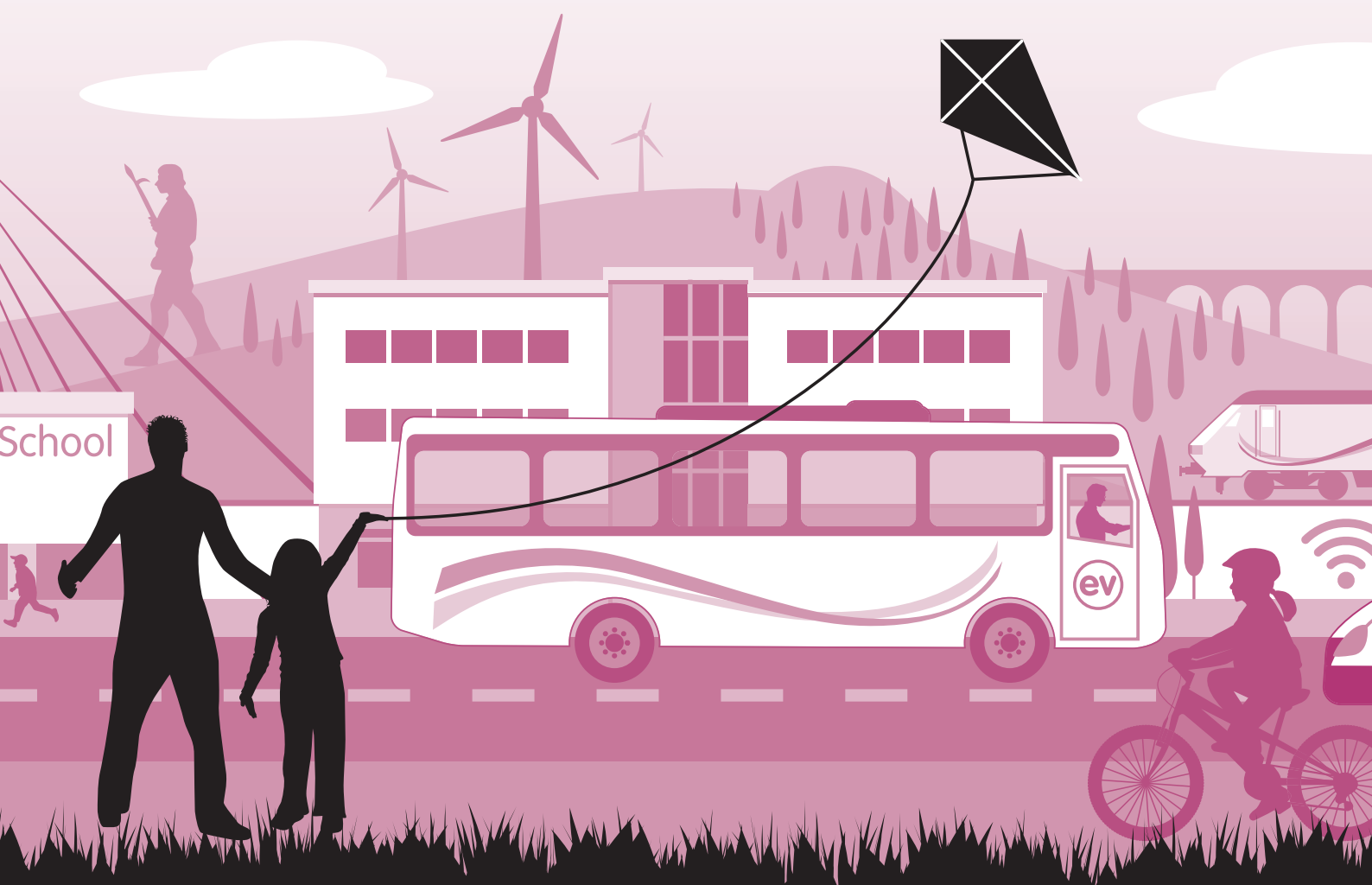


Caerphilly County Borough Council

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL
SERVICES & HOUSING
2021-2022



CREU CYMUNEDAU GOFALGAR
CREATING CARING COMMUNITIES



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1

Introduction

I am pleased to present my Annual Report as the Statutory Director of Social Services and Housing for 2021-22. My Annual Report for 2020/21 centred very much on how the Directorate responded to the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and how we tried to maintain services to our most vulnerable citizens.

Whilst the early part of 2021-22 still required us to prioritise our resources to the covid response, the latter part of the year saw an easing of the covid situation and the first steps back to some kind of normality.

Unsurprisingly the pandemic has left us with a significant backlog of requests for assessments/ services that we now need to address. One of the key challenges that has emerged for both ourselves and our independent sector partners is the difficulty in recruiting and retaining care staff. As the pandemic drew to a close a number of carers took the opportunity to retire or to move onto pastures new, and replacing them in adequate numbers, has proved a real challenge. In addition significant number of vacancies in the retail and hospitality sectors means competition for good quality staff is fierce. We are working hard locally, with other local authorities and with Welsh Government to try to rectify what is a UK wide problem.

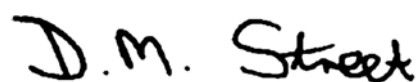
Despite a significant number of challenges the Directorate's performance has been strong throughout the financial year and we have been able to return to some of our performance reporting mechanisms. This report also highlights how we addressed our key priorities for 2021-22 and our priorities for 2022-23.

A positive development for us has been the introduction of our Caerphilly Cares service which was a part of the Council's response to the pandemic. Caerphilly Cares has taken the basic principles of the Social Services Wellbeing Act (holding meaningful conversations and strength based assessments) and applied them to anyone who contacts the Authority for help and support. This ensures we get a better understanding of why people are in need of support and whether that support needs to come from Social Services or the broader Authority.

Partnership working has become increasingly significant in providing social care services. The Gwent Regional Partnership Board has received sizeable amounts of grant funding to develop new and intergraded service models across Adults and Children's services.

I would like to thank all of the staff involved in delivering social services across the County Borough, whether they work for the local authority, independent sector or the third sector. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of unpaid carers for their tireless efforts.

I have no doubt that 2022-23 will bring its own challenges, but I truly believe that the Directorate is well placed to deal with whatever comes our way.



Dave Street

Corporate Director for Social Services & Housing

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Director's summary of performance

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, local authorities have been required to submit 'check point data' to monitor the impact of the pandemic particularly in relation to work load demands and staff resourcing including absences. At the same time, Welsh Government has undertaken a review of the national performance data set and have implemented a National Performance Framework that will be reported on at the end of 2022-23 financial year.

However, the Directorate Performance Assessment (DPA) for the first 6 months was presented to the Council's Social Services Scrutiny Committee on 8th March 2022 and the key messages were as follows:

Caerphilly Social Services is committed to making sure that people are able to make

their voice heard, whether this is about how our services are developed and delivered in the future or whether it is about a service they are receiving now. We do this in a number of different ways including, undertaking surveys, contract monitoring processes, responsible Individual visits, complaints and compliments, consultation events and feedback from Inspections.

All of our Regulated services are now registered under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA) 2016. This has been a major piece of work completed in accordance with the statutory timescales.

Key activity undertaken by Care Inspectorate Wales and the Wales Audit Office during the period has included:



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Adult Services

The numbers of people receiving services remains fairly constant however, due to the national shortage of domiciliary care workers, at the time of writing this report there were 74 people waiting for the provision of a care package. This figure has fluctuated through the year and has been as high as 123 people, which has had an adverse impact on our ability to discharge people from hospital.

There has been a significant increase in the demand for referrals to the Community Occupational Therapy team, which has placed significant pressure on staff and our ability to provide equipment and adaptations in peoples own homes.

There was a slight reduction in the number of assessments completed due to complexity of the cases and staff absences due to Covid.

Children's Services

For Children's Services, the numbers of referrals progressing for assessment remained relatively stable however, complexity of the issues presented has been increasing. The numbers of children included on the Child Protection Register and the number becoming Looked After were also reported to be stable at this time.

Overall performance was noted to be positive with no exceptions to report. The end of year Directorate Performance Assessment 2021-22 report can be found on the Caerphilly County Borough Council website.

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How are people shaping our services

Caerphilly Social Services is committed to making sure that people are able to make their voice heard, whether this is about how our services are developed and delivered in the future or whether it is about a service they are receiving now. We do this in a number of different ways including; undertaking surveys, contract monitoring processes, responsible Individual visits, complaints and compliments, consultation events and feedback from Inspections.

The most important way of ensuring people's voices are heard and listened to is through every contact that our staff have with service users. This starts from first point of contact with the Directorate. Our staff have all received Collaborative Communication training to provide them with the skills to have meaningful conversations to identify 'what matters' to people including the personal outcomes the individual wants to achieve and the support networks they may already have in place to rely on to meet these outcomes. Any plans to provide care or support are co-produced to ensure people's voices and choices are recorded and responded to appropriately.

As referenced in my introduction to this report we have also applied the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act to broader Council services via the implementation of our Caerphilly Cares Services. This ensures that people's voices are central to all Council contacts, and activities such as strength based assessments are becoming embedded in the broader Council offer.

All of our Regulated services are registered under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA) 2016 and inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). In line with requirements, all our registered services have completed Quality Assurance Reports which are submitted to CIW. Routine inspections of care homes have continued and the inspection reports are all available on the CIW website.

Engagement meetings have continued to be held with the CIW link Local Authority Inspector and the Senior Management Team.

Social Services has a statutory process that has to be followed when someone is unhappy with our services and wishes to make a complaint. We endeavour to ensure that the handling of complaints is quick and effective with the result that the majority of issues are able to be resolved as early as possible.

During 2021-22, the Directorate received 135 complaints. The Social Services Complaints and Information Team put significant effort into attempting to resolve issues to the customer's satisfaction at Stage 1 of the process and it is really positive to report that the majority of complaints are resolved at this stage.

The Complaints and Information Team record whether complaints are upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. This enables the Directorate to note any themes and trends from the findings to improve future practice and identify any isolated incidents of poor practice that may require attention.



Of the 135 complaints received at Stage 1, the following outcomes were noted:

- **7 were closed with 4 being withdrawn by the complainant and 3 being referred to other ongoing processes i.e. ongoing legal proceedings**
- **9 complaints were upheld**
- **1 complaint was partially upheld**
- **117 complaints were not upheld**
- **1 complaint was ongoing at the year end**

Of the 9 complaints upheld:

- **3 related to Adult Services**
- **1 related to Children's Services and**
- **5 related to the Corporate Complaints Procedure**

The Directorate received 9 requests to progress complaints to a Stage 2 formal investigation. In addition, there were 14 contacts by our customers to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) - the same number as in the previous year.

The Directorate appreciates the importance of learning from complaints and representations and it is recognised that equal emphasis needs to be placed on learning from positive outcomes.

Praise is received by teams in the form of thank you cards, letters and emails and these are sent to the Complaints and Information Team for them to record. In 2021-22, 126 compliments were received, of which 83% related to Adult Services and 17% related to Children's Services. This is not unusual given the nature of the services being delivered by the two areas.

In addition, annual survey responses by some service areas results in positive feedback that can be used to measure the success of the Directorate in those areas.

The 2021-22 Annual Review of Complaints Report was presented to Scrutiny Committee on 14th June 2022 and can be accessed via the Caerphilly County Borough Council website.



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Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help

As stated in Section 3 above, staff within Caerphilly's Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service are trained to undertake 'meaningful conversations' with service users, their families, and carers about what really matters to them.

'Meaningful conversations' start with IAA staff the first time someone contacts us. These conversations concentrate on people's strengths, on working with people to regain or maintain their independence and utilising their own skills and networks to achieve their desired outcomes wherever possible.

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of contacts for Children's Services are from professionals and as a result the 'what matters' conversations with the child and/or their family are unable to take place until an assessment for Care and Support has commenced.

A guiding principle for Caerphilly Social Services is the promotion and maintenance of independence.

For Children's Services, this means supporting families to stay together and maintaining children within their homes and communities wherever it is safe to do so. This is underpinned by timely assessments of need and creative solutions being sought to help keep families together.

Whilst some families may have a negative view of Children's Social Services to start with, we ensure that children, young people and their parents and carers are fully involved in the assessment process and that they help to shape and influence their plan for care and support. Working in this way helps to improve working relationships over time.

To ensure that they have the opportunity to participate in consultations or purely making their views known all children have access to an Independent Advocate who can support them in meetings to ensure their voices are heard. We were the first Local Authority to develop a statutory Parent Advocacy service jointly funded by Families First. Welsh Government subsequently provided funding to pilot the roll out of the model across the other four Gwent Local Authorities.

Supporting people to retain or regain their independence is a key objective for all who work within Social Services.

We have full access to the national citizen's wellbeing database called DEWIS so that people can have quick and easy access to information directly from a website rather than having to make a call to Social Services and/or speaking to a professional where they may prefer not to. We have a dedicated lead officer to further progress the development of DEWIS.

Adult Services have introduced an assessment service for domiciliary care to look to promote people's independence where ever possible using a 'Reablement' approach. This has enabled people to be discharged from hospital and be assessed in their own homes.

In addition, we have worked with the Health Board to have access to their domiciliary care run to discharge people from hospital who require a large package of care. Thus we have reduced their length of stay and enabled them to return their own home which is what they want for their wellbeing.

We have opened a coffee shop staffed by 12 individuals with a learning disability who previously attended day services. Plans are underway to employ these people on the Council's terms and conditions.

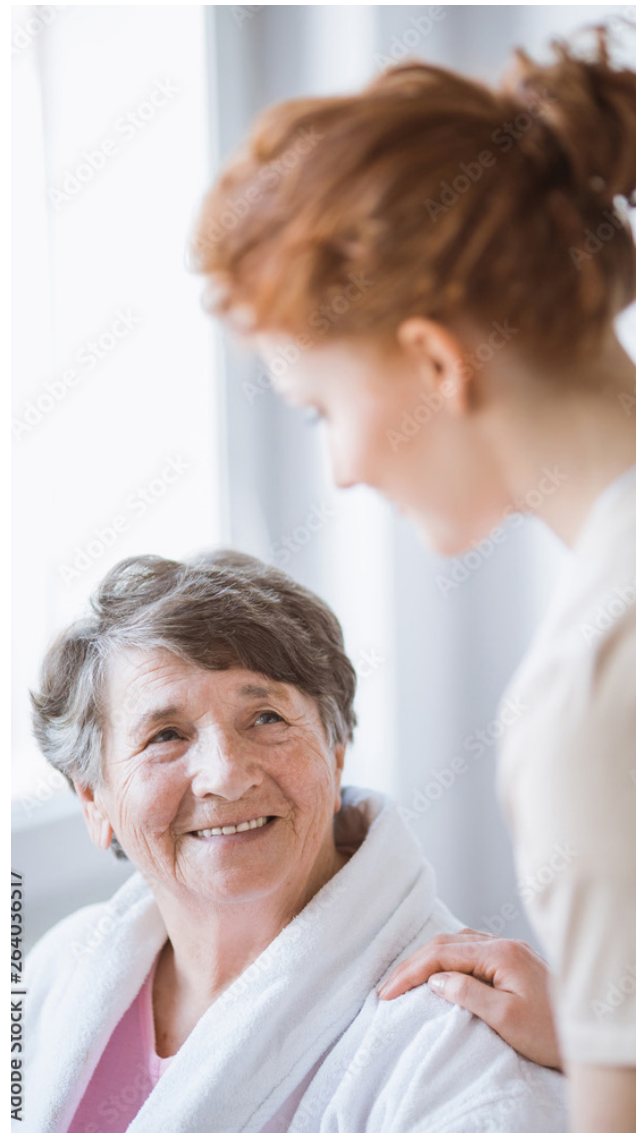


How we addressed our priorities for 2021-22:

- We transferred our Community Connectors and Volunteer coordinator to Caerphilly Cares to focus on prevention and enabling people to be part of their community.
- We included all our registered services on DEWIS so people can search for vacancies in Care Homes and access inspection reports.
- We established a group of parents of people with autism to help inform our practice.
- We held joint training sessions with the Health Board to enable staff to have different conversations with people to better understand their desired outcomes.

What are our priorities for 2022-23:

- To embed the intake model of assessment for care to promote people's independence, choice and control.
- To increase the take up of Direct Payments to allow individual's choice of how their care and support is delivered to best meet their needs.
- To share learning to support colleagues with the national roll out of Parental Advocacy in Children's Services.



5

Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

Caerphilly recognises the importance of working with people and our partners to improve outcomes for children and young people and this will continue to be a priority for us going forward.

The principle focus of partnership activity for the Directorate has been the Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB). This Board, established under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 brings together key representatives from the five Local Authorities in Gwent alongside representatives from the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Third Sector, Providers and Citizens.

The RPB is supported by a range of strategic groups all of which have their own forward work programmes and are primarily supported via funding from Welsh Government grants.

Caerphilly are active partners in the Gwent wide Children and Families Strategic Partnership which is prioritising the development of integrated approaches to supporting children and young people including therapeutic support for children Looked After through the regional development of the My Support Team (MyST) service across the five Local Authorities. MyST is a specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) delivered by the Local Authorities and the Regional Programme Director and Business Support are hosted by Caerphilly.

The Gwent wide Attachment Trauma Service has continued to offer advice, consultation and training to Caerphilly social work teams with the aim of supporting children and young people to remain living at home or remain in stable foster placements.

In response to increasing demand and complexity of children's care placements, Children's Services sought Corporate and Political approval to expand in-house residential care provision including two additional children's homes, supported accommodation for young people Leaving Care and a house for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. These plans will be further developed through 2022/23.

Across Adult Services, we continue to develop our services to prevent unnecessary admission to hospital and facilitate a safe timely discharge for individuals who have to be admitted. The Community Resource Team (CRT) has placed community staff in Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr to work with individuals, their families and Health professionals. Initiatives include access to the Health Board's Domiciliary Care runs and the development of 'step closer to home' beds in care homes for temporary placements to prevent people staying in hospital once they are medically stable.



We have recognised that increasing numbers of people are experiencing lower level mental health issues and they were falling between existing services. In response we have developed a Team to address this gap. The Team work with people with anxiety, low mood, low self-esteem and related issues. The Mental Health Workers provide emotional support throughout interventions and individuals are able to access the service by telephone during office hours. The service also supports individuals with housing, income, benefits, employment and healthy living where necessary, all utilising a wide variety of statutory, voluntary and third sector agencies.

During the year, as part of the Council's Place Shaping Programme, Cabinet agreed to allocate capital funding to develop two new respite facilities – one for adults and one for children. These developments will replace and increase existing provision to continue to support parents and carers in their unpaid caring roles.

How we addressed our priorities for 2021-22:

- We expanded the Home First ethos to include Prince Charles Hospital in Merthyr Tydfil and secured funding to expand the service to cover the Grange University Hospital
- We implemented the nationally agreed 6 pathways in respect of Discharge to Assess and Recover to improve outcomes for individuals
- We supported unpaid carers, using the small grants scheme. Issued 194 leisure memberships 28 of which were to young carers
- Increased the number of unpaid carers on our mailing list from 1303 to 1727 organised numerous events and individual activities in which 1388 people participated.
- We supported the expansion of the MyST service into Newport to complete the regional development.

What are our priorities for 2022-23:

- To work with the Health Board to increase capacity in the community
- To work with regional colleagues to develop a framework to support unpaid carers.
- To progress the development of the respite houses for adults and for children.
- To expand children's residential care and supported accommodation for young people across the Borough.
- To continue to support the National Transfer Scheme by offering accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.

6

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

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is the most important thing that the Authority does. Consequently, the Authority has ensured that it is a corporate priority and responsibility. A Council wide Corporate Safeguarding Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Social Services.

Safeguarding is everybody's business and is a key theme running through the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. Consequently, we make sure that our staff, contractors and partners are aware of their responsibilities in this area. A Corporate Safeguarding Policy is in place and a programme of training and awareness raising is in place. Each service area has an identified Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and periodic practice development groups are held to support the DSOs.

The Corporate Safeguarding Board produces an Annual Report for Elected Members and the 2021-22 Report presented to Scrutiny Committee on 14th June 2022 can be accessed via the website.

The arrangements for improving safeguarding policies, procedures and practice across the region are led by the South East Wales Safeguarding Boards (SEWSCB and GWASB) and the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Board. These Boards are supported by a Business Unit funded by the statutory partners and hosted by Caerphilly. The Boards have a clear governance structure and their work is supported by a set of sub groups. Caerphilly are active partners on these Boards.



Within the Council, responsibility for children's and adults safeguarding sits within Children's Services. Although discrete service areas, they are all managed by one Service Manager and capacity and resilience has been improved as a result. Decisions are made on all referrals within 24 hours ensuring full compliance with statutory procedures. The new All Wales Safeguarding Procedures were implemented in 2020 and are now fully embedded across the Directorate. A National Safeguarding Training Framework is scheduled to be implemented at the end of 2022.

How we addressed our priorities for 2021-22:

- We embedded the new All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.
- We introduced a Corporate Safeguarding Self-Assessment Tool for all Council Service areas.

What are our priorities for 2022-23:

- To continue to embed learning from Adult and Child Practice Reviews.
- To review the priorities of the Regional Safeguarding Board's 3 year Plan.
- To implement the National Safeguarding Training Framework from November 2022.
- To progress the development of the Council wide Learning Management System (LMS) to record safeguarding training attendance and compliance - which was delayed due to the Covid pandemic.
- To respond to any findings from Internal Audit following their review of the Corporate Safeguarding Self-Assessment processes.



7

Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

Supporting children Looked After and young people Leaving Care to reach their full potential and achieve positive outcomes is a key priority for Children's Services and the Corporate Parenting Group.

Caerphilly has a proven track record of supporting young people into further and higher education and a number of Care Leavers have gained Degrees and similar qualifications. 50% of Care Leavers continued to be engaged in education, training or employment 12 months after leaving care.

We recognise that it is important for people to be more self-reliant and maintain their independence enabling them to participate fully in society and their local community. We have embedded the DEWIS information system so people can access information for themselves 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Enabling all adults to achieve their outcomes has been a key feature in the delivery of alternative day services in response to the Covid pandemic. The learning from delivering services in a different way that meets individual needs will be a key component of the commissioned independent review to re-design and transform day services going forward.

The opening of a coffee shop staffed by individuals who previously attended day services has been very well received and is used regularly by local residents. This is a great example of what can be achieved by delivering services differently.



How we addressed our priorities for 2020-21:

- 10 individuals achieved an accredited course in Customer Skills .
- All individuals who work in the coffee shop have accessed Level II Food Hygiene training.
- We launched the young carers ID card, 38 issued already.

What are our priorities for 2022-23:

- Commission an independent organisation to produce a model of day services for the future.



8

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

We want to support children, young people and adults to be as socially active as possible, to feel they can make decisions for themselves and keep themselves safe.

We have embedded the “what matters conversations” across the Directorate and trained staff to enhance their skills to focus on outcomes, the strengths and assets of people, their families and networks.

We recognise that people having fulfilling relationships with those they are close to is really important for their well-being.

For children Looked After, maintaining contact with their families and their home communities is really important and Children’s Services do everything they can to ensure contact arrangements meet the needs of everyone involved and are positive events.

Within Adult Services, we continued to recruit carers to our Shared Lives Scheme to enable us to offer more choice and increase the number of placements we are able to offer in family homes to people of all client groups. We also made funding available to allow adaptations to people’s homes, such as ramps and showers to allow people to remain independent.

We have continued to facilitate Carers Groups across the county borough to enable carers to meet socially over a coffee. Our Carers Team attend many events to promote their service and their efforts have been recognised.

We recognised that we had more work to do on supporting relationships and this became a priority for us going forward in terms of expansion of the My Mates club.

Within Children’s Services, wherever possible and whenever safe to do so, we ensure children are placed as close to their home communities as possible in order to support their links with their family and home.

There are increasing demands being placed on us to recruit more foster carers in order to meet the needs of children and young people. We continue to run a radio recruitment campaign which has helped us increase the enquiries we receive but we continue to see the highest rate of enquiries comes from ‘word of mouth’ recommendations from existing foster carers. We are fully engaged in the Foster Wales developments for recruitment, retention and support services for foster carers.

Recruitment of all staff but particularly Qualified Social Workers is a significant and growing challenge and Caerphilly support the national approaches being undertaken by the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) and Social Care Wales (SCW).



How we addressed our priorities for 2020-21:

- We developed the mental health project arm of South East Wales Shared Lives Scheme and expanded the pilot area from Newport to Caerphilly. The Health Board are now full partners in the scheme.
- We promoted membership of My Mates for people with a learning disability to develop personal relationships and friendships.
- We provided respite opportunities via the Summer of fun and the Winter of Wellbeing schemes for over 100 carers.
- We continued to second staff to undertake the Social Work Degree.

What are our priorities for 2022-23:

- Further expand South East Wales Shared Lives Scheme to provide a service for older adults with mental health problems.
- Work with partners to develop mechanisms to allow individuals to establish and maintain friendships.
- Continuation of the secondment scheme for staff to undertake the Social Work Degree.



9

Working with & supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life & live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

Children's Services actively support children Looked After Children to engage in education and training and provide individual support wherever necessary. Children and young people are encouraged to make the best use of their leisure time and are supported to engage in community activities wherever possible.

Children's Services have a well established operational protocol with Housing to ensure we can provide appropriate support to young people facing homelessness. We have a range of supported accommodation available including shared living provision, supported lodgings and supported tenancies. As stated in Section 5, we intend to expand our in-house provision of children's homes and other accommodation options to meet the needs of our children and young people.

The Council is committed to developing dementia friendly communities so people can be supported to participate in normal activities of daily living such as shopping, banking and eating out. You will see the dementia friendly signs in local establishments

and many people wearing the blue flower badge indicating they have been trained as a dementia friend.

Within Adult Services care homes, you can see many different displays and themes reflecting people's earlier lives. These change regularly and can reflect current events. The homes are now divided into small house units each with its own staff team so they can really get to know the residents. The physical environment within some of the homes has also changed with the introduction of primary colours reflecting people's choice of their bedroom door and communal areas are brighter and more defined.

With our partners we expanded our Shared Lives Scheme to look at a health initiative which provides placements with families to prevent people going into hospital and/or facilitating them being discharged to a family home. This enables people to have time to recover, receive more therapy interventions and have an assessment of their needs in more appropriate surroundings. We are committed to this alternative model of accommodation.



How we addressed our priorities for 2021-2022:

- We planned the development of the Mill Road flats for independent living for adults with a disability. However, building work was delayed due to the pandemic and issues with drainage on the site.
- We opened a coffee shop, staffed by individuals who previously attended day services to enable us to move towards employing people with a learning disability.
- We contributed to the development of regional plans for shared residential provision for young people in crisis.

What are our priorities for 2022-23:

- To employ people with a learning disability on the council's terms and conditions.
- To commence the building work on the Mill Road flats - we anticipate contractors being on site January 2023.
- To expand children's residential care and supported accommodation for young people across the county borough (also in Section 5).

Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

Our staff are our greatest asset; a skilled and motivated workforce are essential to safeguard and support vulnerable people, promote independence and enhance service delivery. Ensuring that frontline practitioners and managers are supported and well trained is crucial to the success of our service. Our workforce has been relatively stable with good staff retention. However, as previously referenced, we are seeing increasing challenges in recruiting to specific posts across both Adult and Children's Services and increasing pressures around retention due to significant competition for key staff from other Local Authorities and broader opportunities for staff within the hospitality and retail sectors. Increasingly Local Authorities across Wales are finding it difficult to compete with the terms and conditions being offered.

We have a joint Workforce Development Team with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and they are responsible for delivering a training and development strategy that supports development opportunities for staff at all levels in Social Services.

The Authority holds workforce development responsibility for the whole care sector. The Care Sector employs over 3,000 staff with approximately 50% employed by the local authority and 50% by independent and third sector. There are significant demand and supply challenges for staff to deliver Domiciliary Care and this is a UK wide crisis.

We continue to second staff to undertake the Social Work Degree.

Our financial resources and how we plan for the future

Despite the various challenges and ambitions that are outlined in this report the Directorate has once again operated within its allocated budget. Budget management is embedded as a core function of Divisional Management Teams (DMTs) and the Senior Management Team (SMT) with the Financial Services Manager being a member of the Senior Management Team. Budget reports are discussed at DMTs and SMT on a regular basis and these management teams are the key players in the development of the financial strategy of the Directorate.

The most significant growth in demand during 2021-2022 has continued to be in the following areas:

- **Independent sector residential care for children.**
- **Long term care for older people.**
- **Domiciliary care to support people in their own homes.**
- **Supported living for people with learning disabilities.**

Brexit, the Covid pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine have all contributed to the financial pressures being faced by the UK Government, Welsh Government and Local Government and whilst the financial situation for 2022-23 looks to be stable, there are significant concerns for 2023 and beyond.

Ongoing reliance on time limited grant funding streams from Welsh Government, usually paid via RPBs, undermines longer

term sustainability. Whilst the transition of the Integrated Care Funding (ICF) to the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) has afforded a short period of no change to the current funding arrangements, Welsh Government's intention is for RIF funding to taper incrementally with the expectation that Council funding will meet the increasing shortfalls in funding. This position is being challenged across Wales.

Our partnership working, Political and Corporate leadership, governance and accountability

Part 9 of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act places a key emphasis on partnership working and to this end the Directorate is a key partner of the Greater Gwent Regional Partnership Board (RPB) with the other four local authorities in Gwent and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

The work of the RPB has a major influence over the work of Social Services in Caerphilly and in particular with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

Since its inception the RPB has produced:

- **An Area Plan.**
- **A Market Position statement which outlines the provision of existing services, and what services may be required in the future.**
- **An Annual report which pulls together all of the work of the RPB.**

Further information on the work of the RPB and copies of the above reports can be found at its website at www.gwentrpb.wales/home.

However, our partnership working is not limited to the RPB. We have a significant range of services provided with other local authorities and partners including:

- **A joint Workforce Development Team with Blaenau Gwent.**
- **A Gwent Frailty Service developed in conjunction with the four other Local Authorities and the Health Board.**
- **A joint Regional Safeguarding Board covering all partners across Gwent.**
- **A Shared Lives scheme run on behalf of six Local Authorities and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.**
- **A joint regional Adoption Service and**
- **A Regional MyST Programme.**

Political support for Social Services in Caerphilly remains strong. The Corporate Director for Social Services & Housing is a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team which meets weekly to consider key decisions on strategic and operational priorities, prior to these issues/decisions going onto Scrutiny/Council.

There is an Executive Member for Social Services who sits on the Council's Cabinet and also attends the Social Services Scrutiny Committee with senior Managers.

Scrutiny Committee consisting of sixteen elected members meets every six weeks to oversee the performance of the Directorate and to consider any policy/service developments prior to them being considered by Cabinet.

11

Conclusion

2021-22 was an extremely challenging year for everyone connected with Social Services in Caerphilly. The restrictions and safeguards in the early part of the year meant that the response to the pandemic was very much at the front and centre to everything we did. As the year progressed and the country began to move out of Covid restrictions the focus has been on stabilising our services delivery and dealing with the inevitable backlogs that occurred during the height of the pandemic.

2022-23 will bring its own challenges as we move back to normality and some disruption to our normal ways of operating

are inevitable. We are already experiencing significant workforce issues, and these together with the economic challenges likely to be faced throughout the UK, are inevitable. Consequently we will need to work closely with our key partners internally and externally in order to be able to meet the demands that are likely to be made of us.

I am confident that by showing the same commitment and resilience that got us through the pandemic Caerphilly Social Services will be well placed to meet the needs of service users and carers within the county borough.





Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.