



**Rhondda Cynon Taf
County Borough Council**

**Social Services Annual Report
2018-19**

June 2019

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 As the Statutory Director of Social Services for Rhondda Cynon Taf, I am pleased to present my Annual Report for 2018-19. It explains how the Council's Social Services performed over the year and progress made against the priorities we set out in last year's report. It also highlights the priorities we have set for 2019-20.
- 1.2 Social Services is one of the Council's key functions. Our Wellbeing Services, Adult Services and Children's Services have a dedicated and committed workforce. We provide a wide range of services and support throughout the County Borough. The services protect and support vulnerable children, young people, adults, families and carers. Our aim is to help people to live safely and independently in their own home for as long as possible, which we know helps to improve their long-term wellbeing.

Our priorities and where we are heading

- 1.3 What we do and how we do it is framed by several things. This includes laws such as the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, both of which focus on wellbeing, prevention, partnership, collaboration and integration, and involving people. With other organisations, we have also assessed the needs of the population.
- 1.4 We work to meet the care and support needs of all those who need our help, and the wider community. We have an emphasis on helping:
 - People with learning disabilities
 - Older people with complex needs and long-term conditions, including dementia
 - Carers including young carers
 - Families and individual members of families
 - Children with complex needs due to disability and illness
 - People with physical impairment and / or sensory impairments
 - People who have experienced adverse childhood experiences
- 1.5 Our assessments have also told us the following are important to people:
 - Getting information, advice and assistance
 - Stopping problems before they start
 - Stopping problems before they get worse
 - Connecting people to their community
 - Seamless services i.e. different organisations working together as one
 - Making it personal and working with people who need help
- 1.6 Our longer-term aims, which have featured in previous reports, continue to guide our work and what we deliver:
 - Remodelling services for adults to minimise the need for intervention and to maximise people's independence by more prevention and early intervention.
 - Integrating the commissioning of social care services with primary and community health care services to improve the experience of users and to manage more effectively the huge cost of Accident & Emergency and hospital admissions.

- Ensuring more young people with complex disabilities will stay in Rhondda Cynon Taf where they grew up, and live in their own homes, with opportunities to engage in education, training, culture and the arts, thus helping them to grow in independence.
- Delivering more support in the community to people with mental health issues to help them stay well, re-engage in learning, find and keep a job and remain active, with support focused on helping people with their whole life, not simply a diagnosis.
- Helping the area's residents to be some of the most active and healthy in South Wales, benefitting from our leisure facilities, theatres, libraries and heritage sites, parks and open spaces.

What is in this report?

- 1.7 This report summarises our performance in the 2018-19 financial year. Over and above our performance in the day-to-day delivery of services, it highlights progress and developments against the priorities for action we set out in last year's report. Producing this report helps us to be accountable to the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf and open about what we are doing and why.
- 1.8 After this introduction, there are five main parts. **Part 2** provides an overview of the performance of our Adult Services and Children's Services. **Part 3** explains how people are shaping our services and what we do.
- 1.9 **Part 4** reports on action we have taken and are taking to improve people's well-being. It reports on the outcomes people want to achieve and how we work with them, and what we have done to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and well-being. It also covers action to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect and harm, and help for people to develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships. Last but by no means least, it reports the action we have taken to help people to live in accommodation which meets their needs.
- 1.10 **Part 5** explains how as a department we operate, our workforce, our financial resources and how we plan, and our work with other organisations in the area. Given this is a summary report, **Part 6** provides sources of information for further reading if required.

2. Summary of performance

- 2.1 I am pleased to report our teams across Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council have again delivered a high quality of service to people needing care and support. We have continued to demonstrate commitment to joint working, innovation and creativity in further developing our strategic partnerships and new models of care. We continue to work with others in the public, private and third sectors to provide the best services and support we can to help people to improve their wellbeing and to live safely and as independently as possible.
- 2.2 This report summarises our performance over the year. It highlights the scale of the services and support we have delivered, our achievements against plans and targets, and challenges. None of this would have been possible without the committed workforce we have at all levels and we have continued to invest in training, support and developments in the way we work. We are also fortunate to have political and corporate leadership support from the Council as a whole, which is vital to our ability to meet people's needs for services and support and for driving further improvements in services and transformation. This was recognised by Care Inspectorate Wales in its recent review of the Council's statutory social services functions.
- 2.3 The year has seen many developments. For me, some highlights have been the development of our Community Hubs, our Resilient Families Service and, our new models of accommodation for older people. These developments, which will bring further benefits to people's wellbeing, are over and above the wide range of action we undertake every day to meet our obligations to provide good levels of care and support to those with needs.
- 2.4 We are conscious the quicker we can provide help to families in need, the more likely a positive outcome. Our Resilient Families Service is all about quicker response times, sharper diagnosis and assessment of need, the removal of barriers to increase resilience, and improved delivery of family support services. The service is helping families with physical and mental health problems, parental separation, childhood trauma, abuse or offending and drug or alcohol misuse. Most families have been successfully managed by way of a lower level of intervention and possibly at an earlier stage. While it is too early to assess impact of the initiative, the initial indications are encouraging with reductions in referrals to planned care and support services, and enhanced communication and consistency in service delivery. I am pleased this has been also recognised by Care Inspectorate Wales.
- 2.5 An important part of our role in improving people's wellbeing is encouraging and supporting them to learn, develop and participate in society. Our Community Hubs development helps to join up public services, making them more cost effective and accessible. They provide a single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice and assistance to find support and a platform for learning, volunteering and to develop community capacity, and flexible community space for people to meet and socialise, thus helping to tackle loneliness and social isolation. As such, Community Hubs play an important part in preventing ill health and improving health and wellbeing.
- 2.6 We have also made considerable progress on developing alternative models of accommodation to provide more choice for older residents, enabling them to live healthily and safely for as long as possible, increasing independence and reducing social isolation, which are key parts of our agenda. Our Extra Care housing programme is well underway and we have developed plans to increase capacity for those with dementia.
- 2.7 As Director I am supported not just by my own team but by colleagues across the council where we are supported in our work to support the well-being of individuals. Whilst Social Services is within a distinct Council department, there are other things the council does, such as maintaining community-based services like libraries and leisure centres which contribute to the well-being agenda. The work of our staff requires a robust infrastructure and IT support

services and thanks to the support of dedicated staff within the group and our Corporate IT colleagues service during 2018/19 we successfully introduced the Welsh Community Care Information System (WICCS) and have enhanced our agile working arrangements. The Welsh Community Care Information System is a Welsh Government investment into a national IT solution. It provides a shared information platform that has been designed to support the delivery of improved care and support for people across Wales. When it is fully rolled out, it will be accessible to all health and social care professionals within Wales. It will assist staff to work together to plan, co-ordinate and deliver support and/or services for individuals, families, carers and the community.

- 2.8 I am also pleased that Council is also continuing to develop its corporate approach to safeguarding as evidenced in the update report to Overview and Scrutiny committee in February 2019.
- 2.9 I will end my summary by again taking the opportunity to again thank all the dedicated staff who continue to work tirelessly to ensure we provide the best possible response to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community.

3. How are people shaping our services?

- 3.1 We have continued to reach out to people who use our services and to the public more widely. We use a variety of approaches, including information and awareness raising, social media, surveys, meetings with people who use services and feedback questionnaires. We encourage feedback whether positive or negative and, in some cases, make special arrangements to help individuals to take part. This year we have placed a greater focus on the use of social media and our online platform, which makes it easier to see what residents are being asked.
- 3.2 “RCT Together” is the Council’s innovative approach to engaging with its residents and communities to explore how we can work together to develop alternative ways of delivering services and facilities. This helps us to keep them running in the future. The approach has led to several successful community asset transfers, which ensure they continue to provide valued services to local communities. For example, the leasehold transfer of St Mair’s Day Centre in Aberdare to Age Connects Morgannwg.
- 3.3 During the year, we engaged with people in many ways: For example:
- We facilitated a session with children looked after to review and develop the content of a website. This resulted in the launch of the “2 Sides” website as part of the existing “Wicid” web site. The latter is a youth information and media website produced by young people themselves. The site, which has more than 2,400 registered users, already runs features and information relevant to children looked after. Linking them was a logical step.
 - We liaised with a group of young people, the “Blue Print Forum”, which is facilitated by Voices from Care. They meet regularly to capture the views of young people. We use their feedback to inform the evaluation of our services and further developments. They are members of the Corporate Parenting Board and have also worked with our staff to develop a Leaving Care Support Framework and a housing strategy.
 - Children Services are involved with the Youth Engagement and Participation Service via our young person’s forum. This has been set up across the County Borough to improve the way we engage with young people. It consists of young people representing their schools. They in turn, report back to their School

Councils to enable young people to be involved in important issues which affect them. The Youth Engagement and Participation Service is making good use of social media. Its Facebook page receives approximately 30-40,000 hits per month while its Twitter page has 28-30,000.

- 3.4 We regularly review our services to ensure they meet people's needs and provide value for money. We consider carefully the findings of reviews, the results of surveys, the views expressed in consultations and people's comments when they contact us with complaints or to compliment us. A good example is the Maestrisant housing complex in Talbot Green.
- 3.5 Adult Services reviewed the provision of domiciliary care and support for four people at the Maestrisant complex, which is a 31-bed scheme. We consulted with each person receiving care and support from the internal Support @Home Maestrisant Service. We commissioned Age Connects Morgannwg to provide independent advocacy to support each person through the consultation process.
- 3.6 We know that we need to do more to ensure the voice of carers. Although the recent Care Inspectorate Wales inspection confirmed "*practitioners were well-motivated and increasingly adept at ensuring people's voices are heard; and ensuring this is incorporated into the assessment of their needs, and subsequent planning and delivery of individualised care and support*" we do recognise that enhanced support for carers will enable them to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes.
- 3.7 After engaging with the people receiving care and support, their advocates, families and social workers, we concluded a change of domiciliary care provider would be detrimental to them. While initially it was thought costs could be reduced by a change of provider, our consultation identified significant benefits to them physically and mentally from the knowledge, experience and continuation of care provided. We also identified that where appropriate and following assessment of need, other residents at Maestrisant could be included in the service provided thus allowing the current service to maximise the value for money and potentially provide better quality services to other residents by being on site.

What do people think of our services?

- 3.8 We use surveys to measure the quality of our services and to determine what outcomes we achieve by working with people to meet their care and support needs:
- 3.9 The table below provides the results of this year's survey for Adult Services and the two previous surveys in 2016-17 and 2017-18. The survey was based on a sample of adults aged 18 and over who had a care and support plan on the day the sample was drawn. It measures things which people tell us are important to them.

Table 1: Key service quality measures, Adult Services, 2016-17 to 2018-19

	Statement	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Change this year/last (%)
1	I live in a home that supports my wellbeing	87	89	93	●
2	I can do the things that are important to me	49	50	77	●
3	I feel a part of my community	52	52	69	●
4	I am happy with support from my family, friends, neighbours	84	88	97	●

5	I feel safe	76	79	94	
6	I know who to contact about my care and support	79	79	83	
7	I have received the right information or advice when I needed it	79	75	91	
8	I have been actively involved in discussions about how my care and support was provided	73	78	90	
9	I was able to communicate in my preferred language	93	94	95	
10	I was treated with dignity and respect	92	91	97	
11	I am happy with the care and support I have received	84	84	97	
12	It was my choice to live in a residential care home	67	60	56	

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Note: Percentages based on adults who answered each question with "Yes" or "Sometimes". Figures have been rounded.

3.10 All but one measure shows a positive change between this year and the previous year. The exception was Q12 which relates to being in a residential care home being a person's own choice. Most respondents – 290 out of the sample of 365 – preferred not to say or did not answer the question.

"I moved to Cwm Taf with a drug problem looking for a fresh start. The project worker and counsellor from Substance Misuse Services have been fantastic and I have now been abstinent for months. I joined the service user group and now I am not so isolated and really enjoying being around positive people. For the first time ever, I am looking forward to the future" (Male, 49 years of age)

"I was an opiate user in my early twenties after a traumatic life event. I lost my job, partner, my home and was on a downward spiral. I never thought I could escape! After a lot of persuasion, I finally engaged with services and was eventually put a substitute prescribing programme. It gave me space, for the first time I wasn't dependent on my dealers. I wouldn't be in pain every day. Slowly I started to put my life together. Now I'm 15 years drug free have 2 beautiful children, and building my confidence and self-esteem with the service user group in Cwm Taf. I'm hoping to gain employment in the field because I love helping people on their recovery journey in the group" (Female, 42 year of age)

3.11 Table 2 provides the results of this year's survey of and the two previous surveys. The survey was based on children who had a care and support plan on the day the sample was drawn.

Table 2: Key service quality measures, Children's Services, 2016-17 to 2018-19

		(%)			
	Statement	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	Change this year/last
1	I live in a home where I am happy	94	99	98	
2	I am happy with the people I live with	96	99	99	
3	I can do the things I like to do	97	100	96	

4	I feel I belong in the area where I live	92	92	92	
5	I am happy with my family, friends and neighbours	97	97	98	
6	I feel safe	97	99	96	
7	I know who to speak to about my care and support	97	94	94	
8	I have had the right information or advice when I needed it	94	92	89	
9	My views about my care and support have been listened to	96	98	93	
10	I have been able to use my everyday language	98	99	98	
11	I was treated with dignity and respect	98	98	98	
12	It am happy with the care and support I have had	96	97	96	
13	I have had advice, help and support that will prepare me for adulthood (16 and 17-year olds only)	--	86	90	

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Note: Percentages based on children who answered each question with "Yes" or "Sometimes". Figures have been rounded.

3.12 Overall, the above tables show that children looked after report exceptionally high levels of satisfaction with the Council's services and support. For all but one measure, far more than 90% of children are satisfied. While the red coloured flags denote the direction of change and apparent reduction in satisfaction compared to last year's very high levels of satisfaction, the difference is marginal in some cases (e.g. 1 percentage point). The rounding of results to the nearest whole number may also have affected some figures.

3.13 Over and above the national outcome measures, some of our individual service areas also have mechanisms for collecting feedback. For example, of the 300 people who responded after receiving help from our Support@Home (Intermediate Care and Reablement) service:

- 92% said they had discussed and agreed targets, goals and outcomes before starting to receive the service.
- 94% rated the service as "very good" or "excellent".
- 95% said they had achieved their goals.
- 97% said they had been able to maintain or improve their independence.

3.14 The Quality Assurance Framework developed for our own residential care homes has also enabled us to place greater emphasis on hearing people's views and experiences. We send questionnaires to residents and their families. Of 58 residents and 68 family members, friends or advocates who returned forms in one survey:

Residents

- 98% reported their care home showed an interest in their health and always ensures their needs are met
- 96% reported they their privacy and dignity was respected at all times
- 87% reported their religious and cultural beliefs were respected

Family members, friends and advocates

- 94% reported they felt the personal needs of their relative / friend were assessed regularly and were extremely happy that the home fully met their needs
- 91% reported they strongly agreed they were made to feel welcome when they visited the care home
- 90% reported they strongly agreed staff were readily available and approachable

- 3.15 A testimonial from one young person illustrates what our support can make and the difference it can make to people's lives.

"I am a 16-year-old male who has been in a substance misuse service for over 6 months. During this time I have worked with my caseworker to look at my substance use and how to control it, I have done work around harm reduction and triggers to help me cut down to give up, they have helped me to control my substance use to a level I was happy with. From my substance use I disengaged with many things that I enjoyed; with help I have started to engage back with that I enjoy. With support, I was able to attend the Recovery Walk up Pen y Fan and it was a great day as I had never been up there before, and I was able to meet new people. At the moment I am attending the new young people's service group and enjoying it has I get to meet new young people and look at what we can do to help others, I have successfully gained employment and am also working shifts at the local rugby club. I would like to say thank you as I am substance free for over 10 weeks and this was from help and support from services. My relationship with my family has got a lot better and I am able to speak openly with them if I have a problem, this was never the case before as I always used substance to help me. Thank you"

- 3.16 All survey results and any supporting comments from people who receive our services are used to plan developments to further improve the services we deliver. Self-assessment is also being used to identify possible improvements.

Complaints and compliments

- 3.17 We welcome and appreciate the compliments we receive. While we are disappointed to hear of occasions when a service hasn't met people's expectations, we also appreciate people who take the time to tell us. The table below summarises the number of complaints and compliments received in the last four years.

Table 3: Number of complaints and compliments received, Adult Services and Children's Services, 2015-16 to 2018-19

		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Adult Services	No. of complaints received	68	82	51	56
	No. of compliments received	156	102	102	124
Children's Services	No. of complaints received	89	106	114	32
	No. of compliments received	86	62	41	39
Total	No. of complaints received	157	188	165	88
	No. of compliments received	242	164	143	163

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

- 3.18 The last year is encouraging in that for both Adult and Children's Services, there were more compliments than complaints.

- 3.19 While we aim to prevent the need for people to complain in the first place, when a complaint is made, we consider it an opportunity to get even better at what we do and to learn from it to ensure similar issues are avoided in future. For example, in Adult Services this has led to:
- The development of an information pack for parents of adults making the transition to supported living.
 - Improvements to the timeliness of decision-making in relation to the transition process for adults with complex learning disabilities.
 - Improvements to the management of additional calls for Homecare using mobile device alerts.
- 3.20 We recognise people are themselves best placed to make judgements in relation to their own wellbeing. In its recent inspection of our services, the Care Inspectorate Wales highlighted the increasingly effective systems we have in place to support on this. It also concluded our practitioners are well-motivated and increasingly adept at ensuring people's voices are heard; ensuring it is incorporated into assessment of needs, and subsequent planning and delivery of individual care and support. It highlighted more work needs to be done for carers and we agree. We have identified this as a priority for action in the next financial year.

Welsh language

- 3.21 Nearly 28,000 people in Rhondda Cynon Taf speak Welsh (2011 Census) which is slightly more than 1 in 10 of the population (12.3%). The Welsh Language Standards apply to all local authorities. This means everyone in Wales can expect the same approach to the Welsh Language in services, ensuring it is treated the same as the English language with all Councils offering people the opportunity to receive services from us, as well as from those funded by us, in Welsh.
- 3.22 In 2018-19, we have enhanced our approach for service users who wish to communicate in Welsh. Our approach is shaped not only by the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Government's "Follow-on Strategic Framework for Welsh Language Services in Health and Social Services" but also by our commitment to delivering services which meet people's needs. We work closely with our colleagues in the Council's Welsh Language Service and use the Cwm Taf "More than Words" quarterly forum to ensure we are complying with statutory requirements.
- 3.23 We reviewed our progress against the Welsh Language Standards. As a result, all our correspondence and written material available to the public for Adult and Children's Services, including online information and our content on DEWIS Cymru, the national website for people who are looking for information or advice about well-being, is available bilingually. If someone corresponds with us in Welsh, we will respond in Welsh. All our staff are aware of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and what it means for how they work. We also monitor all our external service providers to ensure each complies with the Standards.
- 3.24 Our front-line staff make an active offer of communication in Welsh if it is someone's preference. Arrangements are then made for a Welsh speaking member of our staff to have the conversation and to work with them. We record people's language preference on our system, which informs subsequent communication, and we check preferences on language when core data is checked. No complaints were received during the year about services from Adult Services or Children's Services being available in Welsh. However, we are not complacent, and we will continue to work in a way which meets people's needs.

3.25 We continue to encourage and support staff to learn Welsh in several ways including learning sessions, learning programmes and courses (including intensive courses), and online training modules. Our services have continued developments which enable staff to access Welsh language support tools on their computers. We are also considering the use of an App “More than Just Words” to further support our social workers and care staff. During the year, 107 members of Adult and Children’s Services staff attended our mandatory Level 1 training and 14 received additional support from our Welsh Language tutor. The latter was provided after we identified several residents on the site of our Pentre House project speak Welsh. While it would be beneficial to have more Welsh speaking staff, we believe we currently have enough Welsh speakers to meet the demand for services delivered through the medium of Welsh.

What are our priorities for next year?

- Ensure compliance on Welsh language preference at review when the core data is checked and ensure the Welsh Community Care Information System is updated
- Work with external providers via the contract terms and conditions to ensure Welsh language requirements are met

4. Promoting and improving the wellbeing of people we help

- 4.1 One of the Council's priorities is promoting independence and positive lives for everyone in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Social Services play an important part. Helping to improve the wellbeing of people who need care and carers who need support is at the very heart of our work. We aim to make a real difference to their lives. We cannot do this alone.
- 4.2 We work closely with many other organisations to help vulnerable children, young people, adults and families. We are committed to delivering high quality services and improvements and changes to provide people with support they need when they need it.
- 4.3 In delivering our services, we continue to face big challenges - financial, population changes, and others. Only by working together with others can we respond to the challenges. One of the ways we do this is through a regional partnership. With our partners, we looked at the needs of our population and identified the action we need to take over a five-year period. The Cwm Taf Regional Plan 2018-23¹ describes what will be done and is the basis for our work.
- 4.4 This part of the report describes what we have done over the last year. It includes the priorities we set for 2019-20 after reviews undertaken the previous year. Reviews undertaken by other organisations have also informed what we will do in 2019-20. The priorities are developments we feel will help us to further improve the services and support we offer and, most importantly, the lives of those who receive them.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

- 4.5 As part of our self-evaluation, we decided on a range of priority actions to support children and adults, to be delivered during the 2018-19 year and we included these priorities in last year's Annual Report. We said we would:
- Prioritise the integration of services for: Older people with complex needs and long-term conditions, including dementia; People with learning disabilities; Carers, including young carers; Integrated Family Support Services; and Children with complex needs due to disability or illness.
 - Deliver new accommodation models to improve outcomes for those individuals who need support to live independently and continue to work jointly with Linc Cymru to deliver the Council's Extra Care Housing Development Programme.
 - Make better use of technology solutions to maintain people's independence in their home and prevent escalation of need increasing.
 - Implement the Resilient Families Service and secure the engagement of internal and external partners to deliver the Resilient Families Programme
 - Promote engagement with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure coproduction and that the voice of the children and young people are heard.
 - Implement the National Adoption Support Framework in the area to ensure the children are placed for adoption reach their full potential and have opportunities to achieve.
 - Ensure there is offer of a direct payment to all people with eligible care needs

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

Information, Advice and Assistance Services

- 4.6 Last year, we helped 6,800 adults with information, advice and assistance. This is an increase of 4% over the previous year. The increase is significantly less than the jump of 30% between 2015-16 and 2017-18 but continues the trend of increasing demand for the service.
- 4.7 During the year, 2,990 people were assessed for care and support needs, a 10 per cent increase over the previous year. Of those, nearly 3 out of 4 assessments (72.74%) led to a care and support plan being prepared. We narrowly missed our target for the year of 70.15%, which was the same as our performance the previous year. We aim for the lower figure as this means we are getting better in helping people to find different solutions to a formal care and support plan.
- 4.8 The number of reviews of care and support plans was 7% higher than the previous year. 4,286 review were completed compared to 4,013 in 2017-18. Nearly half of the reviews (49.6%) were completed within an agreed timescale, which is a small improvement on the 46.5% the previous year.
- 4.9 We commissioned an independent review of our Community Review Team to evaluate its impact on performance and service quality. The review set out the opportunities and challenges in how we deliver and made recommendations for the authority to consider. We will use this report in 2019-20 to help us to further improve the service.
- 4.10 Given the role carers play in helping people to stay living in their home and community, meaningful and beneficial support for them is vital. We will continue to focus on doing this as a priority. Over the twelve months, 246 assessments of carers' support needs were undertaken of which 84 (34%) resulted in a support plan for the carer. This compares to 206 and 39 (19%) in the previous year.
- 4.11 We have reviewed our Carers Support Project. As a result, we have invested in the Service and its capacity with the aim of improving the take-up of carer assessments.

Table 4: Key national performance indicator - Information, Advice and Assistance Service, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Percentage of adults who have received advice and assistance from the IAA Service and have not contacted the service for 6 months (Measure 23)	74.64%	80.00	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

- 4.12 As the above table shows, 4 out of 5 adults who received information, advice and assistance from our service did not contact us in the 6 months after. We exceeded our target for this year and improved on the previous year's figure of 74.62%.
- 4.13 Our Children's Services provided information, advice or assistance to 5,670 children and families. This is a marked increase (14%) over the numbers helped the previous year. There was a similar increase (11%) in the number of assessments completed during 2018-19. A total of 7,170 assessments were undertaken this year, up from 6,488 in 2017/18.

4.14 The increase in the level of assistance provided and assessments undertaken is due to improvements we have made for people to access the services of our Resilient Families Service through our Information, Advice and Assistance Service.

Table 5: Key national performance indicator - Information, Advice and Assistance Service, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales	98%%	97.14%	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

4.15 Our performance on completing assessments for children within the statutory timescales was marginally below (0.86%) our target of 98%. However, it is a notable improvement on the previous year's figure of 93.3%

Case Study - Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve.

Mr A contacted the Information, Advice and Assistance Team requesting support for himself and his two young children. Following a “What Matters” conversation, Mr A was able to identify that as a single parent he was isolated and felt unable to access community projects and this was impacting on the care he was providing to his children.

Mr A was referred to the Resilient Families Service. An assessment identified that the family required short term intervention to enable him to build confidence in his parenting and sustainable changes that benefitted the children. This resulted in the family engaging in community activities and no longer requiring intervention from Children’s Services.

Integrating services

4.16 We continue to work with many organisations to deliver more integrated services. Looking at alternative ways of doing things is a key part of the way we work. We do this by drawing on the results of service reviews and evaluations, our performance monitoring systems, and feedback from service users. We also take advantage of opportunities e.g. if a vacancy occurs in a team, we consider whether services improvements or economies can be made by deploying the resource in a different way. This stems not only from a need to ensure our services remain sustainable in increasingly challenging times and to make the best possible use of our limited and decreasing resources but also our desire to give people better services and support.

4.17 More information on developing more integrated services and working with our partner organisations will be seen throughout the report.

4.18 Our joint working with the housing sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf was featured in a report commissioned by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru. The study is part of work to implement “A Healthier Wales” and was supported by the Welsh Government. Our two training flats with Trivallis housing association which help individuals in care to make the transition to living independently on their own were highlighted. So too was our partnership working with Cynon Taf housing association to remodel its Pen Llew Court property into 19 one-bedroom flats for adults with learning difficulties.

Delivering new accommodation models

- 4.19 We are committed to improving residents' wellbeing by ensuring people can live and age well at home in their community. This can be seen from our ambitious strategy to modernise accommodation options for older people.
- 4.20 Extra Care housing is one of the ways we are taking this forward. The model is designed to enhance the wellbeing and independence of older people and is an alternative to institutional care home settings. It provides more choice for older residents, enabling them to live healthily and safely for as long as possible, increasing independence and reducing social isolation.
- 4.21 We have made solid progress over the year.
- The Extra Care housing on the site of the former Maesyffynnon Care Home in Aberaman is under construction and due to open in 2019. It will provide 40 modern units of accommodation plus communal facilities such as a dining room; hair salon; guest suites; lounge and laundry and an activity room. Respite accommodation will also be provided.
 - A pre-planning application consultation for 60 units of accommodation on the former Magistrates Court Site, in Pontypridd was undertaken in August 2018. The proposal is designed to ensure sustainable arrangements are in place to commission increasing levels of care for people within the scheme; including dementia care.
 - We have taken forward the planning for the former Ysbyty George Thomas hospital site in Treorchy. We have also explored the use of a site in Porth and we have identified a preferred site in Mountain Ash.
- 4.22 We have also made good progress on the Crown Avenue sheltered housing scheme in Treorchy in partnership with Trivallis. The development will create new supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities.
- 4.23 As part of our commitment to deliver new accommodation models, we have been working with Ategi to explore opportunities to increase the availability of current "Shared Lives" provision. The aim is to expand the model of care to offer support both short and long-term to a wider range of people who have an assessed need. We relaunched the Shared Lives scheme to identify and recruit additional carers. As a result, the number of short and long-term placements has increased and action to recruit more carers is ongoing.
- 4.24 We reviewed the sleep-in arrangements in our learning disabilities supported-living schemes to provide a better understanding of when support is required and to determine the optimum levels of support through the most effective combination of staff and technology. The findings from the trials will be implemented, in partnership, in early 2019.

Making better use of technology

- 4.25 We have finalised an assistive technology strategy to inform the commissioning of a new model for equipment, assistive technology, community alarms and response services. The draft model was signed off by Cabinet in March. Project development will commence as soon as confirmation of transformational funding is received from the Welsh Government.
- 4.26 Our work with the Innovate Trust has continued. We have piloted the use of assistive technology to support people with learning disabilities to live more independently in the local

community which is better for them and helps reduce the cost of services. The Trust secured additional funding from a trust fund to expand technology and purchase smart devices for all the people it supports in the locality [November 2018 – January 2019]. This means a further 54 people with learning disabilities in the area received access to smart technology². To support the project, the Trust recruited and trained two Digital Champion Volunteers with learning disabilities to act as peer mentors and to help their friends to access and use this new smart technology.

4.27 The work has been extended to develop alternative “outcome-based day opportunities” initially for Supported Living residents. We have also agreed with the Innovate Trust to increase volunteer involvement through University of South Wales student population.

4.28 We are currently supporting United Welsh Housing Association with the development of a “SMART house” in Gilfach Goch, which will be the first property of its kind in the area. It is being funded by United Welsh as a pilot project to evaluate how SMART home technology can promote the independence, wellbeing and engagement for tenants.

Resilient Families Service

4.29 We have implemented our Resilient Families Programme and made good progress with its development and operation. The service, which builds on our original “Team around the Family” arrangements, is geared to quicker response times, sharper diagnosis and assessment of need, the removal of barriers to increase resilience, and improved delivery of family support services.

4.30 Partnership with other organisations is inherent in our approach. Barnardo’s was commissioned to deliver the Families Team element of the service. The other core elements – The Assessment, Brokerage and Review Team, the Families Plus team and the Children with Additional Needs Service – are delivered by us. Working closely with other organisations, we have incorporated additional support services, including a Young Persons Homelessness Support Worker (with Llamau), Specialist Health Visitors and Community Nursery Nurses, and our new Universal Parenting and Young Persons Support frameworks.

4.31 We estimated approximately 1,200 families would be referred to our Resilient Families Services its first full year of operation. The service started in January 2018. By August 2018, the service had already engaged with over 1,000 families. Analysis of the referrals indicates that the numbers were consistent and showed no signs of slowing down. At that point it suggested a potential 60% increase over the estimated figure to around 2,000. In the event, the volume of referrals did slow down before the end of the financial year. However, the full year total number of referrals received was 1,608 which is still a significantly higher figure (34%) than anticipated. The service is helping families with physical and mental health problems, parental separation, childhood trauma, abuse or offending and drug or alcohol misuse. Importantly, only around 1 in 20 (6%) of the referrals had to be escalated to Children’s Services, which means for the vast majority were successfully managed by way of a lower level of intervention and possibly at an earlier stage.

4.32 Given the voluntary nature of the service, there is always the prospect of families refusing to engage with the support on offer. The intervention completion rate of 72% suggests that most families opt to actively engage. This represents a 22% improvement on the 2016-2017 engagement rates with the previous service. This is encouraging. However, we are committed to improving the take-up of the service where possible. Our evaluation indicates more than 9 out of 10 of the families that engaged (95%) benefited from the help and support provided.

Case Study – Resilient Families Service

A referral from Health Visitor made as a result of concerns about a child who lived with his mother, stepfather and siblings. All the children had health concerns, which the mother was trying to manage with the help of the maternal grandmother. The mother was also being investigated for health problems. The stepfather was an alcoholic who has tried on numerous occasions to stop drinking. He had to give up work due to his alcohol addiction as it involved driving. He was spending a great deal of time in bed, so the mother was carrying out all the family routines. The mother also had concerns regarding another child's behaviour; the school reported he was disruptive and did not listen.

The Resilient Families Service helped the father to attend his first "Walk in clinic" to address his struggles with alcohol. Referral was followed up by an assessment and ongoing support, including appointments with his GP to address low mood. Medication was prescribed. As a result, the father was reported to be feeling the 'fittest' he has in years. The Service made enquires for training sessions to build his confidence and to give him something to focus on with the aim of employment, and he attended Communities4Work training sessions. The school reported improvements in the child's behaviour and the parents and school are in contact to ensure the positive behaviour continues. The relationship between the parents improved and they have been reported to be participating in activities as a family.

More engagement with Children Looked After

- 4.33 In line with our priority action, we have promoted better engagement with children looked after. We have done this in several ways and have continued our efforts to provide them with the information they need. Children looked after and young people are now provided with consultation documents for each review, depending on age, as are their parents and foster carers. The comments provided in these documents are used to inform the review process and the planning for individuals. A group of young people, the "Blue Print Forum", meets regularly to capture young people's views to inform service developments, evaluation and delivery. They are members of the Corporate Parenting Board. The group also works with staff from 16+ to develop a leaving care support framework and housing strategy. As mentioned in Part 3 of this report, we also worked with children looked after to develop the "2 Sides" website
- 4.34 Since the introduction of the National Advocacy Framework, all children and young people have access to advocacy and have an 'active offer. This ensures all children and young people who become looked after or whose names are on the Child Protection Register are visited by an independent advocate. During the year, the advocacy service received 303 new referrals, undertook 171 active offers and provided 132 young people with issues-based advocacy. Children and young people were supported and represented at 84 formal meetings, including 39 Child Protection meetings and 39 Children Looked After meetings.
- 4.35 The above action responds to a recommendation in the "Your Life Your Care" report, which was based on a survey of 4 to 18-year olds in the area in early 2018. The report³, published in April 2018, emphasised the importance of working with children and young people to ensure they are informed of when and why decisions are made about their care.
- 4.36 Children's voices must be heard in making decisions which affect them, and we are committed to doing this well. We use the Quality Assurance Framework to ensure it happens by making the necessary checks against the standard. In response to the report, we are developing Life Story work. We have set up a system to ensure it continues throughout a child's care journey and we are implementing it. The Children Looked After Quality Assurance Framework for Schools sets standards to be met when children are looked after.

We have also introduced Foster Care Pioneers whose role is to help other foster carers to liaise with schools on education issues which children in their care may be experiencing.

4.37 Our plan to implement the National Adoption Support Framework has been delayed. The National Adoption Support Framework is due to be issued. While we have been unable to take specific action on the Framework, we have undertaken an audit of our current system and a provisional local framework has been put in place.

Ensuring an offer of Direct Payments

4.38 We have worked with people receiving a direct payment to explore opportunities to improve the support available to them. We did this by the recommissioning of a support contract, which was completed in March 2019.

4.39 The table below shows the progress we have made in supporting the uptake of Direct Payments over the past 3 years:

Table 6: Take-up of Direct Payments, RCT, 2016-17 to 2018-19

Children's Services		Adult Services	
2016-17	127	2016-17	339
2017-18	134	2017-18	358
2018-19	154	2018-19	373

Source: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

4.40 We also undertook a best practice review into which high-performing local authorities promote and make the offer of direct payments with the aim of increasing the uptake in the area by targeting managed accounts.

Table 7: Key performance indicator - Percentage of clients choosing own providers through Direct Payments, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Percentage of clients choosing their own service providers through Direct Payments	15.5%	16.07%	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

4.41 As a result of our work over the year, our performance has improved. We exceeded our target for the year and improved on the 14.67% recorded in the previous year. Although these are slight improvements, they show our action is starting to have an impact. It provides a solid foundation for further action to improve our performance in the future.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Strengthen the participation of children and young people in service delivery by continuing to promote engagement specifically with children looked after and partner agencies to ensure coproduction and the voice of the children and young people are heard.
- Improve local access to information advice and assistance provision for children, young people and families to promote their participation and engagement.
- Strengthen systems for recognising and supporting the needs of carers. Increase the number of carers assessments completed and offers accepted of support when needed.

- Remodel the delivery of Early Years as a result of the Regional Early Years Co-construction Project.
- Continue to work to reduce the need for statutory services by ensuring that children and families have coordinated integrated family support.
- Manage the Children and Communities Grant to commission effective integrated early intervention and prevention services.
- Further develop integrated service delivery to improve early intervention and prevention support informed by Vulnerability Profiling data.
- Develop and fully implement, across all service areas, a systematic and collaborative process for capturing the views of service users and their families about the impact of our support and services.
- Continue to embed strengths-based and outcome-focused assessment, support planning and review across Adult Services

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

What did we plan to do last year?

4.42 We said in 2018-19 we would:

- Develop new community-based models of service with a focus on prevention, independence, choice and wellbeing This will include actions in relation to day services; respite, carers, direct payments; telecare; StayWell@Home; home care
- Develop the capacity and quality of specialist care home provision to ensure people with a dementia no longer able to remain in their own homes can access specialist care locally
- Continue the Valley LIFE project to develop a range of services for older people with dementia which helps to support people to stay well at home for longer.
- Continue the work between Adult's and Children's Services to improve the way we support young people transitioning into adulthood.

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

Delayed transfers of care

4.43 Reducing delays in people being discharged from hospital remains one of our top priorities and we work closely with Cwm Taf University Health Board. It remains a significant challenge with market capacity in home care being a specific area for action during the year.

Table 8: Key national performance indicators - Delayed transfers of care, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons for people aged 75+ per 1,000 population aged 75 or over (Measure 19)	1.3%	3.4	
Rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons for people aged 18+ per 1,000 population aged 75 or over (Measure 19)	2.4%	5.1	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

- 4.44 Despite considerable effort, delays in transfer of care for social care reasons increased slightly during the year. There were 99 delayed cases for people aged 18 and over, of which 67 were for people aged 75 and over. The figures are higher than the corresponding number of cases in 2017-18 of 63 and 36 respectively.
- 4.45 We have worked hard to try and reduce delays due to the time taken to undertake assessments. However, there were 24 such delays over the whole year compared to 17 the previous year. An improvement can be reported in delays in transfer which were down to the choice of care home, which fell from 78 the previous year to 36 this year. There was also a marked improvement in delays in transfer due the availability of care homes, which fell from 47 in 2017-18 to 7 this year.
- 4.46 However, we are not complacent. We recognise there is more to do. For example, as we continue to help more people to remain in their own home rather than move into residential care, we face pressures in the supply and capacity of home care, particularly at peak times of the day.
- 4.47 We are continuing to work closely with providers to reduce delays. Our StayWell@Home service, the Brokerage Team we have developed, and our Support@Home service are all helping to minimise delays in arranging community care packages of support. We have looked to extend the Broker Service to cover residential care placements and pilot arrangements within selected teams to review effectiveness. As a result of our review, we will implement a bed booking system in 2019-20.

Reablement

- 4.48 Our reablement services provide intermediate care and rehabilitation to enable people to remain living in their home safely and independently. The support is available to anyone aged 18 and over who is a permanent resident of Rhondda Cynon Taf and is eligible to receive support.
- 4.49 A plan of support is discussed with the individual after we have worked with them to assess their needs and what they want to achieve. The service is provided free of charge for a maximum of six weeks subject to the person remaining in need of the support. If support continues for longer, charges are made in accordance with our policy on charging for non-residential social services⁴. Where necessary, specialist equipment and/or aids and adaptations for the home may also be arranged.
- 4.50 In 2018-19, our Reablement Service helped 995 people. The table below highlights our performance against key national indicators.

Table 9: Key national performance indicators - Support after reablement, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement & have a reduced package of care & support 6 months later (Measure 20a)	84.95%	85.43%	
Percentage of adults who completed a period of reablement and have no package of care and support 6 months later (Measure 20b)	77.23%	73.47%	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

- 4.51 We were successful in reducing the proportion of adults who, six months after we had provided reablement assistance, were able to live with a reduced package of care and support. Our performance of 85.43% was better than our target of 84.95%. This means more than 4 out of 5 people required less care and support after receiving help from our reablement services.
- 4.52 We fared less well on the proportion of people who, six months after receiving our Reablement service, required no care or support. Our performance of 74.47% came in just below our target of 77.23%.

Residential care homes

- 4.53 The average age of adults entering residential care increased slight to just under 87 (86 years 9 months). Our target was 85 years 3 months. This is encouraging. The more that can be done where possible to prevent people from having to enter residential care by providing alternative means of support in the community the better.

Table 10: Key national performance indicators – Residential care homes, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
The average length of time adults (aged 65 or over) are supported in residential care homes (Measure 21)	922.5	959.35	
Average age of adults entering residential care homes (Measure 22)	85.27 yrs	86.78 yrs	
Number of people admitted to residential or nursing care (Corporate Indicator)	400	420	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

- 4.54 In all, 420 people were admitted to residential or nursing care, 3 more than the previous year. Our performance is slightly behind where we wanted to be. On average, people aged 65 and over are being supported for slightly longer – around 37 days - than in 2017-18.

Community based services

- 4.55 Our Stay Well@Home Service continues to deliver well as an integrated response with partner agencies to reduce delayed transfer of care from hospital. The service operates at Prince Charles and the Royal Glamorgan acute hospital sites in Accident and Emergency and on wards from 8.00am to 8.00pm seven days a week.

Case Study – Stay Well @Home Service

Mrs A is 90 years old living on her own. She had friends nearby, but her son moved away and was therefore unable to visit as often. Support for her was via ad hoc arrangements with friends.

Mrs A was independent, able to undertake activities such as washing and dressing, and was mobile for short distances. She presented to Accident & Emergency at 4:00pm complaining of a headache and dizziness, which she felt were getting worse. Following investigations, Mrs A did not need to be admitted. A referral was made to the StayWell@Home hospital-based team, which responded within the hour. They started the assessment at 4:00pm, just two hours after attending hospital and held a 'what matters' conversation with Mrs A and her family. During the assessment, Mrs A's family raised concerns about her ability to manage at home and felt some formal support was required to manage activities of daily living. Initially, Mrs A was reluctant to accept she required support but wanted to go home. Following discussion about support networks and her abilities, Mrs A agreed she may benefit from someone helping her as she gets tired during the day, and she wanted her family to know she is ok.

Action taken by the StayWell@Home team included a therapy review of physical capabilities, a request for urgent key safe to be fitted the next day and arranged for a roller Zimmer frame to be provided to support her mobility. A care package was arranged to start the next day with a morning and evening calls. Meals on Wheels were also arranged to start the next day. As a result of the StayWell@Home hospital-based service, Mrs A was able to be discharged less than 3 hours after the assessment, avoiding the need to be admitted, an outcome which was in line with her wishes. A review was undertaken within the first 14 days of support, which identified Mrs A would benefit from slightly longer help with reablement. Mrs A regained independence in all personal care activities and meal preparation and as a result, the support could be ended after 3 weeks and 3 days without the need for long-term services.

This case study illustrates what is different with the new arrangements. The assessment undertaken outside of core hours using information shared across health & social care, using one record. A care/support package was established and agreed immediately, with an enabling approach used to increase level of independence and to reduce any dependence on long-term service provision.

- 4.56 Our Library Services continue to play an important part in promoting people's health and well-being and engaging people in social services developments. We have reviewed our Housebound Service. As a result, it will be re-branded as the @homelibraryservice and will be developed to protect the interests of people who have long-term illness, mobility problems or are full-time carers so that they can continue to access books without the need to attend a central location. In addition to consulting people in communities throughout the area, our libraries have also helped us engage with the public for the development of Community Hubs.

Dementia care home provision

4.57 Work is ongoing to increase the capacity and quality of specialist care home provision to ensure people with a dementia no longer able to remain in their own homes can access specialist care locally. For example, our proposal for the development on the site of the former Magistrates Court Site in Pontypridd is designed to ensure sustainable arrangements are in place to commission increasing levels of care for people over time, including dementia care.

Valley LIFE project

4.58 During 2018/19, we have worked with Cwm Taf and Linc Cymru to design the extra care housing scheme and dedicated community resources to be developed on the former Ysbyty George Thomas hospital site. We have secured additional ICF capital funding to support the development of the scheme.

In addition, we have worked with Cwm Taf to extend the specialist dementia intervention service in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This Service offers a needs led approach to understand and manage behaviours related to stress and distress that effect the wellbeing of a person with dementia. The service had previously demonstrated success providing support and education within the care home sector and the new arrangements ensures that the service can now respond to people in their own homes in the community of Rhondda Cynon Taf. To support the extension into the community the service has been enhanced by the inclusion of a senior practitioner social worker in the team to work alongside the additional psychology, occupational therapy and nurse practitioner resources.

Transition to adulthood

4.59 We have made progress on developing new models of care and pathways to achieve better outcomes for young people transitioning into adulthood. Working with partners, regional transition principles have been prepared. Workshops were held in March to produce the new models and a development plan for implementation. A multi-agency project team is now in place to take forward the developments.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Continue to develop new models of care to achieve better outcomes for young people transitioning into adulthood by focusing on preparing them for living as independently as possible.
- Undertake more work to implement arrangements for ongoing service user and carer engagement across Adult Services and to agree a strategy for annual delivery.
- We will be developing and delivering individualised support that is strength based and focuses on what young people and their families want. We will also be ensuring that children and young people who have been cared for are returned home to their families at the earliest opportunity and that the supports offered are evidence based and are part of a reunification framework

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

What did we plan to do last year?

4.60 During 2018/19, we said we would:

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

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

Child protection

4.61 At 31 March 2019, 498 children in the area were on the Child Protection Register. This compares to 502 a year earlier, a small reduction (1%) but nonetheless positive. Children who were on the Register for reasons of neglect rose very slightly from 148 at March 2018 to 150 in March 2019. Those on the Register because of emotional abuse increased from 243 to 263 over the same period.

Table 11: Key national performance indicator – Children Looked After, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Percentage of re-registrations of children on a Local Authority Child Protection register	8.0%	6.72%	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

4.62 The percentage of re-registration of children on our Child Protection Register was 6.72%. The figure, the lower the better, was ahead of our target of 8% and our previous year's performance of 8.1%.

- 4.63 During the year, 4 children become looked after on more than one occasion. Repeat admissions for children who became looked after on more than one occasion equates to 2.4% of all admissions.
- 4.64 Our Miskin Service helps young people who may be vulnerable, looked after, or at risk of becoming looked after. It has a preventative role e.g. preventing the inappropriate admission of young people into care and for those in care and whose placements e.g. in foster care, children's homes, are at risk of breaking down. It also help young people who are accommodated in an emergency to return home. On average, during 2018-19, the service received 50 referrals per month & accepted over 60% of these for intervention.
- 4.65 Over and above helping young people who find themselves in difficult circumstances, our Miskin project encourages learning and development. The team works with our Cultural Services to provide arts and music projects and with the Tai Education Centre providing outdoor activities. The aim is to get young people re-engaged with education through these activities and achieve recognised qualifications.

Supporting Children Looked After

- 4.66 Over the course of the year, 164 children became looked after, an increase of 5% on the previous year. A total of 837 children and young people were looked after during the year, a small reduction from 845 in 2017-18 and a continued downward trend from 884 in 2016-17.
- 4.67 Of the 837 looked after during the year, the total number being looked after at 31 March 2019 was 674, a marginal reduction from the 676 at the same point a year earlier. While the numbers in the area are still relatively high in comparison with similar authorities within Wales, we have not seen the increases experienced by some authorities. Children under 4 years of age are most of children becoming looked after (53%) followed by children less than 1 year old (32%). This is almost identical to the position for the previous year.
- 4.68 The commissioning mix of placements which favours placing children with carers in the County Borough continues to be positive. This has remained similar to last year with 70% of children looked after being placed with in-house foster carers and 30% with independent sector foster carers. Both figures are slight ahead of our target figures. The rise in the percentage of children looked after being placed with relatives has continued with 30% as at 31 March this year compared to 27% in March 2018. This is positive for the children concerned who are afforded the security and stability they need without being legally separated from their family.

Table 12: Key national performance indicators – Children Looked After, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	Our target	Our performance	Actual vs Target
Percentage of children looked after who were seen by a registered dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after	60%	79.2%	
Percentage of children looked after registered with a GP within 10 days of start of their placement	98%	89.3%	
Percentage of looked after children who have experienced 1 or more changes in school during a period or periods of being looked after which were not due to transitional arrangements	12.8%	12.8%	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

- 4.69 We comfortably exceeded our target for children who were seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after. Our performance of 79.2% - basically 4 out of 5 children – was considerably higher than our 2017-18 performance of 53.8%. Although a good performance, we will strive for further improvement in 2019-20 on this and on the percentage of children looked after who are registered with a GP. As the above table shows, we fell slightly short of our target this year.
- 4.70 We met our target of 12.8% in the percentage of looked after children experiencing changes in school which were not due to transitional arrangements. This was an improvement on our 2017-18 performance of 14.4%
- 4.71 During the year, 45 children were adopted, which is a marked, and very encouraging, increase from the 31 adoptions in 2017-18. Three of the children were adopted by their previous foster carers. Three were adopted by single carers, 10 by same sex carers and 32 by different sex carers. We continued our work on quality assurance with the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel initiative, which was introduced after an independent review. Our progress was recognised by Care Inspectorate Wales in its recent review of the Council’s statutory social services functions.
- 4.72 In partnership with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and with the support of the Welsh Government, we piloted a Fostering Well Being programme to improve wellbeing outcomes for fostered children. Foster carers, children and young people were recruited as pioneers, with foster carers running a helpline within Fostering Services for carers. In October 2018, we also launched the good practice guide the “Children Looked After School Quality Mark”.

Safeguarding

- 4.73 During the year, the Adult Safeguarding Team received 4,699 suspected adult-at-risk reports. This is 7% less than the number received the previous year (5,060). The reports resulted in further action in approximately 1 in 10 cases (9% or 418 cases)
- 4.74 Of reports received this year, 3 in 5 (60%) were Public Protection Notifications. The number of Section 126 enquiries (469), which are enquiries required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 when an adult is deemed to be at risk, decreased by 11% when compared to the previous year.

Table 13: Key performance measure – Adult protection enquiries, RCT and Wales, 2018-19

	RCT CBC Target	RCT CBC Actual	Actual vs Target
% of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days (Measure 18)	97%	93.57%	

Source: Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS)

- 4.75 Nearly 19 out of 20 adult protection (93.57%) enquiries were completed within 7 days. This is similar to last year’s performance (93.78%) but slightly below our goal of 97%.
- 4.76 In 2018-19, 13,137 contacts were received by the Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub for Children’s Services of which 1,889, (14%) had child protection concerns. In all, 1,451 of the 1,889 child protection contacts received (77%) proceeded to investigation. This compares with 16,470 contacts from April 17 to March 18, 12% (1938) of which related to child protection concerns & 85% of these resulting in an investigation.

4.77 An extensive programme of learning and development was delivered as a result of the multi-agency safeguarding training plan. More than 2,800 people from more than thirteen different organisations and council departments attended training events. The programme covered a diverse range of important subjects. It included safeguarding practice for children and adults, child protection, working with complex families, working with children involved in sexual exploitation and human trafficking. More than 300 people also received “Ask and Ask” training as part of implementing the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015

4.78

Case Study - Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

The Information, Advice and assistance team received a referral from a local school following a disclosure by Child B alleging that he had been hit with a belt by his mother. The case was identified as a child protection concern and referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub where a strategy meeting was held. Child B was spoken to at the school and it became evident that the child had been subject to inappropriate behaviour management styles within the home. Mother was arrested and as there were no family members the child was placed with foster carers until further enquiries could be undertaken. Following assessment, it was identified that the family originated from a country that used this form of punishment and had not initially understood professional concerns. The outcome was for work to be undertaken with the family which parents fully engaged with and Child B safely returned home with no further intervention from Children’s Services.

4.79 A series of safeguarding audits were undertaken during the year:

- Four multi-agency individual Adult Safeguarding case audits
- Audit of use of the ‘Professional Concerns Protocol’
- Quality of strategy discussions & Investigation decisions
- Use of advocacy in Safeguarding Adults Procedures
- Quality of decision-making in cases where there was no further action following S128 Reports
- Quality of decision-making in cases where there was no further action to protect required following S126 enquiries
- Learning from Repeat Safeguarding Reports for the same adults at risk
- Quality of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards case prioritisation decisions
- Correlation of Relevant People funded by Continuing Health Care and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications made
- Quality of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Best Interests Assessments
- De-registration of 16/17 year olds from the Child Protection Register
- Sexually Harmful Behaviour Audit
- Sexual Abuse Referral Centre referrals in Cwm Taf
- Six individual Children Safeguarding case audits

4.80 The audits and the training programme, which involved staff from many different organisations working in the area, helps to further develop practitioner knowledge, skills and values in relation to Adult Safeguarding. It helps ensure effective operation of the multi-agency initiatives such as the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. We are encouraged this is recognised by others. The Care Inspectorate Wales found an effective multi-disciplinary approach assists in promoting sound safeguarding practice.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Implement the Quality Assurance Framework.
- Strengthen the participation of children and young people in services delivery by continuing to promote engagement with Children Looked After and partner agencies to ensure coproduction and that the voice of the children and young people are heard.
- Develop the pioneer Foster Carer Programme to mentor foster carers who have children with challenging behaviour placed with them.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

4.81 In 2018/19, we said we would:

- Increase the number of Community Hubs and neighbourhood networks over a three-year period. This phased roll-out of the locations of these Hubs to be based on the results of the consultations and evidence of greatest need.
- Develop new community-based models of service with a focus on early intervention and prevention, choice, control and independence

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

Community Hubs

4.82 We have continued our development of Community Hubs and made good progress. Community Hubs encourage and support people to learn, develop and participate in society. They help to ensure better public services, which are joined up, cost effective and accessible. They provide a single point of contact within communities to access good quality information, advice and assistance to find support and a platform for learning, volunteering and to develop community capacity, and flexible community space for people to meet and socialise, thus helping to tackle loneliness and social isolation. As such, Community Hubs play an important part in preventing ill health and improving health and wellbeing.

4.83 The development of Community Hubs allows the Council to reconfigure its community assets and services. The facilities include a range of services provided by the public and third sector which are aligned with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. Bringing services together creates economies of scale in terms of staffing and building costs. Making better, more cost-effective use of our community assets allows resources to be reinvested in new or retrofitted, fit-for-purpose buildings to make services sustainable in the longer term. This year, we have:

- Agreed the leasehold transfer of St Mair's Day Centre to Age Connects Morgannwg. The Hub being developed by Age Connects Morgannwg will have a range of services for the local community.
- Developed, in partnership with a third sector organisation Fern Partnership, a Community Hub in Ferndale at the former Ferndale Infants School. It will serve the

Rhondda Fach area. The building work is nearing completion and the Hub is expected to open early summer this year.

- Developed a Community Hub at the former Mountain Ash Day Centre, which will serve the South Cynon area. It is expected open in early summer this year.
- Started to prepare plans to open a Community Hub at Porth Plaza, which is part of the regeneration of the town centre, and at the Llys Cadwyn, the former Taff Vale Precinct site which is being retained by the Council to provide a number of community-based functions.

4.84 Each Community Hub will support a “neighbourhood network” of community-based services. The network of Hubs will link services and communities together and help make more use of the excellent facilities provided by our local Third Sector organisations throughout the area. They make a significant contribution to people’s health and well-being with and without direct support from the Council.

4.85 The development of Community Hubs is helping us to modernise and reconfigure our open access community services. During the year, we consulted on the future of our four remaining open access Community Day Centres - Gilfach Goch, the Brynnar Jones Centre in Gelli, Teifi House in Maerdy, and the Nazareth Day Centre in Williamstown. There are increasing costs in running the centres, the majority of which are under-utilised, with potential significant capital investment will be required to retain them. The service model does not meet the needs of older people in the communities and is no longer sustainable.

4.86 We place great emphasis on community engagement on matter such as this, where decisions need to be taken on services and facilities. We engaged with people over a period of 6 weeks. We organised eight drop-in events, which were well attended by people who use the services and residents. We also ran an online survey. In total, 331 people response to the consultation. After careful consideration, the decision was made to close three centres, with Gilfach Goch being the one to remain open. We are working with Third sector organisations to explore alternative provision those affected, which includes the Community Hubs we are developing.

4.87 Over and above helping to support young people who find themselves in difficult circumstances, our Miskin project encourages learning and development. The team works with our Cultural Services to provide arts and music projects and with the Tai Education Centre providing outdoor activities. The aim is to get young people re-engaged with education through these activities and achieve recognised qualifications.

New community-based models of service

4.88 We have commenced work with the Rainbow Trust to explore opportunities to develop new day opportunities aimed to improving the employment chances of young people with a learning disability on transition from school or college

4.89 As part of our joint working with other, we now have 5 Community Co-ordinators covering the Cwm Taf University Health Board area. The posts are funded by the Welsh Government’s Integrated Care Fund. Three of the co-ordinators cover the Council’s area - Cynon, Taff Ely, and Rhondda – and one covers the Merthyr Tydfil Council area. The role of the fifth co-ordinator is to work specifically with primary care across the whole area. They engage with people in communities and provide information, advice and signpost to local community groups, activities and services, building strong local networks. As such, they complement our development of Community Hubs.

4.90 Community Zones are being developed and the implementation plan will consider how loneliness and isolation with young parents can be tackled. Loneliness and social isolation affect people of all ages. We secured a £120,000 Transformation Grant from the Welsh Governments Museums, Archives and Libraries Division to renovate the interior of Tonypanyd Library. This has created a modern library with community spaces including rooms for confidential advice sessions and a new dedicated area for people of all ages to create and collaborate on projects. A new IT suite has also been created for Work Clubs such as Digital Friday and adult education classes. As part of the Cwm Taf Public Services Board's priority action, we participated in volunteering fayres in Treorchy Comprehensive School and Merthyr College with the aim of aligning the interests of young people in the work needed to meet the community challenge element of Welsh Bacculaureate and Duke of Edinburgh awards

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Develop new community-based models of service with a focus on prevention, independence, choice and wellbeing, including day services; respite, carers, direct payments, telecare, StayWell@Home and home care.
- Review the changes made to the single point of contact for service provision to realign with the development of the Community Zones.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

4.91 We said we would:

- Continue to work with Children's Services to develop a practice - led approach that improves the way we work with young people and their families throughout their life and at the critical time of transition to adulthood.
- Develop a plan to implement a Regional Fostering Service in line with the recommendations of the National Fostering Framework.
- Complete development of Learning Disability Day Opportunities Strategy and prepare an effective business case for the remodelling of current service delivery model

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

Children's Services

4.92 We have continued to work with Children's Services in regards to Transition arrangements. During 2018/19 we implemented Principles of Transition which were developed on behalf of

the Cwm Taf Safeguarding board and have also developed a Strategic Transition and Operational transition Group which will involve not only Children's Services but other Multi Agency Partners to ensure that we are planning effectively for young people approaching adult hood.

These groups will drive ongoing practice development to improve the transition arrangements for young people and we continue to embed a culture of learning and development by arranging Practitioner forums to develop a consistent approach to transition and support provided to individuals and their families.

Regional Fostering Service

4.93 We aim to give children a great start in life by improving our fostering services and by recruiting more foster carers. In December 2018, our Cabinet approved a proposal to collaborate with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council BC to create a single Cwm Taf regional 'Front Door'. This reflects the priority in last year's report to develop a regional service with locally driven recruitment and marketing activity in line with the National Fostering Framework. It also brings the assessment of potential foster carers back into Council services. The new arrangements were implemented in April 2019. The Council's Contact Centre is now handling all fostering recruitment enquiries, processing applications, coordinating the marketing function and supporting potential foster carers through the process of becoming a Foster Carer for the Cwm Taf region. Whilst it is too early to establish the full impact of the change, early signs are positive with calls being responded to more efficiently and initial visits carried out promptly.

Learning Disability Day Opportunities Strategy

4.94 We progressed the development of a Learning Disability Day Opportunities Strategy and remodelling of current service delivery mode. A set of options was prepared, and the service continues to consider the redesign of services to become more outcomes focused. We delayed the draft report in light of intentions for regional commissioning and to co-produce options with the people who use services and their parents and carers. We held workshops with all stakeholders in February and March 2019 to develop the strategy and implementation plan. We have set a revised target date of July 2019 to allow further co-production with people with a learning disability and their parents /carers in order to finalise the priorities for change.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Continue to work to reduce the need for Statutory Services by ensuring that children, young people and families have coordinated integrated family support earlier.

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

What did we say we would do?

4.95 We said in 2018/19 we would:

- Complete the development and build of the modular construction for the Extra Care Housing to provide more choice for older residents to enable them to live

healthily and safely for as long as possible, increasing independence and reducing social isolation.

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

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

Extra Care Housing

- 4.96 As reported earlier in this report, and in response to the first two priorities listed above, we have made solid progress against our plan to develop more Extra Care accommodation, an alternative to institutional care home settings, which is designed to enhance the wellbeing and independence of older people.
- 4.97 Our Extra Care accommodation on the site of the former Maesyffynnon Care Home in Aberaman is due to open in September 2019. In August last year we undertook a pre-planning application consultation to build on the site of the former Magistrates Court in Pontypridd. Construction of the accommodation on the former Ysbyty George Thomas hospital site in Treorchy is due in summer 2019.
- 4.98 We concluded our major review of existing residential care home and day centre provision for older people. The review was commissioned to help us understand the future service need within the wider strategic context of enabling more people to live independently in their own homes rather than in institutional settings. We have undertaken a 12-week consultation (January to April 2019), the outcome of which will inform future decisions.

Accommodation for people with learning disabilities and vulnerable people

- 4.99 Our partnership working with Cynon Taf housing association to develop better accommodation for people with learning disabilities by remodelling Pen Llew Court in Aberdare has now passed the tender stage. The original 34 homes flats and maisonettes are being converted into 19 one-bedroom flats. It means people will not be living in just one bedroom but will have their own front door, a living room and bedroom, kitchen, and adapted shower. Support will be available on site 24/7. The goal is for individuals to be able

to live in a community not an institution. The complex will include community facilities. Completion is anticipated by the end of 2019.

- 4.100 The development sits well with the recommendations of a national report by the Wales Audit Office “Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for adults with Learning Disabilities. The report⁵ recommended local authorities continue to focus on preventing people becoming dependent on more expensive placements in care homes by providing effective support and a range of step-up accommodation.
- 4.101 In response to the Wales Audit Report regarding people with a Learning Disability, we have continued to work with Partner Agencies and the people who we provide care and support and their parents and carers to implement the Statement of Intent for Learning Disability which describes a shared commitment to deliver a new model for health and social services. Implementation of the Statement of Intent is helping us address the recommendations set out by the WAO in their report but, more importantly, co-produce our commissioning outcomes for the short and medium term. In 2018/19, we have focused on the following priority areas:
- Preventing loneliness and isolation by increasing community inclusion
 - Reducing Stigma
 - Housing
 - Further Education
 - Employment, training and lifelong learning

The agreed shared outcomes are now being used to inform our co-produce work plans for 2019/20

Accommodation and placements for Children Looked After

- 4.102 All our Children Homes received positive reports from the independent visitor. Our three residential establishments have been at full capacity for most of the year with voids being scrutinized monthly. We recognise we need to plan for future accommodation needs and are in the process of reviewing our model of residential care and the housing needs of our children looked after aged 16 and over.
- 4.103 Working with Trivallis Housing Association, we continue to provide two one-bedroom flats for young people leaving care to use on a trial basis for living independently on their own. The flats are for young people aged 17+ in residential or foster placements and staying there helps them to get to grips with everyday life such as paying bills, prioritising expenditure and ultimately facing the reality of living alone.
- 4.104 For our commitment to draft a new model of service provision within our residential establishments, we held back until the Review of models of Residential Care for Children and Young People commissioned by the Welsh Government’s Ministerial Advisory Group had been published. It was published in December 2018 and we have considered its recommendations. These have been included for implementation in a Placement Strategy.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- We will review our model of residential care and the housing needs of our children looked after aged 16 and over.
- Deliver new accommodation models to improve outcomes for those individuals who need support to live independently (This will include actions in relation to extra care/supported living)

5. How we do what we do

(a) Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

- 5.1 The delivery of high-quality services depends on us having an adequate workforce of well-trained staff with the right mix of skills, experience and approach e.g. to enhance partnership working across organisational boundaries. We have continued to press ahead with organisational and cultural change following the introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.
- 5.2 To ensure we have the workforce we need to achieve the best for our residents, we play our part in implementing the Council's five-year Workforce Plan⁶. The Plan has five aims:
- Developing a flexible and agile workforce that shares organisational knowledge
 - Recruiting and retaining the best talent to create a diverse workforce
 - Leadership and management development
 - Enabling a high performing, engaged and committed workforce
 - Supporting the health and well-being of our workforce to maximise attendance
- 5.3 We have also taken, and are continuing to take, action specific to our social care workforce internally and through the Cwm Taf Social Care Workforce Development Partnership Annual Workplan 2018/19. This is a rolling action plan to:
- Support the continued implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social (Wales) Act including the domiciliary care workforce to prepare for registration and supporting the knowledge/role of responsible individuals.
 - Support the training, development and qualification of social care managers: including Step Up to Management; Middle Manager Development Programme; Team Manager development programme; and those requiring registration as managers
 - Support the ongoing development of approaches to outcome-focussed care and support practice
 - Support for both Social Work qualifying training and post-qualifying training in Wales
 - Support front line social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and to support introduction of the revised induction framework
 - Enable the workforce to meet regulatory requirements for qualification and/or registration
- 5.4 A training needs analysis undertaken across the region took account of the national priorities identified by Social Care Wales. The regional priorities identified are a combination of cyclical core training (i.e. required annually) and development events that will raise awareness and develop practice. The local priorities reflect the policy and service delivery of each local authority in the region.
- 5.5 During the year, we delivered planned training for senior practitioners including coaching and mentoring and strength-based practice and supervision. We also delivered training for all Care and Support staff. Subjects included motivational interviewing and collaborative communication, critical reflection and analysis, and positive risk-taking and decision-making.

5.6 In 2018-19, we took several steps to strengthen our workforce planning, our performance management and to train and develop our workforce. They include:

- Action to make effective use of the new Welsh Community Care Information System, which gives us better information to manage people's care and saves time by avoiding the need to repeat information to different agencies.
- A new Supervision Policy, which was co-produced with staff and which is aligned to the principles of strength-based practice.
- The introduction of peer-group support arrangements across Assessment and Care Co-ordination Services.
- Regular engagement with staff by managers to improve communications and to allow concerns, developments, suggestions and ideas to be discussed. This happens in different ways in different service areas.
- Where possible, more temporary and permanent posts created to increase capacity as a response to specific pressures.
- A "Leadership in Dementia Care" programme, and support for our domiciliary staff to complete their registration with Social Care Wales. We have also actively encouraged and supported our in-house direct service front-line staff to attain at least QCF level 3

5.7 In our Youth Engagement and Participation Service, we introduced "Restorative Approaches". All members of staff who manage others have been trained in the approach, which is now embedded across the whole service. The approach has been helpful in establishing the collective needs of staff, informing the redevelopment of supervision forms and sessions, and delivering day-to-day activities. Plans are in hand to introduce the approach to the Early Years and Family Support Service and Resilient Families Service.

5.8 Staff in Children's Services have been involved in several task groups to develop a more streamlined approach to service delivery. Some are also part of national working groups and the training which stems from this is included in our Annual Training Programme. The annual programme is developed with the involvement of staff.

5.9 Our safeguarding staff also continue to contribute to the well-received programme of Multi Agency Practitioner Events. The many events which were held during the year aid professional development practice by sharing learning from audits and reviews.

(b) Our financial resources and how we plan

5.10 The financial position, coupled with changing needs and demographic pressures, continues to be challenging. The Council continues to support and prioritise Adult and Children's Services and once again has demonstrated its commitment to protecting front-line services and investing in our local priorities. For 2018-19, the Council allocated £144.9 million to the Children and Community Services budget, an increase of £6.8 million (4.9%) on the budget for 2017-18.

5.11 The previous financial year (2017/18) ended with an overspend for Adult Services of £0.903 million. This was mainly due to replacement and sickness cover where necessary and the need to provide specialist accommodation placements, home care packages, and reduced occupancy of in-house residential care. We also under-achieved in bringing in income where charging was due.

5.12 This year, we ended the year with an overspend of £1.08 million. The main reasons for this were overspends on:

- Long-term care and support staffing costs
- Nursing/residential care costs
- Intermediate care and reablement, due to increased demand for services to prevent admissions to hospital or to facilitate hospital discharges
- Fairer charging, due to lower levels of income received
- Increased costs of residential care and adoption fees and allowances.

5.13 During the year we also encountered additional staffing requirements in Accommodation Services and less income was received due to lower than budgeted client numbers within Home for the Elderly establishments.

5.14 The overspends were partly offset by underspends in:

- Independent living and day services, due to vacant posts
- Fostering, due to reduced costs
- Children's Services, due to temporary staffing vacancies

5.15 During the year, we have taken a range of action to manage the financial challenges and pressures and this work is ongoing.

5.16 In order to manage ongoing budget pressures, we continue to implement robust and very challenging budget plans as part of the Council's financial management strategy and associated Medium-Term Financial Plan. We have robust processes in place to identify budget pressures and budget efficiencies, including rigorous scrutiny. Vacancies which arise are considered as part of our ongoing, broader, work to reflect on and rethink our activity with the possibility of transforming the way we deliver services. Quality assurance panels oversee commissioning decisions across Adult Services to ensure challenge and consistency in the quality of assessment outcomes along with monthly cost-of-care meetings and fortnightly specialist placements panel meetings.

5.17 We are also focusing efforts to further strengthen prevention work to reduce and/or contain demand and increasing the number of clients living independently thus reducing the cost of care. We continue to work to improve efficiency and productivity of our operations through reviews and by increased use of technology.

(c) Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability

5.18 We are fortunate to have a political and corporate leadership which is committed and effective in supporting and challenging the performance of Cabinet members and officers to drive improvements in services and transformation. This was recognised by the Care Inspectorate Wales in its recent inspection. Our Cabinet Members are approachable and supportive and fully engaged in the delivery and development of services.

5.19 Partnership working to improve services and to achieve efficiencies remains an important part of our work in both Adult and Children's Services. We continue to play a significant part in the Regional Partnership Board and the delivery of the regional plan, which was produced in conjunction with, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, the Cwm Taf University Health Board and Third Sector organisations.

5.20 In June 2018, the Welsh Government announced responsibility for healthcare services in the Bridgend County Borough Council area would transfer to the Cwm Taf University Health Board from the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board. As a result, the Board's boundary would extend to encompass the Bridgend County Borough Council area. The change came into effect on 1 April this year. We have worked with our original partners and new partners in the Bridgend County Borough Council area to ensure the new Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board is up and running and effective. We are committed to playing our part to the full to develop more integrated care and support services which benefit those who need our services and the population of the whole area.

5.21 In Adult Services, we have continued to work closely with partner organisations across the health and social care system in Rhondda Cynon Taf and regionally. For example:

- We are the regional operational lead on the Reablement and Stay Well @Home integrated services which have been developed in partnership with Cwm Taf Health Board and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.
- We have developed new service model proposals such as Stay well @Home 2 and Telecare to support a regional transformation bid, and dementia service proposals to enhance support available in the community. This follows the success of Stay Well @Home in the 2018 National NHS Awards for working seamlessly across agencies. It was also "highly commended" at the Social Care Accolades. A recent independent evaluation of the service evidenced good joint working in practice.
- We continue to work closely with regional partners for effective co-ordination on, and development of, joint investment opportunities e.g. the Integrated Care Fund. We are the regional lead with externally commissioned home care agencies to ensure the effective delivery of home care services; including recruitment and retention initiatives, zoning and outcome-based commissioning.
- The links we have developed with housing providers, commissioned care agencies and third sector organisations are delivering results. We have delivered new accommodation models (long-term and respite) for people with learning disabilities including Pen Llew Court in Aberdare; Crown Avenue in Treorchy, Oxford Street in Mountain Ash and Belle Vue in Treforest. These developments have been highlighted earlier in the report.
- We manage various partnership projects with the Third Sector including RNIB, Action for Hearing Loss, Care and Repair, Mencap, DEWIS and Age Connects Morgannwg. We reviewed each of them in 2018 to ensure arrangements are efficient and effective and outcome focused.
- The Multi Agency safeguarding Hub has continued to develop and mature with strong evidence of sound inter-agency safeguarding practice. Likewise, the work of the Safeguarding Board has delivered opportunities for improvements in practice both within and between agencies.

5.22 In addition to the above, equipment provision for Adult Services is delivered via a Partnership with Cwm Taf Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend Council Borough Councils via a pooled funds arrangement. We have, as regional lead, also established a care home pool budget and commenced a review of joint commissioning of care home provision.

5.23 Care Inspectorate Wales have also commented *that “effective operational and strategic relationships with other regional partners have facilitated the implementation of some innovative projects, such as the hospital based, multi-professional Stay Well @ Home initiative,”* reflecting a strong commitment to co-production.

5.24 Partnership working is also a fundamental part of our Children’s Services. For example:

- We are working with public and third sector organisations to embed a culture of early intervention and prevention through, for example, the Resilient Families Programme. This is part of the Integrated Family Support Framework, the purpose of which is to co-ordinate and organise the contribution of services providing support to families.
- We are leading the development of a Joint Statement of Strategic Intent for Children and Young People for the Regional Partnership Board, working with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cwm Taf University Health Board and third sector organisations
- Our Miskin project works with the Council’s Cultural Services to provide arts and music projects and with the Tai Education Centre for outdoor activities.
- We lead the Cwm Taf Reflect Project, which works with young women who have had children removed from their care, and the Regional Advocacy Service.
- We have a representative on a Welsh Government’s Ministerial Advisory Group. The same person is vice-chair for the Early Intervention Task Group. Another is chairing the Welsh Government’s task and finish group which is examining good practice guidance on neglect.
- We chair the “Together for Mental Health” Partnership Board for Children and Young people and we are working with South Wales Police on the implementation of the Early Action Programme

5.25 We have worked with our partners to establish a Regional Commissioning Team and are committed to helping it become an effective means of developing more integrated services. The team, which will work across all services, will drive the health and social care integration agenda on behalf of the Regional Partnership Board. It will lead the implementation of the Regional Plan and a programme of commissioning activities, which will help to improve the quality and value for money of care services.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

- Development of an overarching workforce development strategy for Adult Services.
- Deliver agreed budget efficiencies and manage services within resources available in the medium-term, including action to reduce sickness absence and improve business processes.
- Embed quality assurance and performance management culture at all levels of adult services (This will include actions on management information and performance indicators).
- Maximise adult social care income and debt recovery to build on improvements in level of debt achieved in 2018-19.
- Manage the market to ensuring we have the local workforce and safe and the sustainable localised care and services that we need.

6. Accessing information and key documents

- 6.1 This report has summarised the Council's Social Services Department's performance for the 2018-19 financial year. Over and above the day-to-day delivery of services, it reports progress against our priorities for action set out in last year's report. The report helps us to be accountable to the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf and open about what we are doing.
- 6.2 The contents of the report strike a balance between volume of information and the desire to make it informative and easy to read. Whether seeking information on our performance or information on help and support in the area, there are other ways in which you can find out about our services and developments, and action we are taking in partnership with other organisations including the Cwm Taf University Health Board, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend County Borough Councils, South Wales Police, and the many third sector organisations, which play such an important role in helping people in our communities.

Other sources of information

6.3 For support in the area:

- Adult Social Services Care and Support
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/AdultsandOlderPeople/AdultSocialServicesCareandSupport/AdultSocialServicesCareandSupport.aspx>
- Children and Families
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ChildrenandFamilies/ChildrenandFamilies.aspx>
- You can search "Dewis Cymru" for community-based services to support you and your family <https://www.dewis.wales/>

6.4 Full information on Councillors, Committees and Meetings is available on the Council's website: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings.aspx>. Meetings of the Cabinet, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee are particularly relevant to this report. Agendas, papers and decision reports can be accessed via the following web pages:

- Cabinet:
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/Cabinet.aspx>
- Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/ChildrenandYoungPeopleScrutinyCommittee.aspx>
- Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/HealthandWellbeingScrutinyCommittee.aspx>

References

¹ Cwm Taf Regional Plan 2018-23

² RCT Corporate Performance Report (2019) Innovate Trust

³ Your Life Your Care (April 2018) A survey of the views of looked after children and young people aged 4-18yrs in Rhondda Cynon Taf

⁴ Charging for Non-Residential Social Services policy

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/AdultsandOlderPeople/Helpoliveathome/RelatedDocuments/ChargingforNonResidentialSocialServices.pdf>

⁵ Wales Audit Office (May 2018) Strategic Commissioning of Accommodation Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Cardiff: Wales Audit Office

⁶ Workforce Plan 2017-2022, Rhondda Cynon Taf

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WorkforcePlan/RelatedDocuments/WorkforcePlan20172022.pdf>