



Appendix A
Annual Report of Statutory
Director of Social Services
2022-23



Draft v2 (July 2023)

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1. Introduction by David Howes, Director of Social Services

Welcome to my seventh annual report as Swansea Council's Director of Social Services, which covers our improvement journey during 2022-23. This report is a statutory requirement, as set out in Part 8 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. In this report, I am proud to reflect in a small part on the exceptional work that is undertaken by my social services colleagues.

The starting point for this review is to again acknowledge the excellence of the social care workforce in Swansea. Over the past year, our dedicated teams have demonstrated incredible skill, professionalism and resilience in the face of unprecedented circumstances. Firstly, the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the Cost-of-Living crisis have presented us all with extraordinary challenges, necessitating innovative approaches to deliver vital social services to those families in need.

Special tribute should also be given to unpaid carers, volunteers and other members of the community who throughout all that has happened have continued to support the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Throughout this challenging period, we have remained resolute in our mission to safeguard our most vulnerable children and adults through excellence in social work and social care practice; by working in partnerships to de-escalate need for statutory help and to promote well-being, protect the vulnerable, and foster inclusive communities.

We are now in a period in which families and communities face greater and greater challenges and uncertainties. Inflation and everyday expenses such as housing, food, travel and energy costs, are continuing to rise.

Swansea Council has rightly made a commitment to implement the real living wage. These cost pressures are real challenges within our social services. We have had to meet public demand and expectations within the resources we have. The Council has been very supportive to social services, yet there are likely to be even greater pressures on public funding in the next few years.

Our new Corporate Plan maintains that 'safeguarding our most vulnerable people' remains a top corporate priority; at the heart of how Council services are prioritised. Our values are reflected in the declaration of Swansea as a Human Rights City last year, and how communities and organisations are working together for the common good.

Swansea Council has a proud track record of respecting the rights of adults and children, by listening closely to and working with them in making decisions that affect them. As a Director, I am pleased that we take time to hear and work with the experiences of the people we serve, and that these experiences are reflected in many of the stories and developments presented in this report.

Transformation is becoming our business as usual. We had to learn to adapt and change more quickly, with more flexible service offers during the pandemic. Swansea has a strong economy environment and workforce to support better health and wellbeing outcomes. Through regional partnerships like West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board, Regional Safeguarding Board and locally with partners such as Swansea Council for Voluntary Services and Swansea Bay University Health Board, we come together in transformation programmes to extend service offers, improve care pathways, enhance lived experiences and achieve better outcomes for citizens.

In this report, you will find some accounts of our efforts in safeguarding people, promoting wellbeing, working in partnership and focusing on prevention. We are supporting children, adults, and families in significant numbers, with more and more complex needs, while always striving to make a positive impact and to achieve their own outcomes and solutions. We prioritise early help intervention, to ensure that our most vulnerable children, young people and adults can receive the care and support they require to flourish. Our commitment to collaborative working with partners in health, education, police, voluntary services and across the Council have been instrumental in delivering improvements. As both Director of Social Services and 'Responsible Individual' for care provision, my role allows me the opportunity to visit many teams and services, and I know that I could report on many more stories of service improvements and personal achievements.

I would like to thank my colleagues Head of Child and Family Services, Head of Adult Services and Head of Integrated Services and their respective senior management teams for their unwavering support during the year.

Without the support of the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team and Council colleagues this improvement journey and our striving to achieve excellence - to be the best versions of ourselves, would not be possible.

One of Swansea's great strengths is the Council's political commitment to the delivery of excellent social care and other community services.

I have really appreciated working with our Cabinet Members Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member – Care Services, Cllr Alyson Pugh, Cabinet Member – Well-being and Cllr Hayley Gwilliam, Cabinet Member - Community.

I would also like to thank the Chairs of Scrutiny Performance Panels and the Chair of the new Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee.

2. Analysis of Current Performance

2a. Overall Summary

In this section, I give my view, as Director of Social Services, on how effective we have been in supporting Swansea's most vulnerable citizens to achieve their wellbeing outcomes. On how we are delivering on the full range of statutory requirements set for us; progress towards our improvement priorities and in achieving our performance targets.

As always, I am immensely proud to represent a small part of the exceptional work undertaken by my social services colleagues within this report.

2b. How we are performing – Child and Family Services

i) Vision /strategy

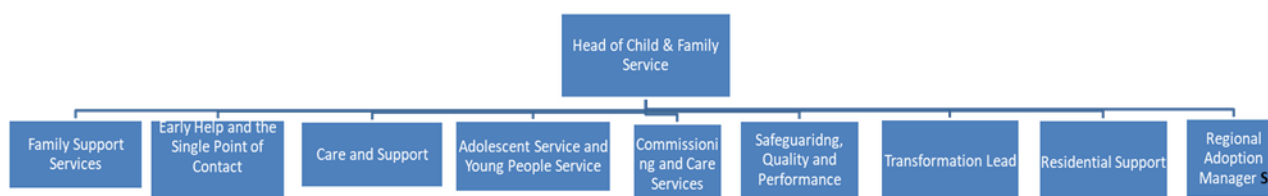
Child & Family Services are responsible for the provision of statutory and preventative social services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and families.

Our vision statement:

"Doing what matters to make things better for children, young people and families."

Our leadership team remains focused on delivering our vision and developing a culture committed to continual learning and development of our staff. We are redesigning our systems, so that the focus is on what matters to children, young people and families, and creating plans that they are fully involved in that are reviewed regularly with their natural support network and any professionals that may help them.

Child and Family Services Leadership structure



In order to achieve our vision, we are working with teams across the service to make it easier for us to undertake meaningful work with children, young people and families in Swansea. We have made changes to the whole system with the help of children, young people and families, staff and stakeholders, which can enable us to spend more time with those that need our help and less time on paperwork and processes, so that their needs can be met at the earliest opportunity and there is a seamless transition between services as their needs escalate and de-escalate.

Throughout this process we have listened to staff, what is important to them and to enable the development of a workforce who feel empowered and trusted in their roles, so that they can be the best that they can. As we continue this work, we are creating a shared purpose and identity for Child and Family Services and developing meaningful measures that will tell us if we are making a difference to the children and young people we support, which will help us to shape practice and improve outcomes now and in the future.

We are hopeful that this work supports us in the long term to spend more time with families, help them achieve what matters more quickly to support their needs to de-escalate or prevent them from getting worse. Over time this will help us work with families earlier on and enable us to invest more in our early help and prevention work and hopefully reduce our overall statutory work.

Our Shared Principles are:

- We will never make decisions without involving others.
- We will learn and reflect, and not blame when things don't go as planned.
- We will actively listen and value the views of others.
- We will follow through and complete actions.
- We believe in our staff and trust them to do the right thing.
- We will own our decisions.
- We will share problems and find solutions together.
- We will be honest, open, and transparent with each other.
- We will encourage creative thinking in others.
- We recognise it is good to be curious.

Regional Transformation Plan for Health and Social Care

The key priorities to provide better services for children, young people and families in the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board (RPB) transformation plan are transforming mental health services and transforming complex care.

Mapping of safer accommodation support is currently underway within the region, under the Transforming Complex Care programme.

This whole system planning work takes into account multi-agency approaches to filling gaps across services including working with Health and Education colleagues to ensure the right support is made available to children and young people.

Child and Family Improvement programme

The [Strategy to support children and young people to live safely at home with their family \(PDF\)](#) describes the way Child and Family Services work and demonstrates our commitment to this strategic priority. It outlines how we have and will continue to develop our services to support children, young people and their family network - ensuring that individual needs can be addressed as quickly and as well as possible in order to attempt to prevent children and young people from entering, or remaining within, the care system wherever safe alternatives can be identified.

This guiding strategy is about taking action to reduce the number of children and young people who need to be looked after by Swansea Council.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 emphasises supporting families to stay together, where this is safe and in the best interests of the child. It further focuses on working with people in partnership and the prevention of escalating needs, something which the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 further reinforce.

For children and young people, this means:

- identifying and assessing as early as possible those children who need care and support (including help to achieve emotional well-being and resilience).
- helping them to use the strengths in their families and resources in their communities for support ensuring intervention at a stage which prevents needs becoming critical.

For this reason, and over many years, Swansea Council has developed an approach that focusses on providing children, young people and families with the right support at the right time.

ii) What we do (Activity in 2022/23)

Table 1. Child and Family Services activity in 2022-23 (Front Door/ Assessment)

Child and Young People Population. (census-2021): there are approximately **45,746** (46,840) children and young people aged 0-17, who are living in Swansea.

NB Data shown as reported to Welsh Government as part of new Social Services Performance and Improvement framework- first year of reporting to new metrics /definitions).

CH/001 No. of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year = **7,072** (8,119)

CH/002 No. of contacts for children received by statutory social services during the year where advice or assistance was provided = **2,387** (N/a)

CH/003 No. of contacts received by statutory children's social services during the year where a decision was made by the end of the next working day = **1,745** (N/a)

CH/006 Total number of new assessments completed for children during the year = **2,576** (602).

CH/007 Of total number of new assessments completed for children during the year = **2,576** (602) (as CH/006):

CH/007a needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan = **493** (458)

CH/07b needs were able to be met by other means = **1,577** (93)

CH/07c there were no eligible needs to meet = **506** (51)

NB- Last year's figures only included more comprehensive assessments carried out in year.

CH/008a Total number of assessments for children completed during the year for children who were born at the time the assessment concluded = **607** (547)

CH/008b of those above, where there is evidence that the child has been seen = **578** (New)

Of the number of assessments for children completed (CH/006) during the year where:

CH/009aNew There was evidence of the active offer of Welsh = **677** (602)

CH/009bNew The Active Offer of Welsh was accepted = **2** (0)

CH/009cNew The assessment was undertaken using the language of choice = **663** (25)

CH/10 New The number of new assessments completed for children during the year undertaken in secure estate = **0** (N/a)

Of the number of new assessments completed for children during the year = **2,576**

CH/11a Physical punishment by a parent or carer was one of several factors = **290**

CH/11b Physical punishment by a parent or carer was the only factor = **98**

CH/13 The number of new assessments that were requested by the child or family during the year where a previous assessment had been completed in the previous 12 months = N/a (N/a)

Overall, the front door to Child and Family Services has been getting busier and busier as the year progressed, and yet there are also signs that the early help offer is managing to impact on cases needing to be referred to safeguarding and supported care planning for assessment.

Overall, the numbers of children in need of care and support is higher, as are the number of cases subject to initial strategy meetings, and strategy discussions. However, the number of children placed on the child protection register has remained consistent and the number of children subject of public proceeding has fallen during the year.

This may indicate that Swansea's investment in a range of early help approaches and services continues to ensure targeted and effective support across the continuum of need. We are making better use of direct payments to support parents-carers of children with disabilities and complex needs.

Table 2. Child and Family Services activity in 2022-23 (Child Protection)

| | |
|------------|---|
| CH/015a | Total number of children with a care and support plan, at 31st March = 983 (886) |
| CH/016 | Total number of children with a care and support plan where needs a met through a Direct Payment, at 31st March = 119 (107) |
| CH/020 | Total number of Initial Strategy Meetings held during the year = 1,000 (803) |
| CH/021 | Total number of Strategy Discussions held during the year that progressed to Section 47 Enquiries = 643 (572) |
| CH/022 | Total number of Section 47 Enquiries completed during the year that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference = 274 (270) |
| CH/023 | Number of children placed on the child protection register = 256 (255) |
| CH/024 | Of those children who were placed on the child protection register during the year, the number that has been previously registered under any category, at any time during the previous 12 months = 25 (18) |
| CH/026a | Number of children on the child protection register, at 31st March = 203 (200) |
| CH/026bNew | Total number of children on the Child Protection Register during the collection year= 463 (-) |
| CH/027 | Total number of initial core group meetings held during the year = 256 (255) |
| CH/028 | Number of initial core group meetings held during the year that were held within statutory timescales = 238 (214) |
| CH/029 | Total number of visits to children placed on the child protection register that were due during the year = 4,699 (5,050) |
| CH/030a | Total number of visits to children on the child protection register that were completed = 3,415 (4,231) |
| CH/030b | The total number of visits to children on the child protection register that were completed within statutory timescales = 2,840 (4,231) |

| | |
|--|--|
| CH/031a | Total number of reports of children who go missing during the year = 450 (-) |
| CH/32 | Total number of children who go missing during the year= 159 (-) |
| CH/033 | The total number of children reported during the year where child exploitation was a factor = 88 (125) |
| Of the total number of reports of child exploitation received during the year where the <i>primary</i> factor was: | |
| - CH/034a | Child sexual exploitation = 163 (62) |
| - CH/034b | Child criminal exploitation = 104 (294) |
| - CH/034c | Child trafficking = 0 (1) |
| NB Since the previous return we have broadened the categories of concern (to include Peer on Peer Abuse, Youth Violence etc) | |
| CH/034 | Total number of children reported during the year where child exploitation was a factor = 267 (357) |
| CH/035 | The total number of days on the child protection register for children who were removed from the register during the year = 82,727 days (86,825 days) |
| CH/036 | The total number of children removed (de-registered) from the child protection register during the year = 260 (314) |
| CA3/002 | Number of pre-birth child protection conferences convened during the year = 43 (50) |

There is evidence through demand at the front door and early help hubs of increased complexity in children and families' presenting needs, which may well be a repercussion of the societal impact of covid, and then the cost-of-living crisis layered on top.

Child and Family Services are managing the risks to young people associated with exploitation outside of the family home through our proactive approach to contextual safeguarding and by the development of our CMET (children missing, exploited or trafficked) team helping to mitigate those risks.

Safeguarding performance in relation to children services continues to hold up well despite systemic challenges associated with less than optimal workforce capacity and resilience (particularly the acute national shortage of children services social workers).

Table 3a. Child and Family Services activity in 2022-23 (Looked After Children)

NB Data shown as reported to Welsh Government as part of new Social Services Performance and Improvement framework- first year of reporting to new metrics /definitions)

| | |
|---------|---|
| CH/037a | Number of children becoming looked after during the year = 109 (108) |
|---------|---|

| | |
|--|---|
| CH/037b* | Number of new episodes of children becoming looked after during the year = N/a (112) |
| CH/037c* | Number of new instances of children becoming looked after during the year where the initial episode in care lasted 10 working days or more = N/a (104) |
| CH/038 | Number of part 6 care and support plans that were completed within 10 working days from the start of becoming looked after = 67 (13) |
| CH/039 | Number of children looked after on 31 March = 481 (488) |
| CH/042a | No. of statutory visits to children looked after during the year that were completed = 6,127 (-) |
| CH/043* | Number of looked after children on 31st March who have had three or more placements during the year = N/a (31) |
| CH/044 | Total number of children looked after on the 31 March who have experienced one or more changes of school during the year (excluding transitional arrangements, moves associated with adoption or moves home) = 32 (22) |
| CH/052 | Total number of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 = 48 (42) |
| CH/053 | Total number of care-experienced young people in all categories at the 31 st March = 270 (344) |
| CH/056 | Total number of "Active Offers" of advocacy for children, aged five and over at the start of the collection year, during the year = 37 (-) |
| CH/057 | Total number "Active Offers" of advocacy for children during the year where an Independent Professional Advocate was provided = 35 (-) |
| * Some additional Swansea data is post populated by Welsh Government from the LAC Census return. | |

Swansea has worked hard to reduce the overall number of children looked after, and we better understand the profile of this population group, and their needs through their care journey to help inform better practice. Our strategic aim to support children and young people to live safely at home with their family is to reduce the amount of time that children need to be looked after by.

We regularly review and monitor plans for children/young people to ensure there is every effort made in achieving permanence at the earliest and safest opportunity. Support is provided to address barriers and obstacles where any delay is apparent.

Overall, Workforce resilience remains a particular challenge but investment in alternatively staff, along with the development of our social work 'Academy' and increased sponsorship of staff to undertake the Open University social work degree. These approaches form part of an overall workforce well-being strategy, and they are helping to maintain short term capacity and allows for some optimism that we will be able to build greater resilience over the next couple of years.

Child and Family Services anticipated that there would likely be an increase in the numbers of children needing to become looked after with the increased pressure on families that have played out over the past couple of years. That increase is evident across Wales (particularly in urban areas), but at this stage it is less pronounced in Swansea.

Ensuring placement sufficiency (having sufficient numbers of looked after children placements) remains a significant risk as the pace with which independent providers are exiting Wales (following Welsh Government's policy commitment to eliminate profit) exceeds the pace with which we can create additional in house, local, regional and national capacity particularly when that capacity requires a specialist health and educational component.

At the same time, we aim to improve outcomes for looked after children and offering the right placement, at the right time. Over recent years, Swansea has been successful in avoiding residential or secure placements unless absolutely necessary. Also, we have maintained the proportion of children placed with families, preferably with in-house foster carers, and closer to home. We work hard to maintain children with their own families, where this is in their best interests.

iii) Performance against targets

Table 4 Child and Family Services Key Performance Indicators in 2022-23

As reported in Corporate Annual Performance Monitoring Report 22-23 v3.0

(Last Year 2021-22 in Brackets)

CFS14a Percentage of contacts received by statutory children's social services during the period where a decision was made by the end of the next working day= **94.12%** (100%)

CFS18a**NEW** Rate of looked after children (LAC) per 10,000 of the 0-17 Swansea population at end of the period (excluding asylum seekers) = **104.27**

CFS19a Percentage of visits to children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) which were not overdue = **82.16%** (91.75%)

CFS24 The number of Children / Young People Supported by Child and Family Services at the end of the period= **1204** (1254)

CFS25 Number of Children / Young People supported by the Early Help Hubs at the end of the period = **1209** (1034)

CH026 The number of children on the Local Authority's Child Protection Register (CPR) at end of the period = **203** (200)

Child and Family Service is maintaining a high level of performance against key measures and indicators, despite the staffing challenges and changes in demand that continue to be seen.

Performance standards and levels of activity in relation to Child and Family Services are consistent, despite the national challenges already mentioned.

- iv) Key Service Improvement Priority in 2023/24**
as set out in Child & Family Services Improvement Plan 2023-24.

“Doing what matters to make things better for children, young people, and families”

Child and Family Service Objectives 2023/24 see Diagram in Appendix c.

2c. How we are performing - Adult Services

i) Vision /strategy

Adults Services are responsible for the provision of statutory and preventative social services to the most vulnerable adults in Swansea.

Our Vision for Adult Services:

- **‘Working alongside you to live well and safely in our community’.**

Our Shared Principles:

- We will work co-productively within communities and alongside families and individuals to keep people safe from harm, supporting people to exercise voice, choice and control in their lives.
- We will creatively collaborate with you to support you to live as well and as independently as you can.
- Building on existing individual strengths, relationships and support networks within communities to enhance resilience.
- We will promote and respect the rights of individuals.
- We will strive to protect and prevent harm.
- We will understand what matters to you and ensure your voice is heard
- When it’s needed, we will provide the right response at the right time.
- We will promote our communities and their well-being.
- We’ll maintain the development of a competent, motivated, supported and compassionate workforce.
- We will continue to build upon positive working relationships with partners.
- We will embrace innovation and a culture of continuous improvement.

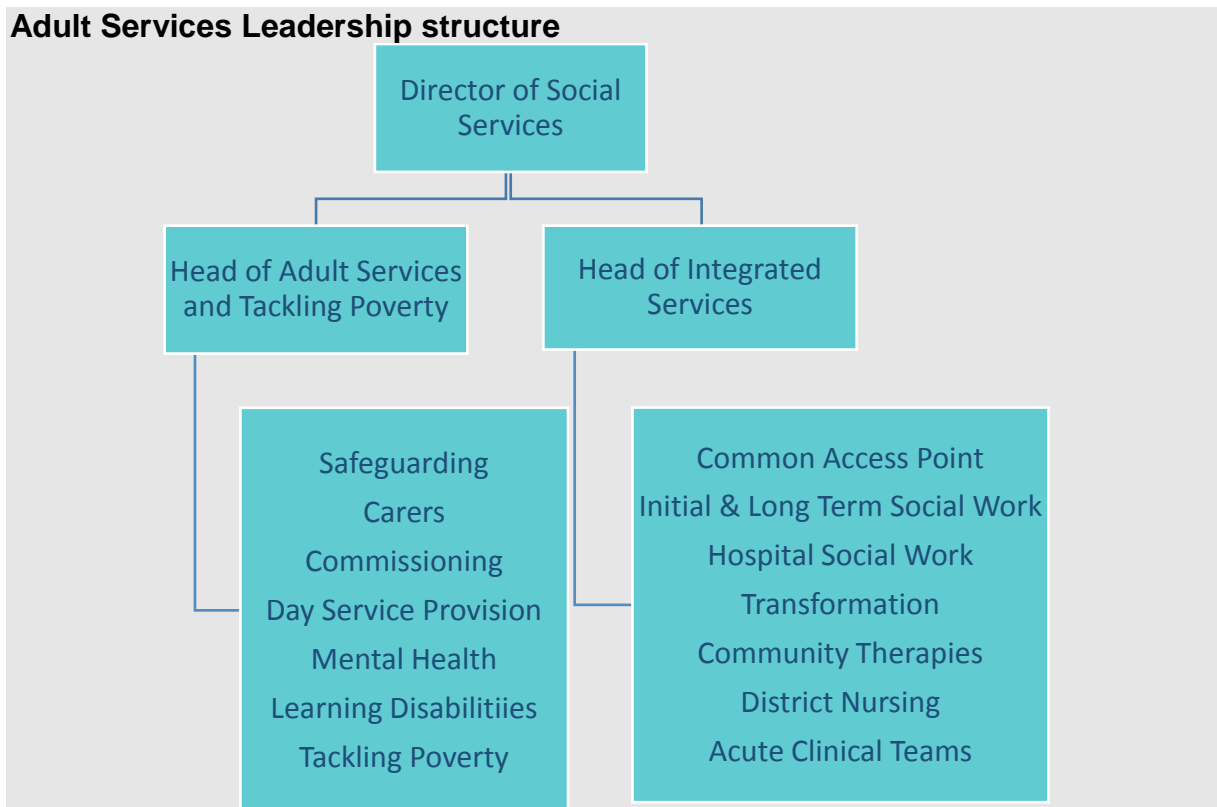
Adult Services Transformation

The development of the Adult Services Transformation programme and our delivery against our agreed priorities is co-ordinated by the Adult Services Transformation team alongside colleagues and teams across the Service and wider partnerships. The work of the Transformation programme is in addition to our business-as-usual improvement activity. However, in 2022/23, the programme has again needed to focus largely on recovery and stabilisation of Adult Services rather than the wider Transformation agenda.

Our longer-term strategic priorities have continued to run through the core of everything we do. We are working towards a whole-system, integrated approach with Health and regional and local commissioning plans to support better outcomes for citizens:

Examples of recent work include:

- Younger Adult Day Services and other Day Opportunities review options and implementation.
- Temporary Supported Accommodation for single homeless people (over 18's) re-procurement.
- Younger Adult Support Living framework development and refresh.
- Sensory Impairment re-procurement.
- Older Adults Day Opportunities review and implementation.
- Extra Care Services for older people re-procurement.
- Carers Services re-procurement.



Updated management structure: [Adult Services SMT Structure](#)

Adult Services Transformation Programme 2023-24 are:

- A review and re-model of our internal and external domiciliary care capacity. As part of this work, we will review and refresh the existing commissioning framework alongside investigation of alternative models for commissioned domiciliary care building upon pilot working arrangements explored over the last 2 years which offer more flexibility and stability to providers as well as delivery of a more outcome focused approach to the provision of direct care.

- The implementation of our Internal Residential Care model of delivery will continue to be progressed and outcomes monitored.
- The provision of step-up and step-down beds associated processes and investment requirements will also be further developed.
- Commissioning opportunities supporting the growth of our assistive technology offer for Adults in Swansea, as part of our preventative and early help priorities will also be explored. This work builds upon our recent commissioning review of the service and market analysis.

ii) What we do (Activity in 2022/23)

Table 5. Adult Services activity in 2022-23 (Front Door & Assessment)

Adult Population (Census-2021) -number of Adults aged 18 and over living in Swansea = **192,008** (199,723)

NB Data shown as reported to Welsh Government as part of new Social Services Performance and Improvement framework- first year of reporting to new metrics /definitions)

AD1/001a Number of contacts received by statutory social services during the year = **11,522** (4,830)

AD1/001bNEW Number of new contacts received by statutory social services during the year = **3,635** (-)

AD/002 New Number of contacts received by statutory social services during the year, where advice or help was provided = **3,579** (-)

AD/004 Number of new assessments completed for Adults during the year = **3,551** (3,859)

AD/005aNEW Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan = **2,044** (1,049)

AD/005bNEW Needs were able to be met by any other means = **1,347** (2,659)

AD/005cNEW There were no eligible needs to meet = **160** (151)

AD/006aNEW Number of new assessments where evidence of active offer of Welsh = **1,832** (1,756)

AD/007 Number of new assessments completed for adults in secure estate = **2** (2)

AD/008 The number of new assessments that were completed, where the assessment was requested by the adult or family during the year and a previous assessment had been completed in the previous 12 months = **61** (-)

AD/010 Total number of packages of reablement in year = **608** (625),

of which Community Reablement = **454** (-)

of which RCAS = **154** (-)

AD/011aNEW Reduced the need for support = **0** (45)

AD/011bNEW Maintained the need for the same level of support = **162** (189)

AD/011cNEW Mitigated the need for support = **349** (305)

AD/011dNEW Neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support = **97** (86)

AD/012 Number of Adults with a care and support plan at 31 March = **5,652** (5,323)

Health and Social care regionally and local are dealing with higher numbers of contacts, referrals, assessments and reviews being carried out. Adult Services continues to be very busy with high levels of, and increasing demand for information, advice and assistance through our front door. During the year activity in the

Common Access Point (CAP) shows a generally increased number of contacts during 2022-23. The number of referrals received in March 2023 is the highest since May 2022. More recently we can profile higher demand in numbers, and level of response required to address complexity of presenting issues.

Therapies and Social Work teams are actively considering their recruitment priorities in continue to manage the volume and intensity of cases. As part of the Directorate’s Workforce Well-being strategy, we are promoting and developing the role of alternatively qualified workforce to facilitate the efficient and safe provision of intervention to people. We are also taking an innovative and flexible approach to deployment of colleagues and are trailing some different ways of working to facilitate the right response at the right time.

| Table 6. Adult Services activity in 2022-23 (Support to Carers) | |
|--|--|
| CA/001 | Total number of contacts to statutory social services by adult carers or professionals on their behalf received during the year = 382 (333) |
| CA/002 | Of this number (CA/001), where advice or assistance was provided = 375 (311) |
| CA/004 | Total number of carers assessments for adults undertaken in year = 518 (348) |
| CA/006 | Number of carers assessments refusing during the year = 880 (888) |
| Other: | |
| CA/005a | Needs could be met with a carer’s support plan or care and support plan = 341 (225) |
| CA/005b | Needs were able to be met by any other means = 144 (111) |
| CA/005c | There were no eligible needs to meet = 28 (12) |
| CA/007a | There was evidence of the active offer of Welsh = 378 (310) |
| CA/007b | The Active Offer of Welsh was accepted = 2 (0) |
| CA/007c | The assessment was undertaken using the language of choice = 378 (310) |

We recognised that our approach to carers assessment had to improve. Our work this year has continued to extend the offer of a what matters conversation to carers in their ‘own right’. We aimed to increase the number of carers assessment, and to support carers on their own wellbeing journey.

This table above shows that there has been improvement in how the offer to carers is made, using our ‘Collaborative Communication’ approach. Working in partnership with carers to support their wellbeing & caring role.

Table 7. Adult Services activity in 2022-23 (Safeguarding)

| | |
|------------|--|
| AD/020 | Total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the year = 709 (959) |
| AS/001 NEW | The total number of adults suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect reported during the year = 588 (959) |
| AS/002 NEW | The total number of adults reported more than once for the same category of abuse or neglect during the year= 58 (78) |
| AS/003 NEW | The total number of adults reported for different categories of abuse or neglect during the year = 87 (140) |
| AS/006aNEW | Number of criminal investigations that concluded during the year = 58 (63) |
| AS/006bNEW | Number of non-criminal investigations that concluded during the year = 49 (22) |
| AS/006 NEW | Total investigations during year= 107 (85) |

There are signs that the new dedicated Adult Safeguarding team And Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team are working effectively, although direct comparison to last year is not possible.

Table 8. Adult Services activity in 2022-23 (Care & Support)

AD/012a NEW Number of adults with a care and support plan on 31 March = **5,662** (5323)

AD012b NEW Number of adults with a care and support plan on 31 March and also a carer's support plan, where the adult has both their own care and support needs and responsibilities as a carer = **78** (-)

AD/013 Number of Adults with a care and support plan whose needs are met through a direct payment = **450** (399)

For services started during the year Total number of days wait between the scheduled start date and the actual start date of a service identified within their care and support plan, where that service is:

AD/014aNEW Adult Care Home = **12,891 days** (-)

AD/014bNEW Domiciliary Care = **26,769 days** (-)

AD/014 NEW the total number of days adults = **39,660 days** (-)

AD/015 Total Number of services for Adults started during the year = **1,418** (1,309), of which

AD/015a Residential Care = **578** (-)

AD/015b Domiciliary Care = **641** (751)

AD/015c Respite Care = **199** (-)

AD/016 Number of Care and Support plans due to be reviewed during the year = **4,588** (4,874)

AD/017 Number of Care and Support plans due to be reviewed that were completed within statutory timescales = **3,324** (2,345)

AD/018NEW The number care and support plans for adults supported with direct payments that were due for review during the year = **337** (364)

AD/019NEW The number care and support plans for adults supported with direct payments that were due for review during the year that were completed within statutory timescales = **112** (158)

Number of Adults receiving day care, at 31st March - reported as = **478** (-)

AD/029 Number of adults who paid the maximum weekly charge towards the cost of care or support during the year = **962** (839)

AD/032 NEW The total number of adults during the year where the need for an independent professional advocate was identified = **127** (117)

AD/033 NEW "The total number of adults during the year where the need for an independent professional advocate was identified and an independent professional advocate was provided = **82** (94)

After three long years, this last quarter has seen some significant improvement in social care capacity across adult services. Waiting lists for domiciliary care are now below pre covid levels having touched 300% higher than anything we have ever experienced in Swansea. This appears to be as a result of concerted efforts on a number of fronts. Investment in in house domiciliary care capacity both reablement and long-term care; extensive work with commissioned providers to try new models; work with third sector colleagues on establishing more micro enterprises; an enhanced bedded reablement offer and investment in different approaches to direct payments both for carers and the cared for.

Despite that improvement, fragility in health services remains significant and consequently individuals are presenting to social services with increasing fragility and a much higher level of need than we would historically have been able to support. It will be increasingly difficult for the Council to support more and more individuals with ever greater levels of need (particularly specialist health need) without a significant shift of focus by health boards and investment in integrated models of community service.

iii) Performance in year

Table 7. Key Performance Results In Adult Services in 2022-23

As reported in Corporate Annual Performance Report v3.0 (Last Year 2021-22 in Brackets)

Targets not set this year.

| | |
|--------|---|
| AD011e | Percentage of residential reablement stays completed during the year where the need for support was mitigated or reduced = 70.9% (NEW) |
| AD011f | Percentage of community reablement packages of care completed during the year where the need for support was mitigated or reduced = 53.99% (NEW) |
| AS13b | Percentage of identified carers who have been offered an assessment at the point of assessment of the 'cared for' = 87.1% |
| AD017i | Percentage of Care and Support plans that were due to be reviewed during the period which were completed within statutory timescales = N/a (-) |
| AD024i | The percentage of enquiries completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse = 82.5% (provisional) |

Our latest performance results are encouraging, the position remains vulnerable to change, particularly with workforce capacity and further disruptions possible.

Looking forward, we can expect increasing demand linked to demographic changes, such as those associated with an aging population, and more people living with greater complexity of need. We have a good understanding of our day-to-day performance and activities with a strong culture of using data and management information to improve decisions.

Adult Services is delivering on a more sustainable, integrated model of health and social care. The service offer is impacted by additional demand at the front door, workforce capacity and rising costs associated with the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

Our multi-disciplinary approach to wellbeing and prevention and the 'what matters most' conversation by staff in the Common Access Point and teams are showing positive signs. Whilst the positive outcomes achieved with people in Bonymaen House continue, we are working closely as a health and social care multi-disciplinary service to put in place mitigation for those few individuals who need to return to hospital during their stay.

iv Key Service Improvement Priorities in 2023/24

- Promoting people's voice
- Ensuring a valued & skilled workforce
- Better Prevention & Early Help
- Keeping People Safe
- Enabling & Promoting Independence
- Financial Efficacy
- Resources which meet the needs of our community
- Focus on quality & continuous improvement.

Service Objectives (as set out in Adult Services Service Plan 2023-24):

See Diagram in Appendix b.

2d. How we are performing –Tackling Poverty

i) Vision /strategy

The Tackling Poverty Service works in partnership with local people, Council services and other agencies to reduce the effects of poverty and support people to reach their full potential.

The Tackling Poverty Service is also responsible for co-ordination of the Corporate Priority 'Tackling Poverty' strategy and 'Enabling Communities' within the Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2027, working with other departments, teams and with external partners to deliver the steps required to achieve this Corporate Priority.

Oversight of this coordination is provided by two internal cross-departmental groups; the Swansea Council Poverty Forum (focused on the 'Tackling Poverty' strategy) and the Enabling Communities Network Group (focused on the 'Enabling Communities').

Our vision is that people and communities are as strong, resilient, connected and prosperous as they can be.

To achieve this vision, our mission is to build relationships with individuals, families, communities and partners to:

- reduce poverty and improve personal prosperity.
- act preventatively through early interventions.
- deliver better outcomes for our population.
- walk alongside people to enable them to achieve their 'good life'.
- work with communities to be more welcoming, self-reliant, connected and cohesive.
- deliver a service that is inclusive, equitable, effective and valued.

Underpinning our vision and mission is a person-centred, strengths-based approach that focuses on the wellbeing and future prospects of the people and communities we work with to deliver our service.

Our enhanced service offer covers everything from Welfare Rights to employability, from Lifelong Learning to Tackling Poverty and Prevention services.



Tackling Poverty Services Leadership structure

The Tackling Poverty Service directly delivers a range of services, programmes and initiatives that achieve or contribute to the following objectives:

- To provide employability support for people seeking jobs and career opportunities.
- To provide adult learning support for people who wish to improve their skills and qualifications.
- To provide financial inclusion support for people who need help to access financial products and services in a responsible and sustainable way.
- To provide welfare rights support for people who need help to access welfare benefits entitlements.
- To provide a Local Area Coordination approach to support people who need help to improve their lives, build their independence and learn new skills.
- To provide a poverty development approach to support people in or at risk of poverty.
- To take a partnership approach to tackling poverty, working with others to alleviate poverty by addressing the causes and long term challenges.
- To take a partnership approach to community enablement, working with others to help local communities become more welcoming, self-reliant, connected and cohesive.

We will be adopting the following principles to this work:

- A whole Public Services Board and whole Council approach.
- Building resilience, social capital and social networks.
- Involvement and participation of service users.
- Implementing 'what works' in future delivery.

We work with residents through a strengths-based approach to increase their well-being, skills and qualifications and to gain sustainable and fulfilling employment and maximise household income.

Also, by working collaboratively through the Swansea Poverty Partnership forum.

We also contribute to the reduction of urgent and emergency requests, and the growing demands placed on statutory services, by contributing positively to Swansea citizen's resilience, health and well-being.

ii) What we do (Activity in 2022/23)

Table 8. Tackling Poverty Services activity in 2022-23

Total Population -citizens (census 2021) - the population of the City and County of Swansea = **237,834** (246.563)

Examples of strategic service developments in the last year:

- **3,295** people accessed employability support through Swansea Working (1,892)
- **391** people secured employment through Communities for Work and Communities for Work Plus (348)
- **1,720** people enrolled on Adult Community Learning courses, including essential skills, digital literacy, and family learning (1,250)
- **£1,549,693** welfare benefits were secured
- **£219,963** worth of debt was addressed
- **Over £500,000 in support for groups and individuals tackling poverty.**
- Received **1,830** introductions to people through Local Area Coordination

Partnership working was supported through the Swansea Council Poverty Forum, Swansea Poverty Partnership Forum, Financial Inclusion Steering Group and Swansea Food Poverty Network.

The economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis continue to have a significant impact on citizens and families already experiencing poverty and this is driving those at risk of poverty, into poverty.

The Bevan Foundation "'Snapshot of Poverty in Winter 2023"' report highlights that more in one in eight Welsh households (14%) either sometimes, often or always do not have enough for all the basics: [Snapshot-of-poverty-in-winter-2023.pdf](https://bevanfoundation.org/Snapshot-of-poverty-in-winter-2023.pdf) (bevanfoundation.org)

Large numbers of people are going without essentials including four intend going without heating in their home and one in four eating smaller meals or skipping meals in their entirety.

The report also highlights that debt is a significant problem with 28% of people borrowing money between October 2022 and January 2023 and 13% being in arrears on at least one bill.

The report finds that the cost-of-living crisis is not affecting everyone in Wales equally.

Among the groups that are being most significantly affected are:

- People in receipt of benefits - people on Universal Credit are five times more likely to report that they sometimes, often or always struggle to afford the basics as the general population.
- Disabled people whose condition limits them a lot - over half (52%) have gone without heating in their home over the past three months.
- Social renters - nearly half (46%) report that they have had to cut back on food for themselves or skip meals in the three months to January 2023.

- Households with children - around twice as likely to be in debt as a result of the cost-of-living crisis as households with no children.
- Adults under the age of 65 - twice as likely to report that their household sometimes, often or always struggled to afford the basics as households over 65 years old.
- Unpaid carers - significantly more likely to have borrowed money between October and January than people who are not carers.

This stark analysis makes it all the more vital that, as a Council, we target our help and those who are most vulnerable and their carers.

iii) Performance in year

Table 9. Key Performance results In Tackling Poverty Services In 2022-23

As reported in Corporate Annual Performance Report v3.0(Last Year 2021-22 in Brackets)

| | |
|-------|--|
| POV05 | Value of welfare benefits raised in 2022/23, securing rights and addressing debt through Welfare Rights = £1,549,693 (£1,139,249) |
| POV06 | Average number of days all homeless families with children spent in Bed and Breakfast accommodation = 13.13 (10.38) |
| POV10 | Number of people gaining employment through Employability Support = 875 (481) |
| POV11 | Number of accredited qualifications achieved by adults with local Authority support = 1193 (620) |
| Local | Level of debt addressed during year= £219,963 (£77,670) |

iv) Service Improvement priorities in 2023/24

Our overall priority is taking forward the Council's Tackling Poverty strategy, as reflected in the Tackling Poverty Service 2023/24 Service Improvement Plan and Transformation programme.

- Deliver key steps and actions to achieve the Corporate Priority of 'Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities.
- Establish an outcome-based model of tackling poverty and enabling communities.
- Ensure people in crisis are prioritised while maintaining focus on prevention and early intervention.
- Raise the profile of the service across our partnerships and communities.
- Align priorities, service delivery and operational functions with Adult Services and Child & Family teams.

Tackling Poverty Services Objectives 2023/24 see Diagram in Appendix d.

2e. What did we plan to do last year? Progress made (Directorate)

Following the pandemic, we set out to progress into business as usual by implementing the Council's recovery programme – "Achieving Better Together", and to pick up on our existing transformation improvement programmes.

Our overall priorities were in the following areas:

- Care Services
- Future Workforce and Equalities
- Community Support

Also achieving the agreed budget for 2022-23, the budget priorities set within the refreshed Medium-Term Financial Plan (see section 5b), and in supporting the Council to deliver its new corporate priorities.

Progress has been made against all our improvement priorities above, and yet there was a huge amount of additional work we still have to do to keep people safe and protected with the additional challenges presented.

Updates on progress are set out in the relevant sections of this report.

This organisational flexibility and staff commitment demonstrates to me the strength in our service corporate and political leadership, the solidity of our partnerships and most of all the professionalism of our brilliant workforce.

2f. Overall Improvement Priorities for next year 2023/24

In support of the corporate objective safeguarding our most vulnerable people, and the Council's policy commitments our efforts are continually focused on three key areas:

- Placement Sufficiency,
- Prevention/Early Intervention
- Workforce.

Also achieving the agreed budget for 2023-24, the budget priorities set within the refreshed Medium-Term Financial Plan (see section 5b), and in supporting the Council to deliver its new corporate priorities.

3. How People Are Shaping Services

Everyone, adult or child, should be given a voice, an opportunity, their right to be heard as an individual and a citizen, to shape the decisions that affect them, to have control over their day to day lives and to be firmly at the centre of their own wellbeing journey.

In this section, I will give some examples of how we are working differently with Swansea’s citizens, how as a Council we are listening and working in new ways, and how we are using this to promote change in how we work.

The diagram below shows Swansea Council’s new Corporate Transformation Programme. These areas for improvement have been drawn from the council’s revised corporate plan, strategic priorities and next steps.



Swansea Council’s coproduction framework

Swansea as a Human Rights City

Swansea Council has been committed to the 1945 Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. In December 2022, Swansea become Wales's first Human Rights City, following a year of action to recognise their importance to the lives of all residents and organisations.

Together with Swansea University the council had produced a guide to help organisations embed human rights into their day-to-day activities and there would be a series of training events with the British Institute of Human Rights which will be on offer to organisation across Swansea.

Llais Neath Port Talbot & Swansea

Llais aims to make sure views and experiences are used by decision-makers to plan and deliver better health and social care services in your local area

Llais hear from the public in many different ways. They visit NHS and social care services to talk to patients, residents and carers. We talk to people at public events, and through community groups.

Llais also has an Advocacy Service to help people who want to raise a concern about care or treatment.

<https://www.haveyoursayllaiscymru.com/hub-page/neath-port-talbot-and-swansea-area>

Swansea Young Carers Service & Young Carers Forum

YMCA Swansea provides tailored support to Young Carers aged 8-18 who may provide care for a family member with a long-term illness, disability, mental health condition and/or dependency on substance use. YMCA Swansea also aims to identify and provide appropriate support to all Young Carers.

Young Carers Forum

An elected group of Young Carers who represent the views of YMCA Swansea Young Carers Service and work collaboratively with other organisations, on local and national level, to raise awareness on challenges faced by Young Carers. The group meets once a month and works on tasks to ensure Young Carers are recognised, supported and that YMCA Swansea is delivering a service for Young Carers that is shaped according to their needs.

Coproduction and Commissioning

Several commissioning reviews were implemented in Adult Services over the past five years. These included reviews on the Social Services Catering Service, Domiciliary Care, Residential Care, Younger Adult Services including Day Services and Temporary Accommodation. There have been good examples of coproduction and involvement in all our commissioning work.

We continually seek out people with lived experience of our services to be involved in our commissioning and improvement work – informing what we do directly and also via ongoing improved approaches to collating feedback and expanding our engagement opportunities. We want to build upon our 'pockets' of good practice in Adult Services of co-production and apply across a wider range of change programmes. As part of ongoing engagement, we are exploring how best to capture

and utilise people's reported outcomes, and use people's experience to improve our understanding of challenges and opportunities across the service.

Local Area Coordination

Our team of Local Area Coordinators across the whole of Swansea are there for the whole community.

They walk alongside individuals and the community to help people to:

- Make new connections and friends;
- Get involved in groups and activities;
- Overcome personal challenges;
- Get their voices heard by people in power and get involved
- Make contributions to their communities;
- Think about what their good life looks like

A Local Area Coordination Guide has been produced at the request of the Corporate Delivery Committee to inform elected members, colleagues and partners, as well as other who work with us, and to explain the role of the Team and how best to work effectively together.

For LAC coverage across Swansea:

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/localareacoordination>

To access the Guide, for more information and LAC stories:

<https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/tacklingpovertylacnewsupdates>

Involving young people in politics:

A tender was awarded to Swansea MAD who worked with the Partnership & Involvement Team & 30 Secondary school pupils from YGG Bryn Tawe and YGG Gwyr to develop a social media video promoting votes at 16, changes in law enabling young people to vote, voting as a democratic right and information about how to register to vote. 'Your Vote, Your Future' was being used as a promotional tool in the lead up to local elections and is available to view at. <https://www.swanseamad.com/vote/>.

Votes at 16 Ambassador recruitment took place with 19 ambassadors successfully recruited from 10 secondary schools. The ambassadors' role was to promote and encourage their peers to register to vote for the forthcoming elections. Ambassadors were supported in schools and youth settings to promote votes at 16 and registration to vote. The Votes at 16 Ambassadors project is a collaborative project between Democratic Services, the Partnership and Involvement Team and secondary schools. This work is evolving with resource packs and on-going recruitment of new ambassadors. It is hoped that we will have news of a new partnership democracy grant application within the next month, and this will allow us to build upon this work and explore support for "Voter ID Cards" going forward.

Children and Young People's Rights Scheme

Adopted in 2014, the Children's Rights Scheme has been redeveloped and refreshed, ensuring that it complements the 'Right Way', a principled approach that is being embedded nationally. This plan incorporates National Principles for a Rights Based approach to Children, taking account of extensive work with several hundred children, young people and practitioners on what a new Scheme should look like.

World Children's Day Event: 21st November 2022

World Children's Day was first established in 1954 as Universal Children's Day and is celebrated on 20 November each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare. Since 1990, World Children's Day also marks the anniversary of the date that the UN General Assembly adopted both the Declaration and the Convention on children's rights.

Over the last year, primary and secondary school children and young people have provided feedback via the "Human Rights City Consultation", "Children's Rights Scheme Consultation" and the Secondary School Pupil Voice PLC Manifesto. To mark World Children's Rights Day on 20 November, we held an event in the Waterfront Museum on 21 November and used the opportunity to update children and young people on how we have listened to them.

Listening to the voices of disabled children and young people

A pilot project has taken place in Ysgol Pen Y Bryn where all staff have undertaken INSET training on what it means to embed a principled approach to children's rights into their new curriculum. Work is on-going with pupils and staff to map existing good rights practice, and areas for development, from which a 5 point-plan for embedding rights will be co-produced by teachers, governors, parents and pupils.

Partnership work continues with pupils and staff at Ysgol Pen Y Bryn to build relationships and ensure an inclusive approach to hearing the voice of children and young people with a disability and this includes joint grant applications with partner projects to deliver inclusive leisure provision and activities over the school holidays which was a priority raised by young people within the school.

Ensuring LGBTQ+ Equality:

26 young people from Swansea have been working in partnership with young people from Neath Port Talbot as members of the Western Bay Junior Safeguarding Board to develop an LGBTQ+ resource pack for schools. 'Equali-tea' is a pack raising awareness of LGBTQ+ issues faced by young people locally, based on the issues raised by young people themselves, and consists of LGBTQ+ history quizzes, teapot conversation starters, and scribble pads which allow young people to discuss LGBTQ+ issues faced in school, in the family and in the community.

'Equali-tea' packs have been distributed to all secondary schools in NPT and Swansea. The Junior Safeguarding Board made up of 23 young people have also facilitated 3 sessions on the pack with senior decision makers –

- 1) with CMET in Swansea
- 2) NPT Corporate Parenting Board
- 3) with Western Bay Children's Safeguarding Board.

Mapping a Whole Council Approach to Hearing the Voice of CYP in Swansea

A cross directorate working group has been established to collate an accurate picture of the current engagement mechanisms and structures in operation across the Council to hear the voice of Children & Young People (CYP). A mapping exercise has been undertaken in order for us to identify any gaps and explore the opportunities going forward.

It is acknowledged that lots of great work is going on across Council directorates to make sure we hear the voice of CYP on issues that impact their lives in line with our statutory responsibility and that children and young people have a say on shaping services going forward. The mapping exercise will help to identify gaps and opportunities going forward.

Engagement Hub:

The Engagement Hub is a one-year pilot project focused on providing a visible engagement drop in hub to increase accessibility of Council engagement officers and provide a physical space for community members to attend and find out about engagement opportunities and receive support to reconnect with services etc....

The “Engagement Hub” will be launched in July 2023 and is located at the heart of the National Waterfront Museum within the Harries room located on the ground floor of the museum in a location with high footfall and which is easily accessible to all.

Childcare and Play Sufficiency and Celebration Event

The 2006 Childcare Act places a duty on Welsh local authorities to assess childcare sufficiency, specifically in terms of whether it meets the needs of parents accessing work or training. A Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) is undertaken every 5 years, with 2022 seeing the most recent submission. The CSA is the culmination of extensive engagement, research and data collection that considers demand, supply, workforce and accessibility across all aspects of childcare provision.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment reported that settings were struggling to find staff, with many vacancies remaining open for some time and the sector feeling undervalued as well as believing the profession warrants higher pay to justify the responsibility involved. It has been a difficult time for all, yet the sector has provided a key role in supporting children whilst earning comparatively low pay in return. (Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022).

One spring like evening during March 2023 we celebrated the great work of our Early Years, Childcare and Play sector. We celebrated and showcased the incredible work achieved every day, in delivering amazing quality childcare and play opportunities, ensuring that children are given the best start in life in Swansea.⁶³ Awards were presented on the evening to many well-deserving people and organisations. After handing the last of the Special Recognition Awards, Director of Social Services Dave Howes said: "Thank you to all parents and carers who took the time to vote, and a huge thank you to JR events which have supported the inaugural event.

Most of the examples presented here reflect Swansea's commitment to coproduction and participation, as integral to how we plan, commission and provide social care, and in collaborate to achieve a sustainable model that meet the needs of future generations.

In 2023/24, our priority remains to ensure co-production is central to how we plan, design, commission and deliver our services. We can learn many positives lessons from our response to recent challenges; how innovative solutions can be found to the most complex problems when we think together and work together.

Examples of Feedback received this year

The team at Bonymaen House received some fantastic comments from a doctor corresponding with a local MP regarding a visit to see their work first-hand. The doctor said: "I wanted to see if you would be willing to visit Bonymaen house and see the absolutely fantastic work it is doing. My Mum is currently in week three of the reablement programme and the transformation is absolutely incredible. My brothers and I have been overwhelmed with the progress and the absolute professionalism of the staff. We really do feel this is an exemplar for post-acute care of the elderly where there are very high success rates in achieving the goal of returning residents to independent."

Our Independent Domestic Violence Advisor delivered a presentation at the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Festival of Practice highlighting the successes of Swansea's Specialist Domestic Abuse Court. Michelle received excellent praise for her work: "The professionalism and commitment in the way all organisations worked together to deal with DA cases in Swansea were recognised as best practice in England and Wales." Head of Child and Family Services said: "Fantastic feedback and well-deserved recognition of the excellent work, she and the team are delivering in Swansea. Michelle is leading the way for victims of abuse; putting Swansea on the map as a centre of excellence"

A young girl's father has shared praise and appreciation to Early Help Lead Workers for their support. The father said: "I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for how effective the system has been for our family. Our daughter encountered challenges at school, so I reached out to inquire about any additional support, and within two weeks, we received an offer for assistance from the Early Help hub. Our daughter is now much happier in school and receiving fantastic support! We were blown away by the amount of knowledge and expertise demonstrated by Carol and Jen! I want to express my gratitude for their outstanding support. The assistance we have received has been invaluable and has made a significant difference in our family."

4. Reports on the Six Quality Standards

This next section of my annual report provides an overview of social services quality and performance, using the National Standards Framework: Code of Practice: measuring performance addressing the **six national quality standards** (under review).

It also reflects the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales by helping to create a place where we all want to live, now, and in the future.

The six national quality standards are:

1. **Prevention** -working with people to define and co-produce personal wellbeing outcomes that people wish to achieve **NQS 1**
2. **Well-being - What Matters conversations- help received via Early Help & Front Door** - working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing **NQS 2**
3. **Safeguarding** - taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm **NQS 3:**
4. **Wellbeing outcomes achieved by managed Care and Support and good Social Work Practice**-By encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society **NQS 4**
5. **Quality Of Services** -supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships **NQS 5**
6. **Working in Partnership and Integration** - working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic wellbeing, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs **NQS 6**

Each of the 6 parts in Section 4 covers the expected outcomes, what we are doing, how well we are doing and the priorities for the year ahead

4a. Prevention

Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people.

Our expectation is that Swansea citizens are well informed, understand what care, support and opportunities are available and they can access support themselves to help achieve their own wellbeing outcomes.

The strategic aims of Swansea Council's Transformation Plan – Achieving Better Together is to focus on:

- The core purpose of the Council
- Transforming services to be effective and efficient
- Greater collaboration with other Councils, organisations, community groups and residents, with a focus on regionalisation
- Greater and more meaningful engagements with our residents and community
- Balancing the budget for current and future years
- To meet the aspirations and targets within the Medium-Term Financial Plan

A key aspect of Swansea's Adult Services Transformation and Child & Family Services Improvement programmes is to support these aims will be to target the range of preventative approaches, as set out in Swansea's Wellbeing plan, due to be updated this year.

What we planned to do

How well we responded during the pandemic was based on working with and in communities, alongside third sector and other partners and by providing clear and easily and accessible information for the public.

We set out to achieve this by:

- Continue to work with partners and communities in promoting prevention and early help
- Improving prevention and early help within our social services transformation programmes, as part of Council's Transformation plan, and the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership work programme.

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

Work around development of prevention and early help is progressing well., building on the excellent response to the Covid pandemic. Such innovative work has presented further opportunities for change and improvement particularly in respect of citizen and carer's direct access to information, and support to improve their wellbeing.

Swansea citizens can access information on the Council's public website to help them better understand and choose from the wide range of care, support and opportunities which are available, and use these to help achieve their wellbeing outcomes. Swansea continues to develop our range of public web resources available to help people make informed choices.

There is help available on a daily basis to ensure people access the full range of Council services to achieve their own wellbeing outcomes.

Early Help Hubs (C&FS)

Swansea's Early Help Hubs work within a joined-up approach using the signs of wellbeing framework to work with individuals and families supporting wellbeing using a locality-based hub structure and a single point of contact for professionals.

The Early Help Hub model builds on and increases the previous family support provision, formally known as Team Around the Family (TAF), Family Partnership Team and Evolve. By co-locating and bringing these services into one structure we can ensure that support is available regardless of age or location, that it is integrated with partners and utilises community assets to provide:

- Child or early years work;
- Youth work;
- Whole family work.

There are five Early Help Hubs across Swansea in a locality-based model covering East, Penderry, Townhill, Valley and West.

East - Llangyfelach Road, Brynhyfryd, Swansea SA5 9EA

Penderry - Portmead Avenue, Blaenymaes, Swansea SA5 5QH

Townhill - Powys Avenue, Townhill, Swansea SA1 6PH

Valley - Bethel Road, Llansamlet, Swansea SA7 9QP

West - Pontarddulais Road, Gorseinon, Swansea SA4 4FE

Local Area Coordination

By extending local area coordination, offering support to families in need and promoting well-being opportunities to enhance our quality of life in supportive communities and within Swansea as a Healthier City.

Swansea has a Local Area Coordination team covering the whole city to help people find the right help and support, now working in all areas, helping people to 'Get a life not a service'.

A Local Area Coordinator can help anyone build relationships within their community in support of their own wellbeing outcomes.

Public Information

A wide range of public information is available to all Swansea citizens, via Swansea's updated public website: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/socialcare>

There are links to SCVS website with even more resources:

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/3849/Swansea-Council-for-Voluntary-Service>

Also, the Family Information system (FIS). [FamilyInformationService](#)

Swansea Family Information Service works in partnership with the private, voluntary, independent, community and maintained sector –to shape and secure a range of

high quality children's and childcare services. There is help on FIS to find childcare and early support available to parents and families, including the Best Start Squad: [BestStartSquad](#)

Dewis Cymru is a national wellbeing directory providing an online library of community assets with contact information and organisational information, maintained by organisations themselves, as and when changes to provision occur. Swansea has increased the number of local resources available to **924** (833). <https://www.dewis.wales/>

Flying Start

Flying Start is the Welsh Government's flagship Early Years programme for families with children aged under 4 years and is targeted in some of our most deprived areas. The programme's 4 key components; enhanced health visiting, speech and language, parenting and high quality part time funded childcare aims to support families to give children the best start in life. Swansea has a 'cap' number of beneficiaries to be reached which totals 3103 with the programme currently being delivered in areas of Birchgrove, Blaenymaes, Clase, Clwyd, Craigfelen, Gors, Hafod, Plasmarl, Portmead, Sea View, St Helen's, St Thomas, Sketty, Townhill, Waun Wen, Morrison, Clydach and Mynyddbach. 18 childcare settings are currently offering 481 children high quality part time childcare. In addition a further 209 children have benefitted from phase one of the Programme for Government phased expansion, details of which are highlighted below.

Families First/ Family Support

Families First has been running in Swansea since 2010. Since 2018 it has been incorporated into the Children and Communities Grant. The funding enables a variety of services to be delivered including:

In 2022/23 family support interventions delivered through Families First include:

- Early Help Hubs
- Homestart
- Play Leisure Opportunities Library
- Local Aid Buddies,
- Stepping Stones
- CMET
- EYST – Family Link
- Family Centres both Local Authority and Faith in Families
- TCS counselling services

Performance is reported the Families First Performance Framework:

Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Swansea Council has an established programme of e-learning and face-to-face Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) training as one of the key mechanisms for delivering the VAWDASV (Wales) Act 2015. Anyone who experiences domestic abuse – can get help right away

Swansea has a 'You are not alone' chatbot, which helps to guide you to the right advice, 24 hours a day.

#YouAreNotAlone

Our VAWDASV partnership group oversees our response and coordinates a joined up, multi-agency response in this vital area.

Tackling Poverty strategy

Swansea is a city with significant inequalities between our most and least deprived communities. The Tackling Poverty Service works in partnership with local people, Local Authority services and other agencies to reduce the effects of poverty and support people to reach their full potential. The Tackling Poverty Service champions the Corporate Plan priority of Tackling Poverty including a 'tackling poverty is everybody's business' approach, through the development of a Tackling Poverty strategy. The coordination of cross departmental / service working (Tackling Poverty Forum), as well as multi-agency Tackling Poverty Partnership forum ensures that next steps are coproduced; development work is joined up duplication is minimised, and impact is maximised. Vital areas of work include: Welfare Rights, Financial Inclusion, Employability, Life-long Learning, Local Area Coordination.

Recent developments include:

Launch of Swansea Poverty Truth Commission, Employment Hub in the Quadrant, Swansea Spaces (Warm Hubs) and Cost of Living help web page.

This work is now supported by the Council's Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee.

Stories of Achievement

Early Years

Mum left school at 16 with no qualifications as she was pregnant with her first child and LJB was born 2 years later.

LJB started in childcare on her 2nd birthday. – She had significant speech and language delay, and her play skills were not developed. Following her Wellcomm screen a referral was made to Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) for an assessment and targets were set in childcare and home. Mum met with the Key worker regularly for support and guidance with these targets and soon we noticed an improvement with LJB receptive and expressive language. Following the summer 2022 holidays LJB had her first seizure at home. Mum became extremely anxious and was frightened to leave LJB. Shortly after LJB had another seizure a referral was made to the paediatrician. LJB had her diagnoses of epilepsy, and she was put on medication to control her seizures. Childcare staff met with the epilepsy nurse, all staff did the epileptic training and the rescue medication training. A health care plan was devised from the health profession which was later shared with childcare and school. Mum had a referral to EYEH for home intervention. Mum's confidence has grown, she has recently passed her driving test and is now working for the local authority. LJB is happy and is thriving in school.

Story 2. Evolve

Swansea's Evolve Youth Service has undertaken a full review of their offer, with a public consultation now closed on the delivery of what is an innovative and constantly evolving service. They provide a full range of flexible, creative and responsive, interventions for children and young people, across the whole of Swansea, identified as having vulnerabilities and complexities across the City.

Evolve Swansea Youth Workers organised an inspiring walk to promote awareness about mental health among young people. Evolve's Christmas Giving event, providing a warm and welcoming place for young people over Christmas in Swansea at local Youth Clubs. A panel from Evolve Swansea's Youth Clubs have taken part in a discussion about the language used to them and their peers in talking about young people.

During 2023/24, our priorities are to:

- To deliver on the Tackling Poverty strategy and enabling communities priority to improve outcomes for Swansea citizens and families.

4b. Wellbeing – What Matters

Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

Our expectation is that each citizens’ voice is heard by our service and listened to; people can speak for themselves and that they have control over any decisions that are made. That our most vulnerable people who need help to do the things that matter most to them, to promote their independence, and those carers can access support they need for their wellbeing.

Children have the right to reliable information under the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is important, as early as possible in our processes to provide as much up to date information about services and resource as we can to adults, children and young people. This can help people decide what to access, have an improved understanding of how services have changed, as a result of Covid-19, and to see details of how to access services, if they are needed either directly or via Information, autonomy and access to services.

Additional information included public health information, resources to support being at home, e.g. learning, play, and a specific section on access to services that specifically supported children and young people to have their voices heard in Swansea.

Our multi agency approach to Information, Advice and Assistance whether accessed directly, via Early Help or at the social services front door is set out for citizen’s on the Council’s public website: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/contactsocialservices>

What we planned to do

During 2022/23, our priorities were to continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable adults, children and their carers by:

- Working together to achieve what matters, building on their strengths and by supporting service users to achieve safety and their own well-being outcomes, and carers in their own wellbeing.
- Further embedding new approaches to ensure we are providing the right service to the right people at the right time.

Across the whole services we are working together to achieve what matters and supporting our service users to be safe and well. By providing the right services, at the right level of care and support, at the right time.

By our targeted approach, fewer children, young people and families require a statutory intervention from Social Services by receiving the right help when they most need it. Helping children to remain living safely at home with their families and be the best that they can be.

Within Adult Services, there is a collaborative communications approach, building on an integrated services model to support outcomes for individuals

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

We now have the multi-agency response available at the Social Services front door. By this we mean that there is a wider range of professionals who are available on a daily basis to support our information, advice and assistance (IAA) offer.

Across all services, we are offering 'What matter to you' assessments, which help us to focus our assessment on what is important to people, and their own view of wellbeing outcomes they wish to achieve.

Our front door Information Advice and Assistance services are using the practice models such as 'Signs of Safety' and 'Collaborative Communication' (refer to section 4d) to strengthen links to our frontline social work teams, which focuses on strengths, outcomes, voice, choice and control.

Advocacy is in Adult Services,

Advocacy supports and enables people who have difficulty representing their interests to exercise their rights, express their views, explore and make informed choices. An advocate is offered to help an individual to take decisions in their best interests. There are different forms of advocacy, depending on the help needed and decisions to be taken, but

- Independent Professional Advocate,
- Independent Mental Health Advocate,
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocate,
- Paid Relevant Person's Representative,
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocate

Adult Services has worked hard to develop this offer and use of advocacy through the citizen's journey.

C&FS Single Point of Contact

Our 'Single Point of Contact' is an enhanced advice and advocacy offer to help understand what is happening to a child, and within their family and to have a what matters most conversation; to help decide if support is needed and to find the best help quickly.

Swansea's SPOC explore the unique strengths and risks in families, in order to stabilise and strengthen a child and family's situation. Families living in the city and county of Swansea can contact us themselves to ask for help or advice. Sometimes people such as teachers or health visitors also contact us to see whether we can offer a family extra support. We aim to inform, support and empower people to make choices to stay safe, happy and well. Support might be from within their natural network of family or friends, and could also be from places in their communities like charities, and well as social services.

This year has seen the launch of Single Point of Contact and Continuum of Need Indicators to help measure performance and outcomes.

Adult Services Common Access Point (CAP)

Adult Services Common Access Point (CAP) remains at the forefront of our transformation, in applying a strengths-based, outcomes focused framework, by using Collaborative Communication practice and the 'what matters to you' conversation. Our front door team has a highly skilled, multi-disciplinary team that promotes positive discussions with citizens and carers at often difficult times. We are working more and more closely with third sector to find the best support available to meet the person's own outcomes.

Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services CAMHS

Since the pandemic more children and young people are experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.

Locally and regionally we have been working towards a bridging service for children and young people in need of support from Child and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS). CAMHS supports young people with difficulties, such as depression, self-harm, violence or anger, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, problems with food and anxiety, among many others.

Swansea Bay has open access 'front door' to Swansea Bay CAMHS via a Telephone Single Point of Contact / Referral Line for all children / young people & their families, and for all professionals. Our CAMHS Crisis Team operates 9am – 9:30pm seven days per week. Early Intervention in Psychosis Service, for young people aged 14 – 25, who may be experiencing early symptoms of psychosis.

Support to Carers – improving access to support for carers wellbeing

Building upon the regional carer's strategy Swansea locality have worked with carers to redesign our carers assessment process. We have also worked with the Carers Centre in Swansea to pilot a specific resource used to complete carers assessments. Successful completion of a stand alone carers assessment at the right time for the carer can help prevent crisis and ensure carers wellbeing and support needs are met. As a result of this work carer's assessments and reviews are increasing with the last 6 months showing completion of **420** in comparison with 207 for the same period in 2021.

Improving access to respite care Swansea Social Services was successful in obtaining a Carers Trust grant for £26k proposal which has enabled carers to access placements at short notice or planned in advance. These services are used to prioritise breaks for people who need it most or as a response to emergency or crisis situations. By allocating 2 beds at dual registered care home for a set period during the year. The pilot scheme has been very successful with good take up, and **20** vulnerable adults benefiting from the service.

Stories of Outcomes

Ageing well & Age Friendly City Recognition:

Over the last 18 months following on from the pandemic, Swansea Council's Partnership & Involvement Team along with partners of the "Ageing Well Steering

Group” have given extensive consideration to how and where we engage older adults aged 50+, in order to tackle loneliness and isolation, positively impact on physical and mental well-being and reconnect community members with local services and support. Swansea Council’s Partnership & Involvement Team work with a wide range of partners to run a number of weekly community engagement sessions which support people to build confidence, make new social connections and engage with community activities and projects, which they may not have felt comfortable or able to do without support. The “Ageing Well” agenda is part of the PSB “Live Well, Age Well” Objective and the commitment for Swansea to work towards “Age Friendly City” recognition with the “World Health Organisation”.

Work continues to develop Swansea into an “Age Friendly City” utilising engagement events, increasing communication and developing forums and mechanisms to hear the voice of community members aged 50+ and encourage active participation in local, regional and national developments.

Ageing Well Engagement Walk:

Swansea’s “Ageing Well Engagement Walk” is facilitated in partnership with Swansea Council, Action For Elders, Chinese Association For Wales, Caredig Housing & Swansea’s Ageing Well Community Group.

The “Engagement Walk” was initiated to combat loneliness and isolation, impact on physical and mental well-being, connect community members with local services to access information & support needs, whilst also providing opportunities to be heard when services are changed/developed to ensure they are fit for purpose and meet the needs of the community.

Please see promotional video in link below:
<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/Ageingwellmarinawalk>

Voice of the Child - Personal Education Planning

A joint PEP review was undertaken in January between the Local Authority and Education. The final report identified a number of key learning points.

During the audit process there were very good examples of young people being involved in completing their ‘My PEP’ and we could hear the child’s voice shine through.

Some plans showed good examples of PEPs being co-produced, allowing the young person to bring to life their own goals. It is important that the young person remains central to the PEP and that their voice is reflected in the school PEP as well as the My PEP.

Working collaboratively with schools and having staff participate in the PEP review has proved to be very beneficial for all involved to gain further understanding in the importance and effectiveness of a high-quality PEP.

Collaborative working is essential and will extend the audit invite to more professionals to share good practice in PEP completion and returns.

During 2023/24, our priorities are to:

Working together, with partners to achieve what matters most, and supporting all citizens -children, young people and vulnerable adults and families -to be safe and well.

4c. Safeguarding

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

Our expectation is that the most vulnerable people in Swansea are safe and protected from abuse and neglect. There are strong and effective arrangements in place to make any concerns known.

The pandemic and more recently the cost-of-living crisis have emphasised the importance of ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements and complicated arrangements to intervene with vulnerable individuals, children and families. Our workforce and partners have demonstrated considerable dedication, skill and innovation in making sure that we continue to support safety and safeguarding planning.

Our approach to Safeguarding and keeping people safe is reflected in 'Safeguarding our most vulnerable people' as the council's strategic priority. We have strong leadership in place to drive forward both a regional and corporate approach. Safe practice underpins the professional frameworks guiding our social work models in Child & Family and Adult Services.

A Corporate Safeguarding policy and work programme ensures the 'Everybody's business' approach is extending the expectation to partners and providers, as well as Council staff.

What we planned to do

- To evidence how well we are listening to / working with voice of child and vulnerable adult in all aspects of our safeguarding work.

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

Safe Voice (Adults)

Swansea is aiming to ensure individuals have a "safe voice" on safeguarding matters by providing stronger voice, meaningful control over the support they receive and remove any barriers to achieving their wellbeing outcomes and by making safeguarding personal.

In all our care and support work, service developments and social work practice, Swansea is aiming to ensure individuals have a "safe voice" on safeguarding matters by providing stronger voice, meaningful control over the support they receive and remove any barriers to achieving their wellbeing outcomes.

Adult Safeguarding

A full review of safeguarding arrangements has been undertaken in Adult Services with the establishment of a dedicated safeguarding team to be incorporated into the temporary management structure in Adult Services. Changes are receiving positive

feedback from key stakeholders and families. Adult Safeguarding team are demonstrating their skill and expertise by ensuring that all concerns are addressed at the earliest opportunity, that risks are managed effectively with partners using our practice approaches that place the person at the centre, with full involvement and engagement.

More cases are being closed and Safeguarding concern investigations are now more likely to be followed through to conclusion, and where necessary supporting police to achieve a conviction.

Adult Services Court of Protection

Last year we established a dedicated safeguarding team with the restructure of Adult Services. From the feedback received these arrangements are working well, with the specialist capacity to provide advice and assistance, and to work closely with practitioners has been valued. We will continue to review and monitor how well this is working, and to further improve our processes.

Corporate Safeguarding

Swansea Council expects that vulnerable people in Swansea are kept safe and protected from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children is both a corporate priority, and well-being strategic outcome within the Corporate Plan (2022-23). This is now widely understood as “everyone’s business”, by our leaders and elected members and our workforce, partner organisations and the individuals who are carrying out work on behalf of the Council.

A recent Estyn’s Inspection report on Education in Swansea (June 2022) endorses the Council’s approach to corporate safeguarding, noting strong leadership, a positive culture and collaboration between service areas (p16-17).

[Inspection report City and County of Swansea 2022 \(gov.wales\)](#)

An effective corporate safeguarding culture requires strong, visible, leadership presence, ensuring that senior officer and their workforce receives positive, professional and consistent backing in carrying out Council activities. This has been evident during this most difficult, challenging period, and though the vast range of actions taken in keeping people safe and well. All named safeguarding officers are working effectively together under the direction of a Corporate Safeguarding group, which meets quarterly, and is jointly chaired by the Director of Social Services David Howes and the Cabinet Member for Care Services –Cllr. Louise Gibbard

DoLS

The restructure of Adult Services teams also resulted in the creation of a standalone Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) team. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards were introduced in 2009 to protect against arbitrary deprivations of liberty in hospitals and care homes. These safeguards provide a legal framework that helps to ensure that human rights are protected once notified by a Managing Authority the Local Authority has a duty to assess whether the restrictions are necessary in order to prevent harm to the person and proportionate to their needs. Swansea has significantly improved performance in relation to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) through implementing these dedicated team arrangements. Feedback suggests this has not only improved professional knowledge but is driving up standards and response times.

Contextual Safeguarding/ CMET

Contextual safeguarding is an approach to understanding and responding to harm that adolescents face beyond their family homes, this type of harm is referred to as Extra familial harm and can include CSE, CCE, youth violence and peer on peer abuse.

In the first year since it was formed, our new Contextual, Missing, Exploited & Trafficked (CMET) panel considered 50 referrals and around 25 agencies have been in attendance.

Continuum of Need

Following consultation with a number of our partner organisations the Continuum of Need - Indicators for Support document is now completed and ready to be used as a guide to professional decision making within Child and Family Services, and in ensuring a proportionate response to need.

Getting the right response to need - Staff portal ([swansea.gov.uk](https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk))

Stories of Outcomes

By working in new ways, the Council is in a stronger position to focus resources on more preventative and contextual approaches. Child and Family Services places practice excellence at the centre of our work with the most vulnerable children
<https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/cfssafeguarding>

Adult Services are using collaborative communication and narrative based approaches to help professionals and service users reflect together on their experiences, the outcomes achieved and what could be done better.

<https://staffnet.swansea.gov.uk/collabcommscaseexample>

During 2023/24, our priorities are to:

- To implement the work programme of the corporate safeguarding group, and to continue to drive up quality standards in practice.

4d. Managed care and support – outcomes achieved

Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in Society.

Our expectation is that Swansea citizens can learn, develop to their full potential, and to do the things that matter most to them. People accessing managed care and carers can engage, contribute to communities and feel valued in society. People are supported by care and support plans, which promote their independence, choice and wellbeing

Our approach to social work practice development in helping people to achieve their own personal wellbeing outcomes is set out in practice handbooks and through our overarching practice models of Signs of Safety (Child and Family Services) and Collaborative Communication (Adult Services)

What we planned to do

Swansea citizens can learn, develop to their full potential, and to do the things that matter most to them.

We set out to:

- Continue to embed strengths based, outcomes focused practice within social work practice and processes, set within quality assurance framework reflecting right service at the right time.

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

We continue to demonstrate we are being the best we can be in all our work with adults, children, young people and families is no matter the challenges faced.

Swansea is a leading authority in implementing positive way of working through established practice based on Sign of Safety and Collaborative Communication. This report highlights many examples of how we are listening to the people we serve and to the people in their lives in shaping future services

Our excellent staff, managers and partners are all contributing to the best outcomes for children, young people, families, and adults.

Social Work Practice Frameworks

Swansea Council has a strong track record of applying evidence-based Practice Frameworks to drive social work improvements, such as Signs of Safety and Collaborative Communication: citizens can expect a 'What matters to you' conversation as this is now central to how we work, across the whole of social services. From our early help to our preventative work, to our 'warm' front door and within our social work teams, we aim to promote the person's own wellbeing outcomes and to prevent crisis and rapid escalation of needs.

Child and Family Practice Framework

Child and Family social workers are now experts in use of Signs of Safety/Wellbeing models, working in partnership and collaboration with families and other professionals, to understand what matters most, to explore strengths and risks, to stabilise and strengthen a child and family's situation by finding the best possible solutions.

- Working with children, young people and families to help them identify their needs and the right support for them.
- Wherever possible, ensuring children can live in permanent homes with their parents or wider family network, with the necessary support, but under an arrangement where those caring for them feel enabled and able to meet their children's needs, and exercise their parental responsibility.
- Improving outcomes for looked after children in our care and strive to achieve genuine permanence and security for those children, until at least they reach adulthood.
- Ensuring practitioners have access to a forum of experts who can support them to address barriers and obstacles when progressing children's cases towards achieving permanence.

[Swansea Staffnet - New - Strategy to support children and young people to live safely at home with their family](#)

Adult Services - Collaborative Communication

Adult Services are challenging historic ways of working by embedding a practice model, 'Collaborative Communication', which focuses on the rights of citizens, building on the voice, choice and control of individuals, their strengths, support networks and their own wellbeing outcomes.

The Academy

The Academy is a new team within Child & Family Services started with the goal of assess cases where there are child protection, or safeguarding worries about a child or young person or where there are identified eligible care and support needs and. Whilst working on safeguarding child disability cases, newly qualified social workers have access to high levels of practice support to develop their own skills and resilience so they have a well-rounded experience of social work. Earlier this year, several representatives from Social Care Wales visited Swansea Council at the Guildhall to discuss Social Work with Swansea's Academy team.

In the last 18 months of the Academy being launched it has enabled Child and Family Service to nurture and grow **5 Newly Qualified Social Workers** taking them through their first year in practice competencies, training, processes and learning of handing own case allocations in a safe space. Whilst also supported **3 students** throughout their placement.

Child & Family Peripatetic

This service offers flexible management and social work support across the whole services. The team can provide experience cover where there are absences and vacancies in senior positions. An experienced worker can then slot into that team to offer support and help the service ensuring that they have someone in place to ensure

there's no service deficit there to children and families, or lack of confidence within the team structure due to absence.

Adult Services Restructure Project

Adult Services Social Work Restructure Project Group is made up of Heads of Service and Principal officers along with Manager/Team Leader/staff volunteers from each Social Work Team. The project is working to establish a shared understanding of the objectives of this Social Work Restructure project which will help to inform what a fit-for-purpose structure means for all social work teams across Adult Services. Stage 1 of the work has been completed analysis of agreeing all 'As Is' reports with the relevant Social Work Team

Stage 2 approach is now proposing to look at future development of social work within Adult Services, evaluation of options and taking a whole system approach.

Quality Assurance- Adult Services and Child and Family Services

Social Services are implementing quality assurance frameworks within both service areas that articulates the high standards of service we expect in all work with vulnerable children and adults. The frameworks are both recognising that we need to focus on understanding the lived experience of those who receive a service. To achieve this, Child and Family Services are expanding how we get information both qualitative and quantitative to help identify improvements.

Adult Services now holds regular Quality and Assurance meetings to share development and examples of good practice.

The framework within Child and Family Services is well support by Learning and Innovation Team and a Services Quality Unit.

Child and Family Services Service Unit Quality (SQU)

One of the main roles of Child and Family's SQU is to make sure that the care and support plan meets the child/young person's needs and to ensure that the actions agreed in the care plan are completed in the timescales agreed.

The ensure each child/young person is at the heart of their planning or review meetings and promote their voice. The team act as guardian of the child's care plan.

They also ensure that Independent Reviewing Officer and Child Protection conference chair standards are adhered to for every child allocated to the service.

WCCIS Referral Process

Adult Services new process for making referrals to Internal Service Provision went live recently. The WCCIS Working Group have implemented a new process for making referrals to Internal Service Provision (Residential Services, Respite and Day Services) which is consistent with the referrals that are made to external provision. The change will mean all referrals into Internal Services will be undertaken via WCCIS.

Stories of Outcomes

Child & Family- Service Quality Unit

Within Swansea Council, we save weekly for every child/YP and who are care experienced children. In addition to this if they are 15- 25 we encourage our YP to use an online learning tool (stepladder of Achievement) set up by the share foundation. This helps them to develop financial know-how and making plans for the future. It has six steps to work through and you earn money at each step.

We are at the beginning of this journey and have 5 five YP signed up and one YP who has completed the six sessions earning £1500 of additional money, we asked him to share some learning:

- What motivated you to do it?

The thought of extra money

- What do you think was the easiest step and most helpful to support you with managing your money?

Step about budgeting was useful about prioritising bills in the future.

- What would you say is the hardest step and the one you least learnt on?

Step 5 about managing my money was the hardest.

- What are you most proud of?

Completing it all with little help

Thanks to all who is supporting our YP to become more financially secure, which includes, IRO, social workers, foster carers, young person advisors.

Foster Carer feedback

Feedback from Foster Carer said: "It's been fantastic. It's been the best 12 months of fostering over the 15 years we have fostered. We thoroughly enjoyed it. They are part of the family, and we plan things around them. The supervising social worker- A. has matched the children well. He knows the children and knows that it will work. He knows both sides and having that information has helped. He has put it together well."

Community Initial Assessment Team

Social Worker from the Community Initial Assessment Team received a message of appreciation from a family who struggled dearly to arrange care for their mother until she came along. The family's daughter said: "I am writing on behalf of my family to express our gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work and incredible positive results achieved by 'A'. As my mother's condition worsened, we tried to get as much help as possible but sadly encountered many hurdles until A. visited. Within one week, she had arranged for carers to come in twice a day, plus a District Nurse to call once a week. We cannot praise A. enough. I have been incredibly impressed by her. She has proved to be genuinely interested, compassionate, professional, and determined to help us, and she should be recognised for all her outstanding efforts." You should be very proud of this recognition.

During 2023/24, our priorities are to:

- Continue to implement quality assurance and practice frameworks within child and family and adult services to improve outcomes.

4e. Range of Services

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

Our expectation is that Swansea citizens are supported within and by their communities, in which they can contribute and enjoy safe and healthy relationships. People are also helped to recognise unsafe relationships and to protect themselves from abuse and neglect. The views of families, carers and other personal relationships are taken into account when assessing and planning care and support needs.

Swansea's approach to commissioning for better social care outcomes is set out in the commissioning work being undertaken regionally, and locally through Swansea's commissioning cross cutting reviews.

This can be found regionally within the Western Bay Health and Social Care Programme Area Plan for Care and Support Needs 2018-23, and locally through the Council's Transformation Plan, delivered via the transformation and improvement programmes and the Council's corporate procurement methodology.

What we planned to do

We are looking to continually improve our approach to commissioning through coproduction, robust commissioning framework and by working closely with partners:

- To rebalance care and support to meet the growing demand for care at home and within our capacity to deliver through our existing models of care
- Work within effective procurement frameworks locally and regionally

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

Health and Social Care is currently challenged with a growing demand. Both Adult Services Transformation and Child and Family Services Improvement programmes, together with cross cutting commissioning reviews set out to improve our service offer, moving away from traditional models of service delivery.

We aim to make continuous service improvements, avoid service costs increasing and to ensure services are both high quality, yet sustainable for the future.

In order to do this our change programmes must ensure coproduction and effective collaboration are featured, so that shared capacity and integrated approaches are used where possible, to be deployed in a more efficient and effective way, saving time, resources, sharing expertise and contributing to improved citizen wellbeing.

There are many examples of Swansea's approach to commissioning and service improvement within this report. It is vital we are getting the most value from the money we have available to provide or commission social care. We are always looking to become more efficient, promote better outcomes and realise savings where we can.

Assistive Technology

Adult Services carried out a service assessment of our current provision. A decision made by project board earlier this year, to progress with Option 2 - Retain Community Alarms and Assistive Technology in house and further develop Assistive Technology offer within a longer-term strategy. The potential impact of an enhanced assistive technology offer is undisputed. By committing to developing our Assistive Technology offer provides us with opportunities to identify, educate, signpost and provide new and innovative technology solutions.

Bonymaen House Reablement

Bonymaen are delivering a fully integrated model of reablement care, that is receiving recognition nationally. The services work with a range of professionals and has access to an enhanced GP service. A trusted assessor can support an individual on the pathway into Bonymaen from hospital and then the integrated reablement team can support their discharge home. This does not require a social work intervention at any stage. There are many success stories to celebrate of people who have left hospital with often high levels of frailty, complex conditions and individual needs who are, through highly skilled interventions, care and support, successfully allowed to return home.

Child & Family Services Residential, Day Care offer

In support of the Rebalancing Care and Support agenda, a strategic business case for upgrading and improving Swansea Council-run, Child and Family Services residential, day care settings. The council's cabinet was recently asked to approve additional spending on these front-line services. It would mean substantial investment during the next four years to improve the eight residential facilities run by adult social services.

Further investment would target the 17 locations providing day services that are a lifeline to so many people. Cabinet members are also being asked to approve investment in the council's early help hubs run by child and family services. These are designed to ensure that children and families in Swansea have access to the right support at the right time from the right person regardless of age and location.

Sensory Team

The sensory services team work closely with health colleagues in the Eye clinic and Audiology. A recent example of their work includes a review of the referral form with Audiologists to include further details which will assist in the prioritisation of cases. The changes made also include the category of hearing loss being included on the form which will speed up the process for individuals and also reduce the workload of the team.

The sensory team have looked at creative ways of working reduce waiting times for assessment as demand continues to increase. This includes setting up vision impairment assessment days where people are seen by appointment and have access to, rehab specialists, social work, IT and independent living skills support. This has been effective and led to some individuals having all their outcomes met in one visit. Hearing loss assessment days where individuals have access to technical

support, equipment demo and social work which again has led to individuals having their outcome met in one visit.

The sensory service team undertake a lot of joint working both within the team and with other colleagues enabling individuals to have a joint assessment and for their personal outcomes to be coordinated and prevent a piecemeal approach. Examples include work with OT's and recommendations made to include in adaptation requests. Sensory loss equipment being provided to maximise independence within the home, close working with the medicine management team and Bonymaen house. The team also liaise with LAC a third sector partners.

The Community wellbeing team support the work of the SST by working with individuals to build confidence manage day to day tasks and increase social isolation and independence.

ForMi and Person Centred Planning (Adult Services)-

Swansea Council's ForMi project provides online support to services in person-centred planning and outcome recording. With the support of mentors, the specialist App enables an individual to create a strength based personal profile, recording what they want in the future, their strengths, what is important to them and set goals. This supports an individual to capture their achievement or story through words and pictures on a Smartphone App. it works in a similar way to social media apps but in a safe and secure manner. Each individual has a circle of support and mentors who are agreed by the individual and can add supportive posts as the individual moves towards their goals.

The ForMi App's innovative approach enables individuals to be at the centre of their own care planning and outcomes. The whole process is person centred, strengths based, and solution focused; it is person centred because it totally involves the individual at every stage in identifying what is important to them. It is strengths based because it centres on what the individual can do and their strengths. It is solution focused because it focuses on where the individual wants to be in the future and on solutions rather than problems. For the first time individuals will use technology to record their outcomes. This exciting project puts the person at the centre of their own personal outcomes, shifting the control in favour of the person, they will identify what is important to them and what their future aspirations will be and who will be involved at every stage of the process to enable them to achieve their personal goals.

Through Care Service (Child & Family Services)

In July 2022, our Bays + Care Leavers' service transitioned from Barnardo's to Swansea Local Authority Children's Services. This leaving care service has been provided by Barnardo's for over 20 years within the Bays service. This development of a through-care service at Swansea Council and a bid to achieve what matters to young people. Both organisations continue to work strongly and effectively together to help children and young people with the other partnered services unaffected.

Values Based Recruitment

Throughout March, 6 Adult Services managers and Directorate Recruitment Development Officer undertook the Value Based Recruitment training. This has enabled initiative thinking around how we recruitment into Residential and Domiciliary settings to ensure we have the right staff based on what matters to our services users and values of our service.

Stories of Outcomes

The Hollies

The team at the Hollies have been working closely with 'K'. who lives with advanced dementia, K. has lived a life full of adventure. Through using The What Matters story, were able to find out about K.'s love of adventure and travel and tailor her personal outcomes to her life story and what matters. K. and her family have given us permission to share her story with you.

At the age of 21, K. had set out upon an exciting adventure with her best friend taking the Fair Sea liner from Northampton to Adelaide, their ticket costing £10 each. Both their mums waving them off as the ship set sail from Northampton. After a month at sea reaching the Outer Harbour in Adelaide, Australia. Where K. and her friend began training to be nurses.

The team have with the support of her best friend been able to help K. track her voyage and to share wonderful memories from her past. The team are now building a journal with K. to re live those exciting memories, working with the peoples library they have been able to trace images of the actual ship that they sailed on, a copy of the ticket that was purchased to board the liner. K. is enjoying engaging in these memories and sharing funny stories from her trip.

ForMi

J. joined the trial for the ForMi app in February 2022, J. and his mum met with his support worker to talk about what he'd like to do and achieve at the centre and identifying some goals for him to work towards. J. and his support worker also had a meeting to look at his profile questions, which gave him the opportunity to think about what is important to him and what his hopes are for his future. The covid pandemic had had a big impact on J.'s life and it was important for him to get back to normal, see his friends and regain confidence. Pre-covid J. had worked at the baler, had found it good fun and had enjoyed recycling chairs and mattresses. He was now ready to build up his confidence and try out new projects at the centre, with the ForMi app giving J. a visual record of his journey towards his goals.

Direct Payments Team

Swansea's Direct Payment Support Team are implementing an innovative project, called 'Recruit Local', across the City and County of Swansea.

We recruited a Personal Assistant Co-ordinator to take recruitment into communities. The objective was to recruit local people to support local people, bringing new staff into the sector, and do this in a coordinated multi-agency approached way.

The new Team linked in internally with the Swansea Council Communications Team, Workways Team, Local Area Coordination Team, and Workforce Team. Externally they linked in with County and Community Councillors, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services (SCVS) Micro-Enterprise Team, Swansea Carer Centre, the Job Centre, key community members and key community organisations. This work has directly resulted in a significant increase in the availability of Personal Assistants with 53 new PA starters since October (May 2023) This serves to not only support the delivery of care and support across our County but has led to reduced pressure in other service areas such as Domiciliary Care.

During 2023/24, our priorities are to:

- Continue to rebalance care and support to meet the growing demand for care at home and within our capacity to deliver through our existing models of care

4f. Working in Partnerships and Integration (Exit Strategies)

By working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Our expectation is that our most vulnerable people are supported to participate as active citizens both economically through work and socially, and within suitable accommodation.

Our approach to working in partnership to maximise people's independence is set out in the corporate plan, wellbeing plan, service plans and improvement programmes.

What we planned to do

- Collaborate with regional partners to draw in maximum levels of grant funding
- Implement the West Glamorgan regional partnership work programme, and by establishing close links to Swansea's transformation programme – "Achieving Better Together".

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

We are supporting people to participate as active citizens economically and socially.

We are supporting vulnerable people to access and sustain engagement with meaningful work.

We are also supporting people to access financial advice and help with benefits and grants.

Here are some examples of how regional work benefits people locally.

Market Stability

The Council worked with its regional partners (NPTCBC and Swansea Bay University Health Board) to publish a Market Stability Report. As a 'sister' document to the Population Needs Assessment and Area Plan, it is a tool to assist regions to assess whether they have sufficient, quality services to meet the needs of their population.

We completed the first of these reports in 2022, and this will be reviewed and updated on annual basis. With our partners, we are aiming to produce a more comprehensive report in 2023. This new report will be underpinned by feedback from service users and a new agreed set of performance indicators. Published in a more user-friendly format, we are planning to use it to subsequently inform Commissioning Strategies in which we will set out how we intend to do things in the future to meet the needs of our communities.

Community Cohesion

Our Cohesion team have worked in partnership with SCVS and the Tackling Poverty Team to distribute small grants to help achieve the cohesion objectives of bringing people together, creating safe and inclusive spaces and events, and creating resilient communities.

The Cohesion team has also worked in partnership with a Healthy Relationship Specialist from Camau, on delivering two pilot training sessions for teaching staff on controversial language with a focus on misogyny and sexism. These sessions have been delivered in response to changes in social trends among young people, particularly since the rise in influencers such as Andrew Tate, who promotes misogynistic views. The sessions offered a safe space for frontline education staff to discuss their concerns and experiences, and to develop skills and methods to respond to this issue. The team have received a very positive response to these sessions and hope to deliver more in the future.

The Cohesion team also delivered a session to staff and partners in collaboration with Ian Rees, a trusted colleague among the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, on the barriers and challenges faced by the community. Topics include historical discrimination, barriers to accessing services and cultural traditions. The session raised awareness around how we can consider these challenges and adapt our approach to engagement with the community.

West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027

The Population Needs Assessment (PNA) is a joint exercise undertaken by health and social care partners to gather information on people's wellbeing and the barriers that prevent them from achieving a sense of wellbeing. It also aims to determine people's care and support needs (including gaps in such provision) in order that services can be developed and targeted accordingly.

[West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment 2022-2027](#)

West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board Area Plan 2023-2027

The new Area Plan for the Region was approved in January 2023 by the Regional Partnership Board, and taken through each of the statutory partners governance structures for endorsement. This Area Plan sets out how the Board will respond to the findings of the West Glamorgan Population Needs Assessment published in April 2022, which captured the health and social care needs of people across the West Glamorgan Region. The Plan explains how the Local Authorities and the Health Board, with partners, will continue to deliver on the statutory requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and A Healthier Wales – national strategic policy.

[West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board Area Plan 2023-27 \(swansea.gov.uk\)](#)

Swansea's Wellbeing Plan – Early Years

There has been a recent recognition of the need to align and integrate governance and accountability for early years in Swansea. This was triggered by a number of parallel initiatives taking place in this space. The Public Service Board identified early

years as one of its wellbeing objectives in 2017, and this objective remains a key one in the current assessment. Swansea was also working on the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme which has its own governance and leadership arrangements, alongside the recent work on self-evaluation with WWEICSC using the Maturity Matrix had also indicated the need for a co-ordinated action plan. Concerns were raised at the potential for three separate governance groups each working to slightly different objectives in the early years.

The regional Health Board covers both Swansea and Neath Port Talbot local authorities. As part of the Maturity Matrix workshop's and resulting report, the need for closer integration was identified, and ambition that would be beneficial for services as well as service users at the regional level.

Corporate Digital Strategy 2023-2028 and Digital Transformation Programme

Swansea Council's Digital Strategy 2023-28 has been updated following consultation, engagement, and by looking at our services with a focus on people's needs, and involving service users to identify ways in which they could be improved and how digital technology can help to make the services more effective and efficient.

Our vision for a Digital Swansea- to use digital technology to improve people's lives, to enable digital access to services 24 hours a day, and to improve operational efficiency by:

- Working to maintain a range of local contact channels that supports digital
- Supporting the most vulnerable and older people when applying for / accessing public services
- Designing access channels based on customers' experiences and feedback and through the involvement of our service users
- Making it easier for everyone to contact us
- Reviewing and publishing our service standards so residents and businesses know what to expect when they contact the Council

Stories of Outcomes

Regional Adoption Service

This vital service has had a busy year focusing on business as usual, alongside new work on birth parent support and post adoption contact.

Performance data (Swansea only) shows activity starting to return to levels seen pre COVID.

Number of child referrals = **48** (56)

Number of children who have a Placement Order Granted = **26** (14)

Number of children matched = **23** (18)

Number of children placed = **19** (18)

Regionally of **35** children placed (49), number of children placed with WBAS adopters = **21** (32). **NB:** Bridgend CBC still partners within this regional service.

West Glamorgan Regional Partnership's People's Forum

The very first West Glamorgan People's Forum took place in April this year. A launch event showcasing some of the great work being undertaken was held involving citizens, statutory and third sector representatives. The forum makes a meaningful difference to people's lives and provide an opportunity to share views on how we can work together to build on what's already been achieved.

The first event featured the launch of the Regional Carers Strategy, which was coproduced with the carers partnership forum, and also looked how we are meeting the needs of older people, children with complex needs, and people with Mental Health needs and a Learning Disability.

During 2023/24, our priorities are to:

To complete work on the action plan will deliver on the Area Plans, setting out the main goals, outcomes and reflecting the medium- term financial priorities of each partner organisation.

5. How We Do What We Do

Our key priorities in 2022/23 were the:

- Implementation of a social services workforce development strategy
- Delivery of improvement programmes as set out in Swansea Council's Transformation Plan 'Achieving Better Together', and to achieve priorities as set within Medium Term Financial Plan

5a. Workforce

We have continued to support and develop our social care workforce and managers to be the best they can be, and to provide the highest quality services. We need to continuously reinforce our workforce, and enhance the values, skills, passion, humanity and creativity needed to achieve what matters to people in our communities. We need to support their wellbeing and professional development. That is why we have an ambitious Workforce Programme to help us do all we can to make Swansea Social Services a place to be proud of and a place of choice.

Social Services Directorate Workforce Programme

Our Workforce Programme aims to tackle challenges around staff recruitment and just as importantly staff retention focusing on staff well-being, building morale, development and training, supervision, progression, staff voice and opportunity to influence.

Regular presentations have been made to the Safeguarding People and Tackling Poverty Corporate Development Committee on progress.

Rewards and Recognition (Child and Family Services):

In January Child and Family Services launched their new Rewards and Recognition scheme. The scheme consists of managers completing recognition forms on behalf of their own staff/ teams or staff in the service for their work. These names or teams are then put into a hat once a month at the Senior Managers Team Meeting where the winner is drawn and announced. The winner receives a gift card and personal thank you by the Head of Service followed up with article and photo in the CFS newsletter to whole service. To date there has been 94 referrals and 5 winners, with future plans to continue into 2024.

Workforce Wellbeing and Engagement (Adults)

Wellbeing and Engagement workshops for Adult Services Staff are taking place across Adult Services, providing opportunities to listen to staff voice around what is working well, not working well and what matters to staff in future developments. Our staff voice is then being used to develop service areas, share best practice, build consistency and develop the Directorate Workforce Programme and Strategy, as well as the Directorate Engagement Programme and Strategy, to ensure we are delivering what matters to staff. Whilst also understanding best methods to support Corporate strategies and the Social Care Wales Workforce Strategy.

Whole Service Culture and Engagement

Social Services developed a whole-service culture and approach to workforce wellbeing. Our Involvement team helps provide staff with equal access to what they need to achieve what matters and do their best work.

The team has launched a new newsletter for Adult services staff, continues with the CFS Newsletter, and continues working with the Director to provide a weekly briefing to all staff. Staffnet continues to be updated.

The team is developing more engaging content including images, video and animation. Since May 2022:

- 35 Directors Briefings have been supported.
- 27 Training Bulletins have been sent out.
- 301 Well Dones from the director have been shared.
- 11 Child and Family Services Newsletters produced and distributed.
- 4 Adult Services Newsletters produced and distributed.
- 110 written articles have been shared through various channels.
- More than 40 videos have been produced.
- More than 750 pictures have been taken.

Vicarious Trauma/ Secondary Trauma:

Throughout the pandemic and recently research has been conducted with a Swansea University PHD Student on how Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma affects Social Workers. In April the findings were concluded with suggestions on what supportive Workforce Tools can help to prevent and support staff through VT/ST. Through the workforce developments over the years, it has been found as a service many suggestions are already in place with future plans for further developments such as supervisions, wellbeing (self-care/ self-esteem), building/ strengthening working relationships, working hours and mental health support.

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Social Services Workforce- Facebook page

In November 2022, a 'Swansea Council Jobs' Facebook page was set up (Welsh and English) to advertise and promote the diverse range of roles that are available in the Social Services directorate, broadening our engagement with public on vacancy opportunities, share news and wider vacancies relating to the Council.

As it currently stands, the page is showing continuous organic growth with **550** followers and 228 likes (early June).

Social Services Apprenticeship scheme

Our new Directorate 'Grow our own' opportunity is the social services apprenticeship scheme. Still in development stages, the intention is to offer a range of apprenticeship posts across the Directorate:

- Resources
- West Glamorgan Project Managers
- Community Wellbeing and Reablement Officers

- Residential Care Officers
- Sensory Team Technical Officers
- Commissioning Hub roles

These posts will be designed through team vacancies, and determine whether training is undertaken in-house, via our own Social Services Training team, or externally through Gower College. As part of the apprenticeship there will be shadowing and experienced knowledge sharing opportunities, as well as continuous developmental support via other internal training.

5b. Finance

Social Services Social Services has a strong track record within the Council of financial efficacy; by achieving delivery of high-quality service within agreed financial resources. Our approach for the years ahead as always is set out within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 - 2026/27.

This plan highlights the increasingly uncertain times ahead in terms of funding for this Council and Local Government in general, as well as the service pressures that the Council faces from rising demands and increases in demography, together with potential funding pressures arising from ambitious plans for capital development.

The 2021 Census reported that the usually resident population of Swansea was 238,500; approximately 500 (0.2%) less than the 2011 Census total. This figure is also approximately 8,100 (3.3%) less than the most recent official annual Mid-Year Estimate figure for Swansea (mid-2020). The latest census figures and subsequent annual population estimates can have significant implications for the financial plans and strategies within Council and partnerships, as they may influence Welsh Government Revenue Support Grant settlement, future grant allocations, and in turn impact on regional programmes, local commissioning, and other partnership strategies.

The current economic climate continues to be uncertain, as the Welsh Government acknowledged in their recent letter to all Local Authorities that local government is facing significant pressures. Whilst there has been a relatively positive provisional settlement for 2023/24, there is no certainty that this will continue in future years.

Statement Of Budget Priorities:

The Social Services Directorate has faced significant challenges over recent years, however, has achieved all existing Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) target savings commitments to date and maintained a high level of delivery.

COVID 19 has had an impact on the way we deliver services for children and families and an even more significant impact on our population of adults requiring care and support and their families and carers. The pandemic has also highlighted the crucial role community based early help and prevention and tackling poverty services play in supporting the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The whole social services directorate has become even more focussed on ensuring a joined up, strengths and assets-based approach to working with and in communities

with targeted support for the most vulnerable, especially important in current times seeing increased cost of living pressures.

Future pressures on Social Care funding is expected, with increasing demand and service costs in relation to increased inflation, and the challenge ahead to transform services to become more sustainable and meet future need and demand in the most effective and efficient way.

The proposed settlement should assist in meeting the additional pressures such as increased costs of externally commissioned care in line with inflation and a commitment to achieving the Real Living Wage, as well as embarking on a transformation and investment in some front-line services positively impacting those needing care and support and our communities.

The focus for the coming year remains on prioritising improvements to services that best support individuals, families and carers

Statement Of Budget Priorities: Social Services- Child & Family Services

Within Child & Family Services, the main areas of priority are:

- Doing what matters to make things better for children, young people, and families
- Maintain the current Safe LAC Reduction Strategy for children and young people
- Continue our investment in preventative services to reduce the number of looked after children and achieve the planned savings and service improvements

We will ensure we maintain a focus for the coming year on prioritising improvements to services that best support individuals, families and carers in recovering from the huge impact that the pandemic, and now cost of living rises has had and is having on the lives of Swansea citizens.

Statement Of Budget Priorities: Social Services- Adult Services

Continue to work across with regional colleagues to ensure clear and seamless pathways for those needing care and support.

Further develop the agreed optimum model for adults, by embedding the following:

- Better prevention and early help.
- A new approach to assessment
- Improved cost effectiveness
- Working together better
- Keeping people safe

Statement Of Budget Priorities: Social Services- Tackling Poverty Services

To further embed tackling poverty services and prevention approaches across the Directorate and wider Council

Continue to ensure we maximise the use of the various grant income streams available to delivery these budget priorities.

Service planning in 2023/24 has a strong focus upon driving efficiency through transformation, and the current programmes support the Medium-Term Financial plan savings, and targets for Social Services (See Appendices). We monitor progress as part of governance arrangements in monthly Social Services Performance and Financial Monitoring meetings.

Corporate budget consultation takes place on a wide variety of specific proposals. This includes consultation with children and young people. Others are consulted on using service-specific groups and/or activities, and feedback is considered within the budget proposals and impact assessment.

Social Services Charging Annual Review

Swansea Council demonstrates best practice by carrying out an annual review of social care charges, reported to Cabinet, supporting principles of fairness and transparency, as well as Council's budgetary.

Cost of Living crisis

We have worked collaboratively with all our care homes, recognising the significant financial pressures placed on them by the cost-of-living crisis e.g. increased costs for food, utilities, insurances etc. We updated the weekly fees to offset costs, to ensure continuity of services.

Let's Agree to Agree

For the 1st time we used the Welsh Government Toolkit 'Lets Agree to Agree' used by commissioners and providers to agree the costs of residential and nursing care in Wales. Every 3 years the local authority undertakes a detailed care homes costs analysis to inform fee rates paid to care home operators for services funded by Swansea Council. This year, with the help and advice of private care home operators we have updated the costs questionnaire, and the processes which we use to evaluate care home costs. The changes created were designed to complement the methods set out in the "Lets Agree to Agree" toolkit for analysing care home costs. The outcomes of the exercise ensured care homes received an unprecedented uplift of between 15 to 20% for the year 2023/24.

5c. Governance and Other Partnerships

Social Services cannot be effective in meeting the wide range of statutory obligations, and facing such complex challenges, unless we have strong support from within our organisation and from each of our partners.

Political Leadership-

Social Services has continued to benefit from strong support from Cabinet and elected members within the Council, and through the constructive support and challenge offered by scrutiny performance panels.

Swansea Public Services Board

Swansea Public Service Board has a vision is to work together to make Swansea a place which is prosperous, where our natural environment is appreciated and maintained and where every person can have the best start in life, get a good job, live well, age well and have every opportunity to be healthy, happy, safe and the best they can be. To achieve our vision, there are four Local Well-being Objectives as set out in Swansea's Wellbeing Plan:

Early Years – To ensure that children have the best start in life to be the best that they can be.

Live Well, Age Well – To make Swansea a great place to live well and age well.

Working with Nature - To improve health, enhance biodiversity and reduce our carbon footprint.

Strong Communities – To build strong communities with a sense of pride and belonging.

In addition, our cross-cutting action for change underpins each of the local well-being objectives:

Sharing for Swansea – To work towards integrated public services in Swansea by sharing resources assets and expertise, in order to develop a common language and make every contact count.

Corporate Leadership

The Directorate has always enjoyed strong corporate support from the Chief Executive and the wider Corporate Management.

Governance and Audit Committee

The Governance and Audit Committee is a key component of the City and County of Swansea's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards. The Committee has specific responsibility for advising the full council, the cabinet and their respective committees and members on matters relating to good governance, financial oversight, risk management and complaints. The Governance and Audit Committee monitors the effectiveness of the Council's rules and procedures for ensuring that the Council acts lawfully, responsibly, and that it is accountable to the public.

West Glamorgan Regional Safeguarding Board

Swansea Council is working within effective regional safeguarding board arrangements. Regional Safeguarding board publishes an annual plan setting out priority areas for the coming year. There is shared accountability for this plan across a range of partners, with targeted focus on preventative approaches, improving quality, performance reporting and learning lessons from practice reviews.

Continuous Improvement

Under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 the council is required to keep performance under review; to consider whether our functions are delivered economically, efficiently and effectively. Swansea Council has established a Strategic Governance Group, attended by the Director Of Social Services, to enhance the council's governance arrangements by overseeing the development and delivery of the council's statutory corporate self-assessment obligations and Annual Governance

Statement. The Group sets out to ensure the council is undertaking a robust self-assessment of its performance, use of resources and its governance arrangements.

Overall priorities in 2023/24:

- To support continuous improvement and effective strategic governance within the whole council and working across local and regional partnerships.

6. ADDITIONAL

6a) Compliments, Complaints, and representations

Compliments

Many compliments received for Social Services staff have been included in the Director of Social Services weekly Covid-19 Briefings.

These briefings have been emailed to staff and have also been uploaded to Staffnet.

Complaints

Annual Reports summarising the Compliments and Complaints received relating to Adult and Child and Family Services, are reported to Governance & Audit Committee

Representations

The number of complaints to the ombudsman increased during this period following the pandemic, as more citizens are aware of their rights:

An Annual Corporate Complaints Report has been considered at the Governance & Audit Committee in January: [Report - Corporate Template \(swansea.gov.uk\)](https://www.swansea.gov.uk/reports-and-accounts/corporate-complaints-report-2022-23)

6b) Mwy Na Geiriau “More than Just Words”

Mwy Na Geriau

Mwy Na Geriau “More than Just Words is more embedded in social services. We expect that citizens can access the service in a way that meets their language needs, leading to better outcomes. Our workforce appreciates how Welsh language and culture are central to a bilingual public service offer, and their role in promoting this. Swansea has developed an action plan to address the next phase of this national strategic framework, and to incorporate the plan into our transformation programmes.

Active Offer

We continue to extend the active offer into all areas of social services provision.

Example: A care home resident whose first language was Welsh recently given the option of having her planning meetings (MDT’s) in her first language. Then nurse based in the service was a fluent Welsh speaker and supported the resident during these meetings until her discharge from the service.

Welsh Champions

Welsh Speaking Dementia Friends champions are transitioning to become Welsh speaking Dementia friends ambassadors. this will mean we have 2 Dementia Friends Ambassadors who are able to deliver Welsh Language training sessions to our teams, partner agencies, schools and of course to individuals and family members.

Dechrau Disglair

A family attending the Welsh medium Flying Start childcare setting (Dechrau Disglair) were in desperate need of support. The child’s key worker quickly identified that the family’s level of need was high. The parents were experiencing financial difficulties

with the family living only on the weekly child benefit. They didn't have food, clothes for the toddler nor themselves as parents. Mum was pregnant again with the baby due this week. With the support from the Children's Centre Dechrau Disglair we were able to obtain a winter coat for the toddler and some clothes, hat and gloves as it was extremely cold and she only had a light summer jacket to wear. The setting also provided a bag of food and fruit. The Childcare Manager spoke to the Health Visitor - requesting a visit to address housing issues, fleas in the house, lack of bedding, and damp conditions. The toddler was sleeping in a cold damp room and her toys were mouldy. The HV is now supporting the family with tenancy support and the Childcare Manager requested a food parcel / Christmas hamper for the family.

Our Early Years Early Help Worker is now based at Dechrau Disglair. She is now aware of this family and was able to assist the Childcare Manager with information regarding additional support from the winter warm project. The EYEH Worker made a list of requirements in terms of supporting the family including addressing the basic needs of a newborn baby; additional baby clothes, blankets, baby bedding, bottles, nappies etc She also provided toys for the new baby and toddler.

The family are extremely grateful for the support and for everything that they have received from Flying Start. Working together within the team has made a massive difference to the family.

6c) Further information on Social Services

This Annual Report provides detail about Swansea's improvement journey within statutory social services in 2022/23.

The Full Report is available in other languages and formats upon request.













There is a wide range of information available through the Council's website:
<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/socialcarepublications>.

For further information on accessing Social Services, check out the Council's public website at: <http://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/2929/How-Social-Services-can-help-with-your-care-and-support>.

Appendices:

- a) Successful and Sustainable Swansea Corporate Transformation Plan 2023**
- b) Adult Services Key Priorities and Objectives For 2023/24**
- c) Child & Family Services Key Priorities and Objectives For 2023/24**
- d) Tackling Poverty Services Key Priorities and Objectives For 2022/24**

a)

| Safeguarding people from harm | Improving Education and Skills | Transforming our Economy and Infrastructure | Tackling Poverty and Enabling Communities | Delivering on Nature Recovery and Climate Change | Transformation & Financial Resilience |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|
|  <p>Transforming Adult Services</p> <p>Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member Care Services</p> <p>Davis Howes, Director of Social Services</p> <p>Amy Hawkins, Head of Adult Services</p> |  <p>Transforming Additional Learning Needs</p> <p>Cllr Robert Smith, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education</p> <p>Kate Phillips, Head of Vulnerable Learners</p> |  <p>Regeneration Programme</p> <p>Cllr Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member Investment Regeneration & Tourism</p> <p>Mark Wade, Director of Place</p> |  <p>Future Community Hub Model</p> <p>Cllr Elliot King, Cabinet Member Culture and Equalities</p> <p>Mark Wade, Director of Place</p> <p>Tracey McNulty, Head of Cultural Services / Geoff Bacon, Head of Property Services</p> |  <p>Net Zero Programme</p> <p>Cllr Andrea Lewis, Joint Deputy Leader (Service Transformation)</p> <p>Mark Wade, Director of Place</p> <p>Geoff Bacon, Head of Property Services</p> |  <p>Digital Transformation Programme</p> <p>Cllr Andrea Lewis, Joint Deputy Leader (Service Transformation)</p> <p>Ness Young, Interim Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Sarah Lackenby, Head of Digital Services</p> |
|  <p>Child and Family Services Transformation</p> <p>Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member Care Services</p> <p>David Howes, Director of Social Services</p> <p>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</p> |  <p>Right Schools in Right Places</p> <p>Cllr Robert Smith, Cabinet Member Education and Lifelong Learning</p> <p>Helen Morgan Rees, Director of Education</p> <p>Kelly Small Head of Education Resource and Planning for Right Schools Right Places</p> |  <p>More Homes Programme</p> <p>Cllr Andrea Lewis, Joint Deputy Leader (Service Transformation)</p> <p>Mark Wade, Director of Place</p> <p>Carol Morgan, Head of Housing and Public Health</p> |  <p>Enabling Communities</p> <p>Cllrs Hayley Gwilliam & Cyril Anderson, Cabinet Members for Community & Cllr Alison Pugh, Cabinet Member Well-being</p> <p>David Howes, Director of Social Services/ Amy Hawkins, Head of Adult Services</p> |  <p>Future Waste Strategy</p> <p>Cllrs Hayley Gwilliam & Cyril Anderson, Cabinet Members for Community</p> <p>Mark Wade, Director of Place</p> <p>Chris Howell, Head of Waste Parks and Cleansing</p> |  <p>Workforce and Organisational Development Transformation</p> <p>Cllr David Hopkins, Joint Deputy Leader</p> <p>Ness Young, Interim Director of Corporate Services</p> <p>Rachael Davies, Head of HR&OD</p> |
| Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty STC | Education & Skills STC | Economy and Infrastructure STC | Safeguarding People & Tackling Poverty STC | Climate Change STC | Organisational Trans STC |

b) ADULT SERVICES KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023 / 24



c) **CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES KEY PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023/24**



d) Tackling Poverty Services Key Priorities and Service Objectives for 2023/24

