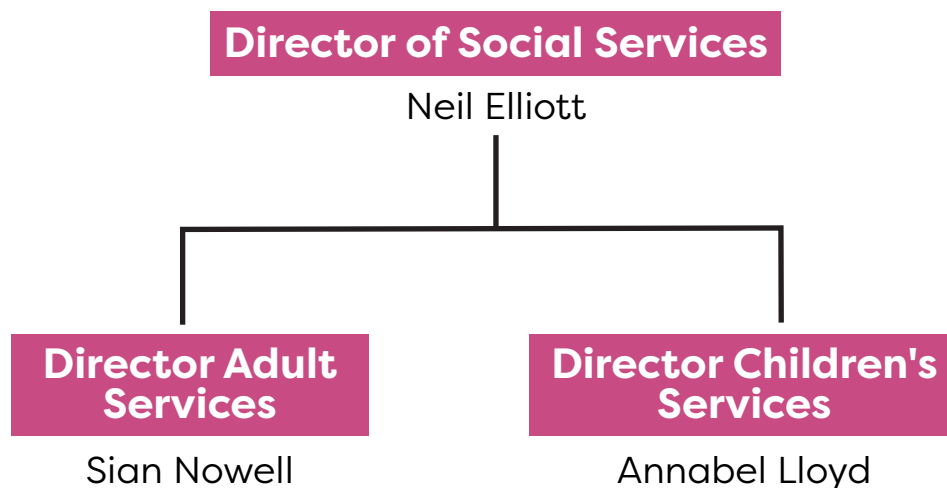
CH/006: **5,313** new children's assessments were completed in 2025/26 – a 5.2% reduction from 5,605 in 2024/25.

CH/007: Of the new children's assessments completed:

- a. **555** assessed with eligible needs (10.4%) were only able to be met with care and support plan – a 27.5% reduction from 766 in 2024/25 (13.7% met with care and support plan).
- b. **3,689** assessed with eligible needs (69.4%) were able to be met by any other means – a 10.6% increase from 3,336 in 2024/25 (59.5% met by any other means).
- c. **1,069** (20%) had no eligible needs to be met – a 28.9% decrease from 1,503 in 2024/25 (26.8% no eligible need).

CH/015: **1,846** children had a care and support plan on 31st March 2026 – a 9.2% decrease from 2,034 in 2024/25.

The Statutory Director of Social Services forms part of the Corporate Senior Leadership Team alongside the Council's Chief Executive and other Corporate Directors. The Social Services Directorate's management structure is shown below.



The Council's political and corporate leadership remains strong, with Social Services a clear priority supported by Cabinet, the Cabinet Members for Social Care and the Senior Leadership Team.

Adult and Children's Services have clear strategies and delivery plans, informed by established annual self-service evaluation, that contribute to the People and Communities wellbeing objective in the Council's Corporate Plan, "Working with our Communities: 2024-2030".

Transformation Boards for Adult and Children's Services continued to oversee service change, to reduce financial pressure and support more sustainable services. Social Services is held to account through monthly performance and quality assurance reviews, regular discussions with Cabinet Members and senior staff, reporting to Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and the Corporate Parenting Board, and staff engagement.

There were 1,591 staff employed in Social Services, including agency staff, on 31st March 2026:

	Children's Services	Adult Services
Total number of staff	669	922
Vacancy rate	18.5%	20.9%
Staff turnover	45 Leavers (6.7%)	105 Leavers (11.4%)

To meet our statutory requirements and maintain safe services, we used agency staff and overtime to cover vacancies and workloads while permanent recruitment continues.

Recruitment and retention remain a corporate priority. In 2025/26, workforce activity continued under our Adult and Children's Services strategies. A review and reset of the Children's Service Workforce Strategy was undertaken this year and a revised Children's Services Workforce Strategy Plan 2025–2030 developed. Feedback and data over the last year indicated that this work is having a positive impact.

In Children's Services, the social worker vacancy rate continued to reduce from 44% in September 2023 to 29.3% in April 2025 and 25.4% in March 2026. Turnover remained stable, with 18 starters and 16

leavers in 2025/26. The success of our Social Work Academy helped reduce social work vacancies during the year in Children's Services, with posts now attracting strong internal and external applicants.

We continued to invest in our "Growing Our Own" scheme, which sponsors Adult and Children's Services staff to complete the Open University Social Work Degree and guarantee a social work role on registration. Two sponsored staff qualified in 2025 and now work in the social work service.

Through Children's Services Communication Cycle, we continued to capture practitioner voice. The Annual Practitioner Voice Report 2025 highlighted what are we doing well and areas to improve, helping shape our workforce planning.

What are we doing well?

- **Supportive teams and management:** The most frequent theme in the feedback was the supportive nature of the teams in Children's Services. Practitioners feel they collaborate well with their teams and can easily seek support and guidance when needed.
- **Work with children and families:** This was a frequent theme throughout all of the communication mechanisms. Practitioners enjoy working with children, young people and families across RCT to achieve positive outcomes.
- **Communication:** Practitioners continue to feel informed and involved with service developments, through a range of communication mechanisms. Staff said that they feel listened to and also mentioned that communication with partners and families is positive.
- **Service Development:** Feedback indicated that recent service changes, including the roll out of the model of Practice, have been well received. Staff value the clear vision and strong commitment to driving these changes.
- **Training and Development:** Many staff commented positively on the training and development opportunities they received in RCT. Staff mentioned that there are plenty of opportunities to develop their skills and to progress throughout the service.
- **Hybrid and Flexible Working:** Feedback from staff indicated that they enjoy the balance of Hybrid working. Many staff undertaking the Enhanced Flexible working Pilot also commented that this new arrangement has been positive.

Improving the employee experience

- **Workload Demand and Resources**

This theme emerged most frequently in the feedback. Practitioners highlighted that increasing workload demands, caseload complexity and staff shortages are limiting their ability to perform their roles effectively. Staff expressed that teams need additional resources to address these challenges, prevent burnout and create space for reflection.

- **Communication**

Although many practitioners feel that communication across the service is positive and that they are being kept informed, others felt that some areas still require development. These areas were:

- Communication across teams especially with information sharing.
- Timely communication about service changes.

- **Organisational Change**

A key theme from the feedback was staff feeling anxious about Children's Services going through a lot of changes all at once with various restructures, the MCP and Pilot's.

- **Flexible Working**

Although practitioners recognised that we are piloting alternative arrangements in certain teams, a key theme was that they would like us to introduce these more widely across the service. Staff also mentioned that they would like us to consider alternative work patterns and more part-time positions.

- **Other**

- Finding suitable office space across RCT with a booking system.
- Access and knowledge of resources to support children and their families.
- Further training and development opportunities for experienced staff.

The Communication Cycle supports practitioner voice, communication and wellbeing. We recognise the pressures on staff, including secondary trauma, and will continue to communicate with our staff to prioritise their wellbeing and resilience.

The Council continued to face significant financial pressures in Social Services, reflecting challenges being experienced by all local authorities.

2025/26 was again another financially challenging year for Social Services, with continued demand, greater complexity, the cost-of-living crisis and inflation increasing pressure on our commissioned care providers and service costs.

The Social Services net budget was £202.7 million. Higher direct care and placement costs across Adult and Children's Services led to a £2.173 million overspend, despite the use of one off funding (earmarked reserves) to manage the risk of additional in year costs. In 2025/26, national grants helped manage pressures and support service development, while capital funding supported accommodation modernisation in both Services. Strong financial management supported the medium-term financial plan and the management of risks and opportunities.

For Children's Services, implementing the Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025, including the commitment to

eliminate profit in children's residential and foster care by 2030, will be a significant challenge. Welsh Government eliminate profit grant is significantly below the Council's likely costs, creating financial risk and requiring revised plans that will impact on our progress towards eliminating profit.

In Adult Services, a key risk is maintaining sustainable fee increases for commissioned care, compounded by insufficient funded nursing care and Continuing Health Care (CHC) funding by Health, and continues to put pressure on the social care system and the financial viability of the care home market. This cannot be sustained.

Social Services will again deliver savings in 2026/27, with further efficiencies needing to be identified for 2027/28 and beyond. This will remain challenging alongside high demand and increasing complexity.

Preventative spend in Rhondda Cynon Taf: Preventing parent-baby separation

Rhondda Cynon Taf and the RCT Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) are working together to better understand how money is spent on prevention and what difference it makes.

The HDRC is an initiative supported by the National Institute for Health Research to help the Council to become more 'research-active'. It aims to create a culture where decisions about health and well-being are evidence-based, and communities have a say on how research can and should be used to reduce health inequalities.

The first report from the HDRC 'Preventative Spend' project focuses on preventing parent-baby separation - exploring how preventative spending can make a difference to families, and identify what evidence is needed to show long-term value.

Approximately £1.17M is spent annually on preventing parent-baby separation, with around 55% of this directed towards tertiary prevention: intervening to stop a problem getting worse or reoccurring. Our research centred on the Magu Service - an integrated pathway for pregnant women and their families, designed to reduce the number of children entering care. Early findings shows that Magu helps prevent parent - baby separation, improves family wellbeing and has the potential to generate significant long term cost savings - though better data systems are needed to fully evidence its impact.

You can read the full report [here](#). We also have an '[easy read](#)' version available.



PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT 2025-2026

This section provides a self-assessment of our performance for Adult and Children's Services against eight quality standards for each of the following areas: People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration, and Wellbeing.

Welsh Government Quality Standards:

"All people are equal partners who have choice, voice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them"

"Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision"

People related priorities we have achieved in Adult and Children's Services during the year that we planned to do in 2025/26, are shown in the table below.

Priorities we have achieved during the year

Develop a range of daytime opportunities and day services for people with eligible needs. Our key aim is to assist people into mainstream community opportunities. However, this may not be appropriate or accessible to people with more complex needs. Our responsibility will be to provide or commission a range of opportunities within our available resources and ensure we facilitate the connection for people to a service that can help them achieve the best outcome.

Work in partnership with Children's Services to ensure the transition for young people and their parents/carers into Adult Services is a positive experience that appropriately supports a progression to independence and autonomy.

My Stay My Way Learning Disability Respite Services

The Council's Learning Disability Transformation Programme has made positive progress over recent years. The co-produced "My Day My Way" day service and "My Home My Way" supported living model are now in place, and this approach now extends to respite care through "My Stay My Way". The current respite offer remains largely bed-based and traditional, limiting choice, control and more flexible options for people with a learning disability.

In June 2025, Cabinet considered the co-produced respite model and approved an eight-week consultation with wider stakeholders. The consultation showed broad support, alongside understandable concerns about the impact on individuals. Cabinet endorsed the model in October 2025, and implementation is now being co-produced with full regard to people's needs, risks and aspirations.

We expanded Shared Lives to increase long-term respite and sessional support in Learning Disability Services. The Service currently provides 20 long-term placements, 16 respite placements and 16 sessional services.

Shared Lives in Rhondda Cynon Taf is an award-winning regional scheme operating across Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen, offering support in carers' homes and local communities.

Shared Lives offers a personalised, family-based alternative to traditional support and accommodation, helping people maintain independence, relationships and community connections. In Shared Lives, an adult with care and support needs is matched with a compatible carer who shares their home, family and community life to build independence, friendships and local connections. Carers are carefully recruited, assessed, trained and supported. The flexibility of Shared Lives allows support to be tailored to a wide range of people and circumstances, as follows:

- Long term: ongoing accommodation and support in a carer's home.
- Respite: short breaks, often with the same carer.
- Short term: time-limited support, including admission avoidance or discharge support.
- Sessional support: hourly support in the carer's home or community.
- Emergency: accommodation and support at short notice.

Case Study: Shared Lives emergency placement

Individual A, a 19-year-old with autism and significant learning disabilities, was supported by the Transition Social Worker. In December this year, his mother could no longer meet his needs, creating an urgent need for emergency respite a week before Christmas. As in-house respite services were unable to respond at short notice, a referral was made to Shared Lives, which responded quickly and kept the placement available as a contingency.

Shared Lives secured a suitable emergency placement for two weeks. This gave his mother the break she needed and enabled her to resume caring for him at home. Shared Lives Carers maintained supportive communication with his mother throughout, which was important to his wellbeing.

Dementia Pop Up Hub Pilot

The dementia pop up hubs pilot was funded by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Integration Fund and delivered with the Age Friendly and Community Coordinators, providing early, preventative, community-based support alongside statutory health and social care services.

The pilot created dementia hubs in three central libraries across Rhondda Cynon Taf to improve support for people with dementia and their families and carers.

Fortnightly three-hour dementia-friendly drop-in sessions positioned libraries as visible, trusted community hubs for dementia support. The hubs offered accessible information, advice, wellbeing activities, social connection and signposting, alongside a lending scheme for dementia-friendly equipment and sensory and memory aids.

Frailty Nurses and the Memory Team in the Health Board provided clinical guidance, post-diagnostic information and advice on managing health, safety and wellbeing at home. The Council's Community Coordinators, Interlink's Social Prescribers, Alzheimer's Society, Age Connects Morgannwg, Care & Repair, Age Cymru and Sight Life helped people access wider community, housing, sensory impairment and benefits support.

The pilot aimed to improve quality of life, independence, safety and wellbeing, while reducing isolation and supporting carers through practical advice and peer support. Key objectives, included:

- Providing practical support to help people with dementia live well at home.
- Reducing isolation and improve wellbeing for people with dementia and their carers.
- Improving access to information, advice and local dementia services through a one-stop approach.
- Testing a low-cost, scalable library-based model for wider roll-out across Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Generating evidence of impact, demand and partnership working to inform future investment.

Over the two-month pilot, 67 families were supported. Evaluation feedback showed 100% of attendees felt the service was needed, and 80 to 100% rated their experience as excellent or very positive. Feedback also showed increased confidence, better understanding of support pathways and reduced confusion.

The following feedback was received via email from a beneficiary who attended a dementia pop up hub session at Pontypridd Library.

“Thanks for your follow up call today - I just wanted to let you know how much we (as a family) appreciate the support we have received once we established a connection through the Dementia hub. Our story is that my Dad had a sudden Mental Health decline in the middle of January which left us feeling isolated and confused as a family. The dementia hub was a lifeline and has put us in touch with the right people who have continued to support us on this difficult journey. I discovered the hub through a third party and I would encourage anyone to take advantage of this service. I believe the link going forward for the hub and the people needing it, has to be via the GP, as when we hit crisis, they were the only point of contact I could think of. I genuinely hope this pilot can continue and goes from strength to strength as the idea of a platform where services can be assessed in one place is necessary - as those of us outside the services have no idea what is actually available - and have no idea what we need until we are informed. Please pass on our thanks to the wider team”

Increasing choice and control for individuals

There were 4,195 adults with a care and support plan on 31 March 2026. Of these, 613 (15%) had needs met through a Direct Payment, up from 553 (13%) in the previous year, continuing a three-year upward trend. Where a need was identified, 91% of adults were provided with an independent professional advocate.

We continued to develop **Micro Care** to expand the local social care market, increase choice and control, and support the ageing population in more innovative and sustainable ways. With continued support from Community Catalysts and Tribe, the number of

micro carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf increased to 65 by March 2026. They now support 139 people, provide 1,285 hours of care each week and have created 48 local jobs.

Direct Payment hours delivered through micro carers also rose from 614 a week in April 2025 to 1,127 in December 2025, showing they offer a flexible alternative for meeting care and support needs while benefiting the wider community and for people seeking to pay for care or support privately.

Case Study: Micro Care

Mrs B, 78, lives with her husband in the Rhondda and is his main carer. Mr B has dementia and needs significant support, prompting and encouragement throughout the day. As it is unsafe to leave him alone, Mrs B provides care and supervision around the clock.

Although Mr B's needs are high, Mrs B wanted to continue caring for him herself. After he was allocated to a care manager to explore day centre provision, Mrs B was offered and accepted a carers assessment.

The assessment confirmed Mrs B wanted to continue caring, but also identified the need for respite. The care manager arranged a regular sitting service through a micro-care provider, so someone could stay with Mr B and keep him safe while Mrs B had a break.

The care manager helped Mrs B set up Direct Payments, complete the paperwork and connect with suitable micro-carers identified by the Brokerage Team. This support helped her continue caring for Mr B at home and reduced the need for a formal care package or residential care.

Annual Service User Survey

As in previous years, we surveyed a sample of adults aged 18 and over who had a care and support plan on the sample date about the care and support they receive. Response rates continue to fall, with 300 responses this year compared with 496 in 2024/25 and 724 in 2023/24, reflecting a wider local and national trend. We will continue to work to improve participation. Overall, responses were positive, although satisfaction fell across many measures. Most respondents said they felt safe where they lived and lived in a home that supports their wellbeing.

SERVICE QUALITY MEASURE: Of the 300 adults who responded to the survey:

91% live in a home that supports their wellbeing (compared to 93% in 2024/25 and 95% in 2023/24).

84% know who to speak to about their care and support (compared to 80% in 2024/25 and 84% in 2023/24).

60% feel a part of their community (compared to 65% in 2024/25 and 71% in 2023/24).

95% are happy with their family, friends, and neighbours (compared to 94% in 2024/25 and 97% in 2023/24).

93% are happy with the care and support they have had (compared to 98% in 2024/25 and 95% in 2023/24).

77% said they can do the things important to them (compared to 80% in 2024/25 and 78% in 2023/24).

89% had the right information or advice when they needed it (compared to 90% in 2024/25 and 93% in 2023/24).

90% had been actively involved in decisions about how their care and support was provided (compared to 90% in 2024/25 and 87% in 2023/24).

97% have been able to use their everyday language (compared to 96% in 2024/25 and 94% in 2023/24).

97% were treated with dignity and respect (compared to 98% in 2024/25 and 99% in 2023/24).

62% agreed it was their choice to live in a residential care home (compared to 66% in 2024/25 and 64% in 2023/24).
Note: question only answered by residents in care homes

74% had the advice, help and support that they needed to prepare them for adulthood (compared to 79% in 2024/25 and 74% in 2023/24).
Note: question only answered by 18 to 24 year olds.

89% feel safe (compared to 92% in 2024/25 and 95% in 2023/24).

We carried out an annual survey of unpaid carers, completed by 19 people compared with 32 in 2024/25. Overall responses were positive, with 100% saying they had always or sometimes been involved in decisions about the care and support provided to the person they care for.

SERVICE QUALITY MEASURE:

Of the 19 unpaid carers who responded to the survey:

100% said they can do the things important to them (compared to 87% in 2024/25 and 80% in 2023/24).

76% feel a part of their community (compared to 72% in 2024/25 and 77% in 2023/24).

100% are happy with their family, friends, and neighbours (compared to 88% in 2024/25 and 93% in 2023/24).

100% feel safe (compared to 97% in 2024/25 and 100% in 2023/24).

89% know who to speak to about support (compared to 86% in 2024/25 and 95% in 2023/24).

100% have been able to use their everyday language (compared to 97% in 2024/25 and 100% in 2023/24).

100% had been actively involved in decisions about how the care and support was provided for the person that they care for (compared to 100% in 2024/25 and 87% in 2023/24).

95% had the right information or advice when they needed it (compared to 94% in 2024/25 and 98% in 2023/24).

100% was treated with dignity and respect (compared to 100% in 2024/25 and 98% in 2023/24).

94% feel supported to continue in my caring role (compared to 87% in 2024/25 and 95% in 2023/24).

100% are happy with the support they have (compared to 93% in 2024/25 and 100% in 2023/24).



Children's Services

Young Carers

In November 2025, Children's Services knew of 279 young carers, 21 of whom had a Young Carer ID Card. During the year, we engaged with young carers and Council staff to understand what is working well and what needs to improve. In summary:

- Support for young carers and families is valued but often delivered in isolation rather than through a coordinated Council-wide approach.
- We cannot be confident we are reaching those in greatest need, including young carers who cannot access group support and may need tailored one-to-one help.
- We cannot be certain resources are targeted where they will have the greatest impact.
- Current provision and pathways need to be more resilient.
- We need to make better use of community and universal services to connect young carers with local support.
- We also need to consider the implications of Adult Services' new support model for unpaid carers, including parent carers.

Work will begin in 2026/27 to improve support and opportunities for young carers.

Annual Service User Survey

As in previous years, we surveyed a sample of children and young people who had a care and support plan on the sample date about the care and support they receive. The survey also asked about spare time, activities they would like to do but cannot, and whether they had anything else important to say. Sixteen per cent said yes, and some used the free text to add further detail. Although lower than last year, this feedback still helps us understand service user experience and identify what needs to change.

A total of 89 children completed the survey, compared with 117 in 2024/25 and 169 in 2023/24. Overall responses were positive, with most measures improving on previous years. All respondents said they always or sometimes felt safe where they lived, and 99% said they lived in a home where they were happy and felt well cared for.

SERVICE QUALITY MEASURE:

Of the 89 children and young people who responded to the survey:

99% live in a home where they are happy
(compared to 89% in 2024/25 and 92% in 2023/24).

91% are able to speak to their social workers about things that are important to them
(compared to 81% in 2024/25 and 83% in 2023/24).

99% feel well cared for
(compared to 96% in 2024/25 and 95% in 2023/24).

100% feel safe where they live (compared to 95% in 2024/25 and 98% in 2023/24).

94% feel they belong in the area where they live
(compared to 81% in 2024/25 and 86% in 2023/24).

96% have been able to use their everyday language
(compared to 94% in 2024/25 and 94% in 2023/24).

69% know why they have a social worker
(compared to 77% in 2024/25 and 86% in 2023/24).

79% had advice, help and support that will prepare them for adulthood
(compared to 72% in 2024/25 and 82% in 2023/24). Note: question only answered by 16/17 year-olds only.

86% had their views about their care and support listened to (compared to 81% in 2024/25 and 82% in 2023/24 and 88% in 2022/23).

Transition

In November 2025, a transition workshop was held for Adult and Children's Services staff supporting young people into adulthood to inform a draft Transition Strategy for consultation, co-production and development of a joint project plan for implementation in 2026/27.

Mwy Na Geiriau (More than just words)

We continued to respond effectively to the Welsh Language Standards and Welsh Government's "Mwy Na Geiriau (More than just words)" framework, working closely with the Council's Welsh Language Service. We also monitored external providers for compliance, and no issues were identified.

We make an active offer of Welsh where it is a person's preference, and this is recorded on our system. All publications are bilingual, staff understand the Standards, and we continue to support Welsh language learning through training, briefings and reminders.

Building on work in 2024/25, we continued to work with Y Ganolfan Dysgu Cymraeg Genedlaethol to secure Social Care Wales funding for Cwrs Codi Hyder. The programme helps level 3+ staff build confidence and vocabulary to work in Welsh in health and social care, through weekly one-to-one tuition, optional small group sessions and coffee mornings. A second cohort was identified following the successful completion of the programme by eight staff in 2024/25.

We also worked with the Council's Welsh Language Service to deliver Prosiect Siarad. Launched in January 2026, it

offers staff eight weekly facilitated conversational Welsh sessions, using an informal "cuppa and a chat" format to build confidence in using Cymraeg.

We produced two videos with the Council's Welsh Language Service to celebrate progress in Welsh language development in Adult Services and encourage staff to build their skills and strengthen our Welsh-speaking workplace community.

Adult Services completed 4,484 new assessments in 2025/26, with evidence of an active offer of Welsh in all cases (100%). The offer was accepted in 16 cases, down from 42 in 2024/25, reflecting individual preference. In Children's Services, there was evidence of an active offer in 1,780 cases, down from 1,940 in 2024/25, while acceptances rose from 7 to 14.

In March 2026, Children's Services managers took part in a Mwy Na Geiriau workshop ahead of establishing a task and finish group to revise and update their plan.

Anti Racist Wales Action Plan

We endorsed the ambitions of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan: Eliminating racism in the workplace, led by ADSS Cymru and commissioned by Welsh Government, to tackle racism in the social care workforce. An Anti-Racist Action Plan has been developed and is being implemented.

During 2025/26, Adult Services:

- Embedded diversity and inclusion in workforce governance
- Promoted race equality awareness and manager guidance
- Explored a staff forum for global majority staff
- Applied anti-racist standards to policy review
- Analysed ethnic minority workforce representation
- Added survey questions on minority ethnic staff progression

The Cwm Taf Youth Justice Service established an anti-racist project in response to ongoing racial inequalities identified nationally and locally, including evidence that improvements in youth justice services had not benefitted children from minority ethnic groups. Local analysis found that these children can experience harsher outcomes and discrimination. The project developed training and guidance to build staff confidence, improve understanding of disproportionality and support fair, anti-racist practice. This training will be rolled out across Children's Services in Spring 2026.

Children's Services also held four anti-racist Wales Inform and Involve sessions for staff, including reflective group work on young people's experiences.

Welsh Government Quality Standards:

“The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented whilst ensuring that the best outcomes for people are achieved”

“Resilience within communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively supporting people who need care and/or support including carers to learn develop and participate in society”

Prevention related priorities we have achieved in Adult and Children’s Services during the year that we planned to do in 2025/26, are shown in the table below.

Priorities we have achieved during the year

Make sure people with learning disabilities have access to accommodation with support that enables them to live as full and independent a life as possible in the community.

Increase and improve flexible, responsive accommodation options for older people.

Where people recover their health and their ability to manage their own living arrangements is restored, we will support them to move on to more appropriate accommodation in a timely way.

Work with individuals to find new ways of doing things for themselves so that they maximise choice and control over their lives.

We will implement the CLA Prevention Strategy, targeting evidence based services towards family support to ensure that only those children for whom there is no safe alternative become looked after.

Care Accommodation

We continued to deliver the Council's multi-million care accommodation strategy for older and vulnerable people, ensuring the right mix of services to meet rising demand and changing needs, and where possible helping more people live independently at home or in extra care housing with targeted support.

Current schemes in development include:



DAN Y MYNYDD

New 60 apartment extra care in Porth. Due to open in late Summer 2026.

MOUNTAIN ASH

New care accommodation that will include 25 extra care apartments, 15 residential dementia care beds and 8 bungalows on one site. Due to open in Autumn 2027.



FERNDALE

New 32-bed residential dementia care home that will replace the current Ferndale House Care Home when complete.
Due to open in Spring 2028.



Case Study: Extra care independent living

Janice and Dilwyn Watkins have thrived since moving into Cwrt Yr Orsaf extra care in Pontypridd. Their privately rented home had become unsuitable for their increasing care and support needs following falls.

As a result of moving to Cwrt Yr Orsaf:

- Safety risks have reduced through a purpose-built, accessible environment.
- Independence has improved, supporting mobility and daily living.
- Wellbeing have increased, including dignity and emotional stability.
- They have remained together, in line with their wishes.
- Their social connections were restored, supporting community involvement.

Dilwyn and Jan now are now also able to return to their local social club and activities such as bingo, while returning to a safe, supported home environment. This represents “the best of both worlds”, balancing safety, support, and independence. This also supports them to maintain relationships that have been built over decades in their old hometown which is only a few miles up the road from the new accommodation at Cwrt Yr Orsaf.

They have recently celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in their new home! You can find out more about Janice and Dilwyn’s time at Cwrt yr Orsaf in this [video](#).

Alongside our long-term investment in care accommodation for older people, we continued to invest in modern accommodation for people with a learning disability, including:

BRONLLWYN

New specialist care home in Gelli that will provide 14 permanent and respite accommodation for people with complex needs and behaviour.
Due to open in early 2027.



GARTH OLWG

New 22 bed supported living scheme and day centre in Church Village.
Procurement of a partner Registered Social Landlord underway.

Recovery Model (step down accommodation)

Adult Services supports people with mental health or substance misuse needs to move from intensive therapeutic placements into step-down accommodation, before progressing to more independent living in the community.

Step-down accommodation is a recognised part of the recovery model. It supports recovery at the person's pace, bridges the move to greater independence, and makes effective use of Council resources.

In 2025/26, 14 people stepped down from specialist placements, and 18 were identified as needing this type of supported accommodation in the next 12 to 18 months. Demand for step-down accommodation is rising as needs become more complex. More people now require specialist residential placements, and most will need step-down provision at some stage.

Case Study: Stepping down to independent living

Sian, 38, has a diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder. In 2020, after a period in hospital and rehabilitation, she moved into specialist supported living through the Specialist Services Panel as a step towards greater independence. She remained there for almost five years.

With consistent support, Sian achieved her goal of moving into independent living. This is a significant milestone, and she is now the happiest she has been and working towards volunteering as part of her recovery.

Case Study: Emergency placement to independence

In June 2025, Cliff needed an emergency residential placement after damage to his property. He is now back home and living independently with support, following coordinated multi-agency work and reablement. Risks included loss of independence, emotional distress, fear of family members and previous financial exploitation. Despite having a stroke during placement, Cliff remained motivated to regain independence. With support from housing, health, finance and voluntary sector partners, he moved to sheltered housing and improved his daily living skills, reducing his care package and supporting planned discharge from services.

Social Work in the Housing Outreach Support Team

In 2025/26, funding was secured for a social worker in the Housing Outreach Support Team. This specialist multi-agency outreach service supports people who are street homeless, vulnerably housed, or living in emergency hostel, Housing First or supported accommodation. They often have complex needs and struggle to access mainstream services, so the Team works with them until they are ready to move into wider services.

The social worker works alongside health, housing, support and third sector colleagues to address care, treatment and support needs. They assess people with care and support needs and help them navigate health and social care pathways to identify future support.

Case Study: Social Worker in the Housing Outreach Support Team

Adam, 35, was referred to Housing Outreach Support due to housing instability, substance misuse and repeated custodial sentences. He had complex needs, including poor mental health, offending history, and difficulty maintaining relationships and accommodation. Before his most recent sentence, he was living in temporary accommodation and struggling with daily living, with substance misuse and mental health creating major barriers to stability and independence.

The Housing Outreach Support social worker began working with Adam in custody, making prison visits to build rapport, assess his needs and develop a strengths-based plan focused on his long-term goals. This informed coordinated support from Probation, Housing, Children's Services and the Community Drug and Alcohol Team. The social worker also helped Adam with budgeting, cooking and managing appointments to build confidence, independence and protective factors.

Since release, Adam has remained abstinent from alcohol and substances for five months and continues to engage with support services. His relationship with his children has improved significantly, and he now has a stable flat where they stay most weekends. This is the longest he has remained in the community without reoffending. A coordinated, trauma-informed and person-centred approach gave Adam the structure and support he needed to rebuild his life.

Reablement

We continued to invest in services that prevent escalating need and promote recovery and independence. In 2025/26, we completed 1,212 reablement packages, 99% of which reduced, maintained or mitigated the need for support, compared with 98% in 2024/25.

Case Study: Reablement Therapist & Sensory Rehabilitation

An older adult returned home after a stroke with pre-existing macular degeneration and hearing loss. Her vision then deteriorated significantly, causing peripheral field loss, disorientation, visual hallucinations and anxiety. This severely affected her mobility, confidence and daily living, placing her at high risk of long-term care.

Reablement Occupational Therapy and Sensory Rehabilitation worked together to address both physical recovery and functional vision impairment. Reablement Occupational Therapy supported safe transfers, personal care, indoor mobility and confidence, using graded support and equipment. Sensory Rehabilitation assessed functional vision, taught visual scanning and introduced environmental adaptations to improve safety and independence.

Close joint working ensured sensory strategies directly supported physical reablement goals, especially in mobility, kitchen safety and daily living.

Visual scanning was introduced in a structured way and applied across mobility, kitchen tasks, leisure and communication. As confidence grew, the person progressed from close supervision to independent mobility at home using a four-wheeled walker.

Outcomes from joint working included:

- Independent indoor mobility and personal care were regained.
- Strength, balance and confidence improved, reducing falls risk.
- Anxiety reduced significantly as independence increased.
- Daily activities, hobbies and communication were managed independently.
- Long-term care avoided and the person remained living independently at home.

This case shows the value of joint working between Reablement Occupational Therapy and Sensory Rehabilitation in improving safety, independence and wellbeing, and preventing long-term care.

In 2025/26, the Sensory Team completed 307 assessments, with 108 Certificates of Vision Impairment registered and supported 273 people through rehabilitation to achieve independence in an identified task.

In 2025/26, our in-house Support @ Home Rehabilitation Service, including therapy-led and non-therapy-led domiciliary care, supported 1,149 people with 30,852 hours of direct support to maximise independence. By the end of their short-term programme, 58% had become independent.

Case Study: Non-therapy-led Memory Service (Support@Home)

Mr H was admitted to hospital in January after being found slumped in his chair, incontinent, with reduced oral intake, acute confusion and left hip pain. He was treated for a suspected urinary tract infection and hip pain. Mr H has a complex medical history. His family reported memory difficulties for around 18 months, and a referral to the memory clinic made. Risks included unintentional neglect, reduced mobility, deconditioning, falls, delirium, emerging cognitive impairment, difficulty adapting to new walking aids and poor nutrition.

Following assessment, a care package of two daily calls, seven days a week, was arranged to support personal care and nutrition, with ongoing review to monitor progress and longer-term need. To support safety at home, small aids and adaptations were provided. The family installed a key safe for staff access, and Mr H already had a lifeline with 24/7 mobile responder support.

Mr H was safely supported at home after discharge, with his immediate care and nutritional needs met through a prompt, tailored care package. Aids, adaptations and access arrangements further reduced risks at home and gave reassurance to Mr H and his family, supporting a safe and positive discharge.

Adaptation and Community Equipment (ACE)

In 2025/26, the ACE Team completed 1,389 assessments and 585 moving and handling assessments, reducing risk and helping people stay safe and independent at home. Vision Products also delivered 8,251 pieces of equipment to Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and collected 2,769 items for recycling.

During the year, 738 home adaptations were completed to help people live safely and independently at home, including 382 Disabled Facilities Grants, 332 small works adaptations and 24 Enable-funded works.

Case Study: Promoting independence through the provision of small aids

Mrs D is an older adult with reduced mobility and standing tolerance due to chronic joint pain. Living alone, she was finding everyday tasks increasingly difficult, particularly meal preparation, carrying items around the home and accessing the toilet at night.

During an Occupational Therapy assessment, Mrs D said standing for long periods made meal preparation painful, carrying food and drinks caused fatigue and risked falls, and getting to the bathroom at night was difficult because of reduced balance. To support her independence, the Occupational Therapist recommended:

- **Perching stool:** for kitchen tasks, allowing Mrs D to prepare meals in a supported seated position, reducing pain and fatigue.
- **Accessible trolley:** to move food, drinks and other items in one trip, reducing strain and falls risk.
- **Bedside commode:** to provide safe nighttime toileting and avoid walking to the bathroom when balance was most affected.

Following these interventions, Mrs D reported greater independence. She can now prepare meals, move food and drinks safely, and manage nighttime toileting with confidence. These simple, low-cost aids have improved her safety, reduced reliance on others and enhanced her day-to-day quality of life.

Unpaid Carers

Adult Services is taking forward a coordinated programme to strengthen support for unpaid carers while preparing for the implications of a new National Strategy for Unpaid Carers currently being consulted.

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, our support offer is being reshaped in response to the scale and changing nature of unpaid caring. Census data shows around 11.2% of our population, about 26,000 people, provide unpaid care, with increasing numbers of older carers and wide variation in caring roles. Historically, non-statutory support for carers was centred on the Carers Support Project in Pontypridd, but take-up was low, with only around 10% of carers registered and very limited face-to-face attendance.

In response, Adult Services, with the Community Development Team and Library Service, developed a new model of support for adult unpaid carers, approved by Cabinet in December 2025. Shaped by carers' views, it focuses on accessibility and reach. The model brings together information through libraries and community coordinators, advice and wellbeing support through a dedicated Carer Coordinator and peer services, and statutory carers' assessments with respite delivered through social work teams as part of personalised support plans.

To support this shift, resources from the Pontypridd-based carers project have been reinvested in library-based information and community wellbeing

services. A phased implementation and risk plan is in place. Progress included direct engagement with carers, staff and stakeholders, and recruitment of a new Carer Coordinator. Work is also under way to ensure unpaid carers continue to influence service design through more local engagement under the new model.

The Council also worked with Carers Trust Wales on carer-aware training for library and community staff. Rhondda Cynon Taf has been selected as a pilot area for this Welsh Government-funded programme, which will help embed the new support model.

The Council also reviewed respite for unpaid carers. In 2025/26, Welsh Government Short Breaks Scheme funding, delivered with the Community Development Team, provided individual short break vouchers to 619 carers for leisure, wellbeing and social activities. Grants were also awarded to 13 community and third sector organisations to deliver more than 100 group sessions, benefiting over 200 carers and reporting strong outcomes in mental health, social connection, and access to information and advice. A further funding bid has been submitted for 2026/27. Alongside the redesigned support model and greater use of community provision, this approach is expected to increase the reach and impact of support for unpaid carers.

Respite for Older People

Respite is vital for families caring for someone at home, giving them a break while ensuring their loved one is supported in a safe, positive environment. In 2025/26, we began a review of respite services for older people. Previous engagement with unpaid carers showed that, alongside care home respite, carers value more flexible, regular breaks. This was confirmed in Spring 2026 engagement with unpaid carers, Council staff and other stakeholders. A draft model was developed and will be refined with stakeholders in 2026/27.

Supporting Inclusive Employment

Vision Products is the Council's supported business and a Disability Confident Leader, which provides a range of diverse services. It champions inclusivity by tailoring opportunities for people and currently employs, trains and supports around 91 individuals with a range of disabilities. A number of these people are supported through employment, traineeships, volunteering, and work experience opportunities.

To help people stay independent at home for longer, Vision Products delivered 8,251 pieces of equipment to Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and collected 2,769 items for recycling during the year.

Vision Products' assistive technology service also helps people stay independent at home through tailored digital solutions such as lifeline pendants and fall detectors. In 2025/26, the team switched 1,041 clients from analogue to digital lifeline equipment and completed 5,757 equipment services in private homes, day centres and other care settings, helping ensure safety, reliability and continued community support.



Vision Products look how well we did in 2025-2026

We installed **2,050 windows**.
That's **150 more** than last year.

We helped **11 people** into work.
That's **2 more** than last year.

We delivered **20,695** items of equipment.
That's **2,302 less** than last year.

PVCU achieved **£1.71 million** in sales income.
That's only **100k less** than last year.

We received **29 compliments**.
That's **6 more** than last year.

We refurbished **12,875** items.
That's **188 more** than last year.

We serviced **5,194** pieces of equipment.
615 more than last year.

We organised **180** training courses.
That's **141 more** than last year.

92% of people are happy in their job.
12% higher than last year.

We passed **13** internal and **5** external audits.
The **same** as last year.

We installed **1,303** assistive technology packages.
94 less than last year.

Vision mobility sold **£80.9k** of items to customers.
That's **£3.5k less** than last year.

Case Study: Supporting inclusive employment. Morgan's Story – Growth through support

The Vision Products Trainee Scheme provides paid work experience for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions, helping them build skills, confidence and routes into future employment in a supportive environment.

Morgan, who has autism spectrum disorder, experienced sensory sensitivities and social anxiety. While studying at Coleg y Cymoedd, he felt ready for work but needed the right support.

After a successful work trial, Vision Products tailored support to Morgan's needs through a dedicated job coach, skills training, regular reviews and an inclusive environment. At first, Morgan found social anxiety and communication challenging. With consistent support and structured training, he built confidence, improved his communication and became more integrated into the team, receiving positive feedback from customers and colleagues. After completing the 12-month traineeship, Morgan secured a full-time Driver's Mate role in March 2026. He impressed interviewers with his attitude and work ethic and is now a valued team member delivering excellent service.

Morgan said *"It means everything to me to finally be employed after trying and working so hard for 5 years to get a place that wants to hire me. As soon as I got the call that I got the job I cried. I really enjoy working in the vans and giving people the equipment they need to live because it makes me think I'm making a difference."*

Morgan's journey shows how personalised support, inclusive workplaces and structured training can help people overcome barriers, build confidence and achieve sustainable employment.

Children's Services

Children Looked After

We saw a 4% reduction in the number of children looked after over the last year and are now 13th in Wales for children looked after per 10,000 population in March 2026, improving from 7th in September 2024 and from being among the highest in recent years.

At the end of March 2026, there were 586 children looked after in Rhondda Cynon Taf, down from 611 in 2024, 624 in 2023, 655 in 2022 and 717 in 2020, showing a positive long-term trend. Most looked after children in Rhondda Cynon Taf live with relative carers. This remains a complex and sometimes unpredictable area. Alongside poverty, domestic abuse, substance misuse and poor parental mental health, demand is also affected by the transfer of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the impact of exploitation on children and families.

We continued to support families so that only children for whom there is no safe alternative become looked after. This included delivering the four development areas set out in our Children Looked After Prevention Strategy 2022/25:



1

Developing the support of Kinship Carers

We continued to improve our offer to Special Guardians. The number of Special Guardianship Orders rose from 333 in March 2025 to 342 in March 2026. A pilot to make Special Guardianship more accessible, particularly for families affected by financial barriers, is expected to increase numbers further. Kinship carers also continued to benefit from additional commissioned support through Kinship Cymru.

Development of Pre-birth Team: MAGU

Cefnogi Rhieni, the second stage of Magu, is now being delivered successfully. It provides practical and emotional support to parents whose child has not remained in their care, helping them make positive future choices. Support is delivered in three stages and reduces as parents move from reliance on services to support from universal provision. Parent and child assessment placements still have a role where risk is high, but data shows babies are more likely to leave these placements in the care of a parent or family member when the family is supported by Magu.

A **progress report** was provided to the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2026. It included two case studies showing the positive impact of Magu and an update on the HDRC Preventative Spend Project.

Case Study: Pre-birth support (Magu)

This was a high-risk pre-birth case where care proceedings and entry to care were likely. Both parents had previously been involved with Children's Services due to neglect concerns about an older child. Because of the level of risk, the unborn baby's case was managed under the Public Law Outline, and both parents were referred to Magu for support.

A pre-birth assessment showed the need for close supervision, so after the baby was born the family moved into a residential parent-and-child assessment unit. Magu remained closely involved throughout, supporting both parents.

The placement broke down when the mother struggled and left, creating a critical decision point for the baby's future. With no relatives able to care for the child, adoption was being considered. The father chose to end the relationship, remain in placement and be assessed as a single parent. He engaged well with support, completing work on healthy relationships, domestic abuse and parenting confidence. His assessment was positive, and he later moved with the baby into his own home with intensive support to ensure safety and stability.

As the father showed consistent, safe parenting, support was gradually reduced at a pace that suited the family. The baby was removed from the child protection register. The service completed all planned work but remains available until the child's first birthday if needed. The case is now closed, with the baby living safely in the father's full-time care.

Developing our Model of Practice

As part of implementing the evidence-based Model of Practice Framework in April 2024, Children's Services identified a need to train staff in the Collaborative Communication Approach. This supported strength-based, collaborative and outcomes-focused work with families, in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and its emphasis on co-production and understanding what matters to families. Over 440 staff, including the Senior Management Team, managers and practitioners, completed the training. 90% rated it as excellent, with feedback such as the example below. Comments also showed strong alignment with Rhondda Cynon Taf's community-focused values.

“Fantastic training. Really enjoyed it and the trainer's compassion and commitment to the families we support shone through. Training content was clear and interactive. Will definitely influence my practice for the positive.”

To embed Collaborative Communication in practice, 40 practitioners completed additional training as mentors. They facilitate reflective groups and work with managers and the Lead Manager for Practice to highlight strengths and challenges across services.

The model also included the rollout of Trauma-Informed Practice training. So far, 97 practitioners completed it. Internal staff delivered the programme using no-cost resources from Traumatic Stress Wales, as Children's Services is part of the pilot.

Training alone will not deliver the required change, so the Model of Practice Steering Group has created two sub-groups: paperwork, policy and procedures to align systems with the approach and partners and people with lived experience to shape delivery and continuous improvement.

Case Study: see next page



Case Study: Family Group Meetings

Family Group Meetings (FGM) are a key part of our approach. They help families repair, maintain and strengthen relationships, and make plans when there are concerns about a child's safety and wellbeing.

A longitudinal audit of FGM held between April 2021 and June 2023 reviewed the position of families two years later. It covered 58 families, representing 58% of all FGMs held. Key findings included:

- Positively, the audit found evidence of de-escalation, with 48.3% of families (28 cases) now closed to Children's Services.
- A further 48.3% of families (28 cases) remained open to Children's Services: 22.4% (13) with no change in status and 25.9% (15) with a change in status.
- Of the 15 families that remained open with a change in status, 9 ended in Special Guardianship Orders, enabling children to remain with their wider family and out of public care.

As well as improving outcomes for children and families, these cases avoided the cost of looked after placements for the Council.



Children's Services worked with TGP Cymru to establish a parent group for those with experience of statutory intervention to help shape service development. The "Breaking Barriers" group was set up in January 2025 and will play a key role in this work. Similar feedback will also be sought from parents receiving preventative services and from children.

Enhancing Reunification Work

Not all children who come into care can or should return home, but many can with the right support. In line with our revised Reunification Strategy, we continued to work with parents to reunify children safely where possible. In 2025/26, 84 of the 156 children who ceased to be looked after returned home (54%), up from 79 of 149 (53%) in 2024/25.

Case Study: Reunification

A referral was made when an expectant mother presented late to maternity services and disclosed that an older child was no longer in her care. Background checks showed the child had previously been removed under a care order due to domestic abuse, neglect and the mother's lack of engagement with support.

Given this history and early concerns about domestic abuse and substance misuse involving both parents, we began pre-proceedings for the unborn baby. Both parents were offered tailored support on healthy relationships, parenting, child development and substance misuse, but were initially reluctant to engage.

A plan was made for the baby to remain with the parents in extended family accommodation. However, significant undisclosed substance use was identified through drug testing, making the plan unsafe, and the baby entered foster care shortly after birth.

Despite this difficult start, both parents later engaged well. They attended daily family time, worked consistently with parenting and substance misuse services, improved their relationship, maintained abstinence and secured suitable housing.

Following a positive post-birth assessment, the baby was gradually rehabilitated home. Specialist support continued after reunification and was stepped down as the parents sustained their progress.

Around the child's first birthday, all services were successfully closed. The case ended with the child safely in the parents' care, following meaningful and sustained positive change.

In April 2025, we created a new Children Looked After and 14+ Team to increase reunification for older children. Between April 2025 and March 2026, care orders were discharged for 10 children placed with parents before their 18th birthday. This is higher than the 6 discharged in 2023/24, but lower than the 15 in 2024/25.

My Voice My Review

In 2025/26, 352 children completed “My Voice My Review”, representing 27.13% of the 1,297 Children Looked After reviews held during the year, up from 250 the previous year. This reflected work to raise awareness of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) role and consultation documents. Thirty-one children said they wanted to speak to an IRO outside the review, and 184 (53.8%) planned to attend their meeting, both higher than last year.

Of the 352 children who completed the consultation, 44.89% said they did not want to attend their review and 8.1% wanted to meet their IRO beforehand. Reasons included not knowing, feeling too young, nervous, being busy, or finding meetings boring or too long. Some children said their foster carer or social worker could speak for them. When asked about advocacy, some preferred to speak for themselves or identified other trusted adults, professionals or family members to speak on their behalf.



Resilient Families Service

We continued to support families early to build resilience and reduce the need for statutory services. In 2025/26, we worked with 1,131 families, 86% of whom (978) reported improved resilience after completing work with the Resilient Families Service. This was slightly lower than 2024/25, when 88% (1,034) reported improved resilience. Only 3.4% of children and young people referred to the service needed a statutory Children’s Services intervention, highlighting its continued positive impact.

Case Study: see next page



Case Study: Family feedback on the Resilient Families Service

Family B consists of a mother and her three children, Child B (aged 12), Child C (aged 11) and Child D (aged 9), who live in the maternal grandparents' property. The family was referred because Child B was thought to be taking on too much responsibility at home due to the mother's declining mental health. She was receiving support from the Mental Health Team, off work, and struggling with daily living tasks. Protective factors included strong co-parenting from the children's father, who cares for them on alternate weeks. Child C has additional learning needs, and the mother requested support with education.

A family plan was agreed with three priorities:

1. Child C – Education

The school and ALNCo were contacted to assess need. Strategies including a blue reading overlay and touch-type spelling were introduced at school and home. Universal support strategies were shared, and future statutory testing will inform any further support. Feedback was shared with Mother.

2. Mother – Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience

She was supported to attend GP and psychiatric appointments, leading to medication changes, improved sleep and support from a Mental Health Nurse. Mother also engaged in ADHD and wellbeing courses, applied to Home Finder, and was supported with a PIP Mandatory Reconsideration and gambling recovery referral. Twice-weekly visits focused on motivation and emotional stability, leading to reported improvements in mood, confidence and outlook.

3. Daily Routine and Home Environment

Practical support helped the family clean, organise and maintain the home using visual routines. Funding was secured for a replacement washing machine, bedding and a bed for Child B. Mother and the children now share household responsibilities more appropriately and consistently.

The intervention reduced safeguarding concerns by restoring appropriate parental responsibility, improving the home environment and stabilising Mother's mental health. She reported improved wellbeing, reduced isolation and aspirations to return to part time work. Children's needs, particularly Child C's educational support, are now appropriately addressed. Mother demonstrated increased insight into her parenting role and the impact of her wellbeing on her children.

Mother stated:

"I couldn't have progressed so quickly in a space of time without you. You've done everything to help me. You have been a massive support for us. I'm thinking positive about the future instead of being lost in time. I'm thinking about going back to work for a couple of hours. The kids keep me going. They make me want to be better. This help is ultimately to benefit my children."

Welsh Government Quality Standards:

“Effective partnerships are in place to commission and fully deliver fully integrated, high quality sustainable outcomes for people”

“People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners”

Partnership and Integration related priorities we have achieved in Adult and Children’s services during the year that we planned to do in 2025/26, are shown in the table below.

Priorities we have achieved during the year

Work in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to implement an integrated community health and social care service that can co-ordinate an effective and seamless approach, either as an urgent response to acute illness or crisis or to manage chronic and long-term health and social care needs. Linked to this is an integrated approach to supporting timely hospital discharge.

Our Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy to re-design alongside stakeholders our front-door to be a sustainable service with a strong prevention focused response.

We operate in a highly interconnected space and have continued to engage in meaningful partnership work with a whole range of organisations and people on an individual and strategic level. During the year, Adult and Children’s Services has continued to play a significant role in the regional partnership boards and partnership groups, bringing effective leadership and scrutiny to them. Partnership working is key to the delivery of high quality and responsive services. We continue to work closely with key partners on an individual and strategic level to improve services and to achieve efficiencies.

Pathways of Care Delays (POCD)

A **report on Pathways of Care Delays** was presented to Scrutiny in December 2025. POCD fell from 152 in March 2025 to 117 in March 2026, while total days delayed reduced more sharply from 10,443 to 8,579. This showed improving performance and that Rhondda Cynon Taf was exceeding Welsh Government's aspirational targets for these indicators. POCD performance in the areas most influenced by social care staff deployment and care commissioning showed that:

- **Social Work allocation delays remained low.**
- **Social Care assessment delays rose slightly from March 2025 but were stable across the year and did not meet the regional target of a 20% reduction.**

- **Home care delays continued to fall, reflecting the positive impact of changes to home care commissioning. Numbers fell from 49 in October 2024 to 11 in March 2025, and to 4 people waiting in hospital in March 2026.**
- **Early-year delays in dementia and general residential care reflected the care home review and closure of Caeglas Residential Home in Spring 2025, but performance has since recovered and care home availability delays are now stable.**

Overall, POCD and length of stay improved consistently during the year for Rhondda Cynon Taf residents, largely due to the home first approach and the performance of home care providers.

Case Study: Pathway 1 – Avoiding hospital discharge delays

Mrs E, 93, lives with her adult daughter. After a fall and prolonged immobility, she was admitted to hospital with a marked decline in mobility, strength, continence and independence. Before admission, she managed independently with only informal family support.

When medically fit for discharge, it was clear Mrs E needed longer-term care and support that neither she nor her family could provide alone. Hospital staff worked with Mrs E and her family to plan a safe discharge and submitted an electronic transfer of care referral to the Council's Single Point of Access team. The referral was triaged and sent to Brokerage and the Short Term Care Management Team. A local care provider then arranged a care package and start date, enabling Mrs E to return home safely.

Once home, a care manager completed an adult assessment and the paperwork for her long-term package of care. Mrs E was then transferred to the relevant long-term team for ongoing annual review.

The Stay Well @ Home Team (SW@HT), based at Royal Glamorgan and Prince Charles Hospitals, is made up of occupational therapists and social workers who assess people in A&E and CDU. Its aim is to avoid unnecessary ward admissions and support timely discharge home, with intermediate care, where needed, to help people regain independence in daily living. SW@HT operates 365 days a year until 20:00.

Case Study: SW@HT

Mrs F attended A&E with her daughter after her third fall in a week. Although medically fit for discharge, there were concerns about her safety at home. She lived alone in an upstairs flat, had frequent falls, was not taking prescribed medication, struggled with daily tasks due to arthritis, had continence difficulties, and faced hazards including rugs and leaving the cooker on.

SW@HT quickly assessed her wish to return home and remain independent and identified the need for several supportive measures. Equipment was provided, including a commode, perching stools and a caddy for her walking aid. Referrals were made to Telecare, the @Home service, Community Occupational Therapy and Social Services for a carers assessment for her daughter. Advice was also given on reducing trip hazards and considering support such as Meals on Wheels.

This rapid, coordinated response avoided admission and enabled Mrs F to return home safely the same day, demonstrating the value of early intervention and integrated working.

People frequently express gratitude for being supported to return home, regain confidence, and maintain independence. SW@HT's compassion, professionalism, and collaborative approach are repeatedly praised. Feedback, included:

"Thank you for being understanding and not putting pressure on me."

"Thank you for all the support with my father. You are a very vital service."

"You were both very polite and professional. Thank you for all you have done."

"Very fast service. Thank you."

"It's been amazing. You have all been great."

"You gave me confidence to do the stairs. Thank you so much."

"I am so pleased to have been assessed. I think the steady hoist in my home environment will be fantastic for me and my wife on the not so good days. Thank you so much for your help. I cannot wait to go home."

"I am so glad that he is better than when he went in. Thank you so much for all you have done to bring him home. Thank you all. Excellent."

Integrated Community Care System

The model and partnership agreement were approved by Cabinet in July 2025. The partnership agreement is a major step towards integrated health and social care, reflecting the strength of our partnership with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and neighbouring regional local authorities and our shared aim of seamless, person-centred support for older people and those living with frailty. In Phase 1, Adult Services teams aligned to the new model.

Children's Services

Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy

In April 2024, Cabinet approved our Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy. Progress paused during 2025 while the Council-wide early intervention and prevention review was undertaken for families, children and young people. More detail is provided later in this report.

Work restarted on a digital improvement project for the Children's Services Information, Advice and Assistance Team (IAA). Alongside the

Council's prevention agenda, this created opportunities to streamline processes and reduce the number of professionals involved with families.

In 2025/26, our IAA Service received 27,406 contacts, 3% fewer than the 28,372 received in 2024/25. Of these, 4,376 (16%) progressed to a proportionate assessment; 488 were referred to Intensive Intervention Teams and 3,223 resulted in no further action or signposting to other services.

Regional Exploitation Strategy

Exploitation affects vulnerable adults and children, with some groups, including children in care, at greater risk. It involves manipulating or abusing someone for another person's gain and can be linked to financial, sexual or other criminal exploitation.

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Exploitation Strategy launched on 1 September 2025, with an initial focus on child exploitation. Resources for professionals, including the Strategy, guidance, toolkits and safety plans, are available on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board website.

Exploitation and Serious Violence Training in Rhondda Cynon Taf was delivered to Elected Members and Children's Services staff during the 2025 Annual Safeguarding sessions and used again by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board during Safeguarding Week in November 2025. It covered contexts of harm, grooming, vulnerabilities, indicators, victim impact, victim-blaming language, and the lived experience of a child and parent. We also continued to contribute to the Pan-Wales Exploitation Network and the South Wales Police Thematic MoRiLE CSE Partnership.

Welsh Government Quality Standards:

“People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect and any other types of harm”

“People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible”

Wellbeing related priorities we have achieved or partly achieved in Adult and Children’s Services during the year that we planned to do in 2025/26, are shown in the table below.

Priorities we have achieved during the year

Provide an effective assessment service to assist people achieve what matters to them. Where waiting lists for assessment are necessary, we will continually review according to agreed risk criteria and establish escalation processes to focussed resources on those in greatest need and at most risk of harm.

Invest in digital and community equipment to support and reduce demand for formal care, developing our assistive technology offer to enable people to remain as independent as possible within their own homes.

Making sure that the young people who need residential care are looked after close to home in quality settings here they can thrive and that they are looked after by a stable, resilient, skill and well supported staff group. The work includes 2 co-dependent areas:

- Foster Wales
- Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Strategy

Home Care Commissioning

In October 2024, home care commissioning changed, with five providers appointed across six localities in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A progress report on the first year of the new arrangements was presented to Scrutiny in December 2025.

The new locality-based commissioning aimed to simplify deployment, which had become overly complex under

previous arrangements, with staff travelling long distances between calls and too much reliance on cars. Initial data collated suggested this was successful, although other factors may also have contributed. The table below shows the reduction in home care waiting lists between September 2024, September 2025 and March 2026.

	Sept 24	Sept 25	Mar 26
No. of people waiting for a home care package (hospital)	40	5	8
No. of people waiting for a home care package (community)	36	9	11
Longest time waiting for a package (days)	81	12	7
Shortest time waiting for a package (days)	4	0	0
Average time waiting for a package (days)	34.5	4.2	3

During the same period the activity in the service had increased from circa. 13,780 hours of home care September 2024 to 15,220 hours in September 2025 and to 17,243 in March 2026.

The new home care commissioning arrangements were also revised to support a home-first approach to pathway 1 discharges. As a result, POCD and length of stay improved consistently for our residents during the new arrangements, as shown in the table below, mainly due to the home-first model and home care provider performance.

September 2024	Total delays 235	Length of stay in hospital -14,421 days
September 2025	Total delays 119	Length of stay in hospital - 7,068 days
March 2026	Total delays 95	Length of stay in hospital - 7,368 days

To monitor our home care commissioning arrangements, we surveyed people receiving home care in September 2025. Response was low, with 85 returns (5% of recipients).

Responses suggested many people feel safe, treated with dignity and supported to remain at home, but this was affected by communication issues, frequent changes in care workers, and concerns about reliability and staff preparedness. The findings also showed the need to improve support for independence, community connection, and access to information and advice. We expected this to take longer, as this will require cultural change across social work staff, providers, service users and carers. While not fully representative, the survey provided useful insight into people's experiences and is informing improvements for Adult Services and providers.

Digital / New Technology Initiatives

We continued to expand technology to make services more accessible for people and their families. Progress includes the Adult Services Technology 1ST Strategy, a supporting training plan, and the new Alarm Receiving Centre, which went live in September 2025. This year we also developed a digital enquiry form for front-door services, including the Single Point of Access, to help people access support more quickly and provide clear information about their needs and what matters to them from the outset.

Use of Copilot to reduce administrative burden

Working with Swansea and Carmarthenshire Councils, we are using Microsoft Copilot to improve internal operations, customer service and care quality for our most vulnerable residents.

Care services are built on human moments such as home visits, difficult conversations and support decisions, but each one also creates administrative work.

Notes must be written up. Needs and risk assessments must be completed. Case histories must be reviewed, followed up and transcripts captured digitally.

Microsoft 365 Copilot (generative AI) is reducing this burden and allowing staff to focus more on the human moments that matter.

With Microsoft 365 Copilot now used by around 350 staff, needs assessments are completed almost four times faster, case note reviews are more than twice as fast, and nearly twice as many risk assessments can be completed in an hour.

Staff also report positive benefits: 86% say output quality has improved, 50% say wellbeing has improved, and 75% feel more positive about their role.

Rather than each Council working separately, we have collaborated to accelerate impact by sharing learning, approaches and ways to reduce errors and improve consistency, including joint Promptathon and Agentathon events. It is a strong model: learn once, benefit many times.

In 2025/26, 375 new technology installations were completed to support independent living. This included 72 stand-alone telecare installations linked to care and support plans, and 303 monitored telecare installations through Lifeline packages, helping people stay safe and independent at home by connecting them to the Lifeline Monitoring Centre in urgent situations such as falls. At the end of March 2025, there were 3,981 live Lifeline connections.

Mobile Responder Navigation Hub

Building on our Lifeline Service, we continued to provide a 24/7 Mobile Responder Service, 365 days a year. It responds to Lifeline alarms, reduces demand on the Welsh Ambulance Service, helps avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, and supports people to remain safe at home.

In Spring 2025, we launched a pilot with the GP Navigation Hub so Mobile Responders could assist people without Lifeline who had fallen and were waiting for an ambulance. The pilot expanded from one area to all of Rhondda Cynon Taf, helping people off the floor safely, reducing ambulance pressure, and offering Lifeline to help avoid future waits. Lifeline customers increased to 4,073, up from 3,896 at the end of March 2025.

In 2025/26, the Service received 4,950 calls, including 2,634 falls at home. Using specialist lifting equipment, it avoided 92% of falls-related hospital conveyances, and 87% of responses arrived within the one-hour target.

From January 2026, a three-month pilot extended the Rhondda Cynon Taf Mobile Responder Service to provide falls responses to Lifeline users in Merthyr Tydfil. This formal arrangement between the two Councils and the Regional Partnership Board aimed to deliver consistent support across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and ease pressure on the ambulance service. The pilot included additional funding to strengthen the service for residents in both areas.

Case Study: Mobile Responder Service

Mr W activated his lifeline pendant after a fall at home. The call centre asked mobile responders to attend, complete an I Stumble assessment and, if appropriate, help him up.

Responders entered through an open door and found Mr W seated at the top of the stairs. He had significant mobility problems and could not support his own weight. No injuries were identified under the I Stumble assessment. A Raiser chair helped him into an upright seated position, and responders then assisted him to bed, including lifting his legs due to marked weakness. Mrs W was advised to contact their GP the following morning.

As there were no carers in place and Mrs W reported she was struggling, a wellbeing assessment was requested. Mr W received help within 17 minutes, including assessment, reassurance, safe support to bed and clear advice on next steps. The response also identified wider needs, including carer strain and the lack of formal care, with onward referral arranged to address longer-term risks.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

In 2025/26, we reviewed performance management arrangements in the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) team to address ongoing pressures from waiting lists. This has helped identify areas for improvement, strengthen the performance framework, and streamline team processes. We also increased Best Interests Assessor capacity through locality teams and agency staff, introduced peer support, and used grant funding to enhance scrutiny through Personal Support Worker roles.

Despite this progress, and an increase in completed assessments from 57 in quarter 4 of 2024/25 to 101 in the same period of 2025/26, the DoLS waiting list remained stable at 515 people in March 2026. Referral levels continued to match or exceed assessment and sign-off rates each month.

Demand in the Adult Safeguarding Team also remained high in 2025/26:

- 1,969 adult at risk reports were received, compared with 1,526 in the previous year.
- 1,009 safeguarding reports progressed to section 126 enquiries, up from 744 in the previous year.
- 84.2% were completed within seven working days, up from 80%, reflecting additional staffing and greater team stability and experience.
- 247 professional concern referrals were received, down from 289. Of these, 64.78% led to a strategy discussion, 45 proceeded to a Strategy Meeting, and 3 were substantiated. Some cases remain open pending police investigations.
- One care home provider was managed through escalating concerns.

A permanent increase in staffing was agreed to support rising activity since the team was established, particularly in relation to professional concerns.

Case Study: Adult at Risk

People involved (not actual names): John (diagnosis of dementia and cancer); Phillip (son and alleged perpetrator); Kathleen (wife, not an adult at risk but vulnerable); and Helen (daughter, not an adult at risk).

The Adult Safeguarding Team received a police referral after John and Kathleen were physically and financially abused by Phillip. Although Phillip was arrested, Kathleen and Helen were initially reluctant to provide statements because they feared further abuse. There were concerns the abuse had been ongoing.

The family had not previously been known to services. It was unclear how John's dementia and cancer affected his daily ability to keep himself safe or express his wishes about Phillip's arrest. There were also concerns the family was minimising harm and reluctant to seek support. Because of the domestic abuse concerns, the case was discussed at MARAC. An independent domestic abuse advocate was offered but declined.

Section 126 enquiries confirmed John was an adult at risk and a strategy meeting was held. John was offered a care and support assessment, and Kathleen a carer's assessment. The meeting showed the family wanted support for Phillip because of his mental health and substance misuse needs, which explained their initial reluctance to pursue a complaint. Professionals ensured Phillip received support in his own right, which enabled the family to proceed with the police complaint. Bail conditions were explained and monitored with police and partner agencies to reduce further risk. John, Kathleen and Helen continued to support the complaint, and a care and support protection plan was put in place with active monitoring by adult social care.

Children's Services

For children who cannot remain with their families, our priority is to keep them as close to home as possible. The **Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy** brings together our sufficiency work: developing not-for-profit Rhondda Cynon Taf children's homes, increasing local foster carers, expanding 16+ supported accommodation, and strengthening placement commissioning. In 2025/26, we continued working with providers to increase local placement sufficiency and ensure looked after children receive the accommodation and support they need.

Phase 2 of the Strategy has been evaluated, and an update was presented to Scrutiny and the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2026. Key achievements included:

- Refurbishment, registration and recruitment for three children's homes supporting 11 children.
- Better needs data and commissioning of supported accommodation for care leavers through closer work with housing colleagues.

- A restructured fostering service and a positive CIW inspection, with progress across all development areas.
- Approval of 13 new mainstream foster carers.
- Appointment of 43 new residential staff, although 23 leavers mean workforce pressures remain.
- Embedding of the Therapeutic Model, rooted in trauma recovery, with sustainable funding and a pilot with Trauma Stress Wales.
- Launch of a Special Guardianship pilot to widen family choices.
- A reduction in Operating Without Registration arrangements from 9 in March 2024 to 3 in March 2026.
- Positive feedback from young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf children's homes, who report feeling well cared for and supported.

"I will always be part of (name of children's home) family, and they are always only a call away." She stated "that means a lot, it's scary moving out but I know everyone has my back, and they want me to be the best I can be"

(Child Moving out to independent living from a Children's Home).

"I love it, everyone is kind, it's big enough for my brother to come and live here too.... will that be allowed?"

(Child moving into opened Children's Home).

"I had the best birthday ever! I had two parties in the house, one with my friends from the street and then one with my brother. I asked for a bike for a present, and I got the best one, with all the stuff to go with it. Staff said I am excellent at riding a bike, I had birthday cards and everything!"

(Child celebrating their Birthday at Children's Home).

Positively, 71% of the 586 children looked after live in Rhondda Cynon Taf (closer to home). Of the 364 placements that began in 2025/26, 68% were in county, up from 63% the previous year. In-house children's home placements increased from 20 in March 2025 to 22 in March 2026, while out-of-Wales placements remained low at 8. Operating Without Registration placements reduced to 3, although numbers in high-support accommodation for young people with challenging behaviours increased.

Case Study: Residential Care – A Path to Stability

The child arrived at Carn Ingli aged six after seven previous placements, with a deep fear of attachment and of being moved again. With no local connections and high anxiety, the early months were marked by aggression, outbursts and damage to the home. Their wish for no other children to live there reflected a fear of being replaced, shaped by repeated instability.

Staff responded with trauma-informed care, creating safety through predictable routines and consistent staffing. They built trust by listening, validating emotions and offering choices to increase the child's sense of control. A phased return to education began with short sessions, and a neurodevelopmental assessment led to an ADHD diagnosis, allowing more tailored support.

Gradually, the child was introduced to community activities such as judo, cycling and local play spaces. Although some experiences were difficult, they slowly formed local friendships with staff support to manage social boundaries and stress.

Over time, school attendance and engagement improved. Aggression reduced as the child began to feel secure and valued, and the home was eventually able to place another child alongside them without triggering earlier anxieties. Challenges remain, but the child now shows greater resilience and a stronger sense of belonging.

This case shows the value of consistency, empathy and strengths-based support. Understanding ADHD brought clarity, and gradual community integration showed the child's capacity to build healthy relationships. The focus now is on strengthening self-worth, building on personal strengths, reintroducing everyday household items at a manageable pace, and widening social experiences with reliable support.

Foster Wales RCT is the Council's fostering service. More information is in the **Quality of Care Report** presented to the Corporate Parenting Board. In line with the Residential Transformation Strategy, in 2025/26 we continued work to increase the supply and skills of foster carers in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Despite this, foster carer numbers fell from 248 in March 2025 (124 mainstream, 124 kinship) to 243 in March 2026 (118 mainstream, 125 kinship).

There are currently 364 children in local authority foster care, up from 357 in March 2025. However, the proportion placed in foster care fell from 76% (466) to 75% (440), while placements in children's homes rose from 14% (84) to 15% (85) by March 2026. This reflects the shortage of foster families, meaning some children are placed in children's homes where no suitable foster placement is available. Recruiting more foster families remains a priority to meet this identified need.

Foster Wales – Foster Carers Feedback

"Our supervising social worker is worth her weight in gold! She is a vital part of our support network. She knows us and our young people so well. Her support has been phenomenal over the years working alongside us and the children. Nothing phases her and we are blessed to have this respectful working relationship. You definitely need support and a sounding board to talk things over when you foster. With RCT you know the support is there for every step of the journey" Tracy.

"You're never going to feel like you're doing it on your own when you are fostering with RCT" Matthew.

"Previously, we'd always cared for older children. When we started fostering through our local authority, we started caring for a younger girl-something we'd never done before. But the help we received was so refreshing. Our social worker was, and still is, always at the end of the phone. And there's a proper fostering community here. Now, we know people who are foster carers than ever before, because our local authority helps to bring us together. Choosing to foster with Foster Wales RCT was the best decision we've ever made."

Tim and Tor.

Progress was made on eliminating profit and improving sufficiency, but operational pressures, resource demands and timescales slowed the pace and scale of change. Continued Welsh Government funding, alongside Council resources and a skilled workforce, will be critical to delivering national policy goals in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

In the short term, residential and foster care in Rhondda Cynon Taf will continue to operate through a mixed economy of externally commissioned services and internal provision. We will continue to rebalance and reduce reliance on for-profit providers as local foster and residential services develop and will review next steps once provider intentions become clearer.

Increasing foster carer supply will take longer and remains the key barrier to transformation. This shortage continues to place more children who need foster families in children's homes. We have prioritised this area and made additional investment.

Positively, the number of care leavers currently recorded as homeless fell. However, demand for supported accommodation is likely to grow, as 60% of our children looked after population are aged 10 and over. We will continue to work with housing colleagues and Registered Social Landlords to plan for sufficiency.

Corporate Parenting Pledge

In April 2024, Cabinet endorsed the Rhondda Cynon Taf Corporate Parenting Pledge. By signing the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter, "A Promise from Wales", and adopting the local Pledge, the Council has reinforced its commitment to promoting the wellbeing of care experienced children and young people.

An update report on implementation was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2026. Progress was made across all seven priorities, with key achievements including:

- We co-produced an animation with care experienced young people explaining the Corporate Parenting Board, its seven priorities and how it helps improve outcomes. Young people wrote the script and recorded the voiceover. **Corporate Parenting Board Animation.**
- Corporate Parenting Board members also recorded short videos introducing themselves, their role and why the Board matters to them.
- We supported Corporate Parenting Board members to meet care experienced young people and better understand what matters to them and what they want from the Board.
- We recorded four digital lived experience videos in which young people shared aspects of being looked after, further strengthening our understanding.

Employment, Education and Training Opportunities for Care Experienced Children

We continued to support care experienced young people in and leaving care through employment, education and training programmes that improve employability and job prospects. An **annual update** on Step in the Right Direction and Care 2 Work was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in April 2026.



Case Study: Step in the Right Direction Traineeship Programme

Step in the Right Direction is a two-year paid traineeship for care experienced young people aged 16–25. It offers placements across Council departments, coordinated by the Traineeship Coordinator, supported by a 14+ Worker and overseen day to day by a Placement Manager. The programme provides the work experience and training needed to support progression into full-time employment.

In 2025/26, seven trainees were recruited and achieved or are working towards the following qualifications:

2 x Gym Instructor Level 2
1 x Gym Instructor Level 3

1 x Childcare Level 2
1 x Social Care Level 2

In December 2025, we held a Celebration Event to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Step in the Right Direction: **You can see a video of the event here.**

Case Study: Care2Work

This programme supports care experienced young people aged 16 to 25 to access employment and training opportunities. A summary of outcomes in 2025/26 is below:

Enrolments - **67**

Secured Employment – **7 (3 RCT and 4 External)**

Entered further education – **13**

Achieved a qualification – **14**

Completed a Care2Work Course – **13**

Work experience and volunteering – **8**

Summer 2025 Employability Course

Care2Work successfully delivered its Summer Employability Programme in partnership with Aberdare Town and South Wales Police. Ten young people completed the programme, achieving Level 1 Customer Service Qualifications and developing key employability skills. Eight participants also undertook one week of work experience, gaining valuable insights into the workplace.

Care2Work summer programme WELSH SUBS

Coleg y Cymoedd Pathways Programme

A pilot delivered with Coleg y Cymoedd to support young people to re-engage with further education. The programme was delivered in small, manageable steps so learners could progress at a pace that matched their needs and readiness. This inclusive approach prioritised those furthest from education and least likely to re-engage without targeted support. The pilot operates on a rolling six-week model. During each block:

- Learners attended college part time and completed two BTEC units.
- They also attended a weekly Care2Work reflective session focused on confidence, goal setting and barriers to engagement.
- After each block, learners could either continue for another six weeks to complete more accredited units or leave the programme.
- The programme ran on a rolling basis to the end of June. Learners who stayed engaged for six months achieved a full BTEC qualification and progressed to college in September.

6 young people enrolled and all 6 successfully completed and continuing onto the next phase.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

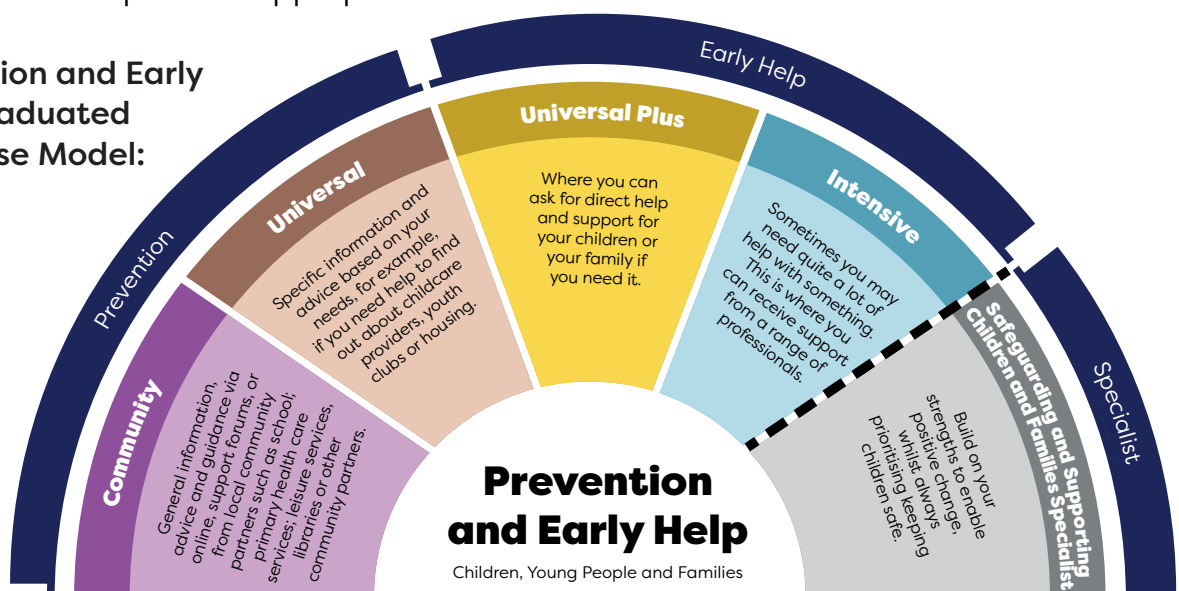
We continued to strengthen early intervention and prevention through a Council-wide review. This examined current and future need, aligned outcomes with strategic priorities, and developed proposals for more effective service delivery. It recommended a clear, accessible graduated pathway of support, from information and community advice to targeted intervention, to respond to different levels of need and support more sustainable services. The model is designed to build self-reliance, tackle disadvantage, and help children thrive through stronger foundations for health, learning and emotional wellbeing. Early action and the right help at the right time can reduce the long-term effects of disadvantage and improve health, educational attainment and social inclusion.

The review also recommended a two-stage review of the Resilient Families Service. This has started and is due to report in Spring 2026.

In 2024/25, only 19% of contacts progressed to assessment. Our data shows we are responding to high levels of need and complexity, with 98% of assessments including what matters conversations. Of these, 38% resulted in Information, Advice or Assistance (36% last year), 37% identified a need for preventative services (up 6%), 19% required a more comprehensive assessment (down 6%), and 6% identified child protection concerns (7% last year). This shows consistent threshold application at the front door and a continued focus on early, preventative help where appropriate.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub data also showed consistent application of Wales Safeguarding Procedures thresholds for harm and abuse. Although initial strategy discussions fell by 17% in 2025/26, reflecting our Model of Practice and more proportionate early decision-making, 74% progressed to section 47 enquiries in both 2024/25 and 2025/26. Variation in harm categories remained within 3%, indicating consistent practice. Section 47 enquiries leading to an Initial Child Protection Case Conference rose by 4%, while the number of children on the Child Protection Register fell from 309 in March 2025 to 297 in March 2026.

Prevention and Early Help Graduated Response Model:



Cwm Taf Youth Justice Service (YJS)

The **HMIP Inspection report**, published on 20 August 2024, rated the YJS ‘Good’. Before publication, however, the Youth Justice Board placed the YJS in Quadrant 3 (‘Requiring Improvement’) in May 2024 due to rising serious violence, first-time entrants, reoffending and custody rates.

Since then, the service has made strong progress. An **update report** was presented to Cabinet in December 2025.

Stronger Management Board oversight through KPI subgroups improved understanding of practice, strengthened accountability and aligned strategy more closely with frontline delivery. It also supported a more data-led response to disproportionality among vulnerable groups, contributing to custody cases falling from 8 in 2023/24 to 1 in 2025/26.

Multi-agency work strengthened oversight of remand decisions, police custody use and anti-social behaviour, including a consistent Criminal Behaviour Order protocol. Collaboration with Education Services improved

school engagement, with the proportion of children not in full-time education falling from 93% at inspection in summer 2024 to 27% by March 2026, reducing risks linked to exploitation and anti-social behaviour.

The YJS also strengthened quality assurance for out-of-court disposals, improved practitioner support for risk assessment, and reduced first-time entrants to the youth justice system from 57 in 2023/24 to 29 in 2025/26.

Following a progress review in August 2025, the Ministry of Justice Performance Oversight Board moved the YJS back to Quadrant 2, (‘Satisfactory Performance’), recognising clear strategic and operational improvement against the inspection recommendations. In a formal letter, the YJB described the move as:

“in recognition of sustained improvement across key indicators, driven by stronger governance, strategic leadership and effective partnership working”.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

The number of unaccompanied child refugees (UASC) in our care rose from 37 in March 2025 (10 under 18 and 27 over 18) to 40 by the end of March 2026 (11 under 18 and 29 over 18), through the UK National Transfer Scheme and a small number of spontaneous arrivals. This is likely to remain an area of growing need as geopolitical, economic and climate pressures drive migration.

Adult Services

- Ensure unpaid carers are valued, recognised and supported to provide care in a way that supports their resilience, health and wellbeing
- Provide engaging, clear and easy-to-access information and support to people when and how they need it in order to stay healthy and well.
- Ensure that our support conversations enable people to access both community and family resources, as well as, where relevant, commissioned services, to maximise their independence and achieve the outcomes that matter to them.
- Promote direct payment options and improve the processes for doing so, enabling people to maximise their choice and control about how to meet their care and support needs.
- Make sure people with learning disabilities have access to accommodation with support that enables them to live as full and independent a life as possible in the community.
- Increase & improve flexible, responsive accommodation options for older people.
- Work in partnership with colleagues in Children's Services to ensure the transition for young people and their parents/carers into Adult Services is a positive experience that appropriately supports a progression to independence and autonomy.
- Work in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to implement an integrated community health and social care service that can co-ordinate an effective and seamless approach, either as an urgent response to acute illness or crisis or to manage chronic and long-term health and social care needs. Linked to this is an integrated approach to supporting timely hospital discharge.
- Provide an effective assessment service to assist people achieve what matters to them. Where waiting lists for assessment are necessary, we will continually review according to agreed risk criteria and establish escalation processes to focussed resources on those in greatest need and at most risk of harm.
- Deliver our Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy and supporting action plan.

Children's Services

- Our Right Help, Right Time, Right Place Strategy to re-design alongside stakeholders our front-door to be a sustainable service with a strong prevention focused response.
- Workforce Strategy 2021-2024 - Children's Services' workforce is motivated, engaged and valued; staff have the capacity, skills, competence and confidence to meet the needs of children and families.
- CLA Prevention Services - Targeting evidence based services towards family support to ensure that only those children for whom there is no safe alternative become looked after.
- Making sure that the young people who need residential care are looked after close to home in quality settings here they can thrive and that they are looked after by a stable, resilient, skill and well supported staff group. The work includes 2 co-dependent areas: Foster Wales and Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Strategy.





CHAPTER 4

OTHER INFORMATION

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ANNUAL DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES REPORT 2025-2026

a) Inspection and reviews

What do our inspectors say about our Adult Services?

- **CIW Inspection: Support@Home Service (Rehabilitation, Mobile Responders and Extra Care). Conducted in December 2025, CIW found:**

Well-being is excellent because people achieve outstanding outcomes and live lives of their choosing. Exemplary multi-disciplinary working supports people to achieve these outcomes. Care and support is excellent, with people and families having extremely positive experiences from services, which enhances their lives. Effective systems are in place for medication management, infection control, and safeguarding. Leadership and management is excellent because the services are extremely well-led, with highly effective governance arrangements in place. The staff teams are well-trained and have the required expertise, skills and qualifications. They are well supported by the management teams and are safely recruited.

No areas for improvement were identified, and no priority action notices were issued.

- **Joint CIW/HIW Inspection: Taf Ely Community Mental Health Team. Conducted in January 2026, the Inspection found:**

Taff Ely Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) provides compassionate, person-centred care, with staff demonstrating strong awareness of individuals' social, cultural, language and diversity needs. The team operates effectively through a single point of access, timely assessments and established out-of-hours pathways. Its integrated, co-located structure supports continuity and coordinated multidisciplinary working, and most Care and Treatment Plans reflected people's goals and strengths. Service users who responded to the survey reported highly positive experiences, describing staff as caring, supportive and responsive.

However, several areas for improvement were identified. Advocacy was not consistently or clearly documented in care records, despite its importance, and carers' assessments were variably recorded, suggesting some needs may have been overlooked. A significant rise in ADHD-related referrals has increased pressure on both clinical and administrative capacity, affecting service delivery. Additionally, physical health monitoring and associated documentation were not sufficiently robust, including for higher-risk individuals, posing potential safety concerns.

An improvement plan to address the areas for improvement will be actioned in 2026/27.

What do our inspectors say about our Children’s Services?

- **The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) was the subject of an inspection recommendation following an Improvement Check (IC) visit to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Children’s Services, in June 2025.**

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg EDT covers Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The service must provide help in a crisis to vulnerable adults, children in need and their families. Partners and practitioners reported challenges with staff sufficiency, record keeping, and practice. Leaders should work with regional partners to review these arrangements and promote improvements in a timely way.

A service development Improvement action plan to address the recommendation is in place and will be monitored and reviewed by the EDT Partnership Steering Group.

- **CIW Inspection: Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Service**

The Service is the regional adoption collaborative serving people living in the Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The Inspection conducted in December 2025, CIW found:

Strong governance, child-centred practice and comprehensive adopter assessments, while identifying improvements needed in consistent Welsh language compliance, adoption support equity and strengthened oversight of unannounced visits.

An improvement plan to address the areas for improvement is in place and will be monitored and reviewed the Regional Management Board.

b) Complaints and representations

Adult Services compliments and complaints

The statutory Social Services complaints and compliments process allows people in receipt of support and their families to provide feedback. The table below summarises complaints and compliments received this year and over the previous three years.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of complaints received	74	79	79
Number of compliments received	90	81	129

Most adult social care complaints are made by carers or relatives on behalf of the person receiving support. While not formally recorded, many appear to relate to adults whose age, disability or mental capacity may be protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Team and Adult Services work to ensure individual needs are considered throughout the complaints process, including making reasonable adjustments and referring any safeguarding concerns through the appropriate route.

As in previous years, Adult Services complaints remained low relative to the number of people using services and were consistent with recent years. By contrast, contacts to the Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Team increased, reaching 119 in 2025/26. These contacts support early resolution, with 100% resolved outside the formal complaints process.

Compliments also increased in 2025/26, providing useful insight into good practice and service users’ expectations and experience.

In 2025/26, Adult Services introduced reflective practice sessions to consider issues raised through Stage 2 complaints. Three sessions were held across the service, and training is being developed to cascade learning to frontline staff. Topics considered included self-neglect and hoarding, cognitive bias, and the impact of Court of Protection proceedings on families.

Issues relating to social care charging continue to be a focus of complaints, with relatives challenging the Council’s financial decisions. Delays in financial assessments cause frustration for families, and communication and public information in this area need to improve. To provide a clearer process for financial challenges, an appeals policy has been developed with neighbouring Councils. This will give Council staff and families greater clarity on how to deal with challenges relating to chargeable services.

Children’s Services compliments and complaints

The statutory Social Services complaints and compliments process allows child and young people and their families and carers to provide feedback. The table below summarises complaints and compliments received this year and over the previous three years.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Number of complaints received	89	83	79
Number of compliments received	55	43	59

Like Adult Services, Children’s Services complaints reduced slightly in 2025/26 and compared to the previous year. However, contacts to the Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints Team increased to 127, with 98% resolved outside the formal complaints process. Compliments also increased.

Most complaints came from parents or carers, with only two representations from children or young people. This may reflect effective advocacy and early resolution, but we will further consider how the Customer Feedback Team can reach young people, especially those placed out of county.

Complaints highlighted areas for improvement in support to children and families. The main themes were:

- Working with neurodiversity.
- Timeliness of complaint handling.
- Parental contact and parental alienation.

One complaint was investigated by the Ombudsman, leading to improvements in how decisions are made about accommodating young people where there are safeguarding concerns in the family. It also prompted reflective discussion across services and a review of existing processes.

c) Referencing other sources of information

The Council's Corporate Plan 'Working With Our Communities'
Council Performance Report 31st March 2025
RCTCBC Self-Assessment 2024/25
Annual Equality Report 2024/25

d) Glossary of terms

Term/Acronym	Description
Reablement / Rehabilitation / Interim care	This short-term care is sometimes called intermediate care, or aftercare. Reablement is a type of care that helps people relearn how to do daily activities, like cooking meals and washing. It is provided by local authorities with the aim of mitigating the need for long term care and support.
Domiciliary Care / Domiciliary Support Service / Home Care	Domiciliary care, also known as "care at home", refers to a broad range of care services provided in a person's own home. It can include assistance with day-to-day living and certain health care issues for the elderly.
Residential Care Home / Nursing Home	A residential care home provides accommodation and 24-hour personal care and support to the older people and others who may find it difficult to manage daily life at home. Both a residential care home and nursing home provide care and support 24 hours a day, however the main difference is that a nursing home is able to provide a higher level of care. Nursing homes have qualified nurses on-site around the clock to provide medical care as needed whereas residential homes help people with personal care and support them to engage in physical activity.

Glossary of terms

Term/Acronym	Description
Care Experienced Children	Care experienced is an umbrella term which can mean children / young people who are: • Looked after at home through a Care Order • Looked after away from home in a residential children's house, in a foster placement or in a kinship placement (Looked After or Non-Looked After) • Previously looked after, where at some point in their lives they have had any of the above experiences. The child / young person may never have been formally looked after.
Care Leaver	In Wales, care leavers are individuals who have been in the care of the local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and have left care on or after their 16th birthday. The support provided to care leavers is intended to be equivalent to what a child who has not been looked after might reasonably expect from their parents.
Children Looked After (CLA)	Children and young people who are 'looked after' don't live with their parents, either temporarily or permanently, because for many reasons they can't safely take care of them.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is about protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.
Wales Safeguarding Procedures	They detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Provides a useful glossary of safeguarding terms: <u>Safeguarding Wales</u>.
<u>Performance and Improvement Framework:</u> <u>Measuring activity and performance data</u>	This sets out a framework of metrics covering adults, children, and carers, which must be collected and submitted to Welsh Government together with anonymised person-level data and aggregated data on specific aspects of social care. It states local authorities should also gather their own data to understand better how the local delivery of social care is working according to local priorities.

Glossary of terms

Term/Acronym	Description
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)	CIW is the social care provider regulator. They will register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales.
Social Care Wales (SCW)	SCW is the workforce regulator. As part of this they register and set standards for the care and support workforce and develop the workforce. SCW also has an improvement remit, by which they will share good practice, set priorities for research and provide information for the public and other organisations.
Resident / Citizen	A person whose usual residence is within the local authority boundary.
Service User	A person who is accessing social services.
Shared Lives / Adult Placement Scheme	Shared Lives Schemes – also known as adult placements – are a family-based way of supporting a vulnerable person’s housing needs. This type of supportive accommodation can be the ideal stepping stone on the way to independent living. This sharing arrangement is often referred to as ‘shared lives’.
Direct Payments	Direct payments are issued to individuals to allow them to pay for their own care. They are a way that local authorities can help to meet individual’s eligible need for care and support, or a carer’s need for support. They are a way for people to arrange their own care and support.
Supported Living / Accommodation	Supported living accommodation is a type of housing that provides personal care, support or supervision to help people live independently. The care and support are separate from the housing contract. The accommodation can be shared or single, depending on the needs and preferences of the occupants.

Glossary of terms

Term/Acronym	Description
Unpaid Carer	An unpaid carer is someone who provides care and support to family members, friends, or neighbours who are affected by disability, physical or mental ill-health, frailty, or substance misuse. The carer does not need to be living with the person they care for.
Young Carer	A young carer is an unpaid carer who is up to the age of 18. They may be providing care and support to parents, siblings or other family members.
Care and Support Plan	A care and support plan is a document that sets out what has been discussed during a social care needs assessment and what is going to happen as a result. It is a plan which a local authority is required to prepare and maintain under section 54 (1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
Carer's Support Plan	If unpaid carers have needs that are eligible for support, the local authority has a statutory duty to plan for and meet those needs by providing a 'Carer's Support Plan.' Where eligible needs for support are identified for the unpaid carer, local authorities must ensure these needs are met.
Advocacy	Advocates in social care are independent from the local authority (local council) and the NHS. They are trained to help people understand their rights, express their views and wishes, and help make sure their voice is heard.
Prevention and Early Intervention	Prevention and early intervention are forms of support aimed at improving outcomes for people or preventing escalating need or risk. They are also sometimes referred to as early help or preventative services.
The Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014	The Regulations which introduced a new two stage process to deal with complaints and representations about local authority social services. It brings the process for social services in line with the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy and Guidance and the NHS Complaints Procedure Putting Things Right.

Glossary of terms

Term/Acronym	Description
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is a legal procedure in the UK designed to protect vulnerable people in care settings. It applies to adults who lack the mental capacity to give consent to their care arrangements and need to be deprived of their liberty. DoLS ensures that those who cannot consent to their care are protected when their arrangements deprive them of their liberty. It will be replaced by Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) in the future.
Mwy Na Geiriau / More than words	More than just words is a strategy and delivery plan to aim to improve the quality of care for individuals living in a bilingual country.
Extra care	The provision of a domiciliary care package to an individual living in supported living/ accommodation.
Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (ARWAP)	The Welsh government plan to tackle racism and make 'meaningful and measurable changes' to the lives of BAME people in Wales. The plan aims to make Wales an anti-racist country by 2030.
Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA)	Refer to contacts and referrals – consent and level of information recorded – link to proportionate assessment.
Not in education, employment or training (NEET)	NEET stands for "Not in Education, Employment, or Training". It refers to young people who are neither engaged in education or vocational training nor in paid employment. NEET individuals may experience social and economic disadvantage.
Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014	The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is a law that aims to improve the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and to transform social services in Wales.
Micro Carers	Micro Carers are small, community-based care providers designed to complement traditional home care. They offer a personalised approach, increasing choice and control for individuals with care needs while providing local entrepreneurs with opportunities to work within their communities.