

Public Document Pack



Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa,
Aberaeron, Ceredigion SA46 0PA
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25 April 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

I write to inform you that a Meeting of Cabinet will be held at the Council Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely via video conference on Tuesday, 2 May 2023 at 10.00am for the transaction of the following business:

1. **Apologies**
2. **Personal matters**
3. **Disclosure of Personal/ Prejudicial Interests**
4. **To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Cabinet and any matters arising from those Minutes
FOR DECISION (Pages 3 - 6)**
5. **Any petitions received
FOR INFORMATION (Pages 7 - 10)**
 - a) **Objection to the proposed imposition of 20mph speed limit at Stags Head No. 69.1 – B4578 & B4343 intersection**
6. **Reports of any decisions (if any) having been called in from Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
7. **Any feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee not otherwise on the agenda**
8. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools and Culture upon the Action Plan - Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR DECISION (Pages 11 - 28)**

9. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools and Culture upon the Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR DECISION (Pages 29 - 192)**
10. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Schools and Culture upon the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR DECISION (Pages 193 - 214)**
11. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Gofal upon the Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for housing in the county for the next 5 years including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR DECISION (Pages 215 - 282)**
12. **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal upon The Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR DECISION (Pages 283 - 336)**
13. **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal upon the Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Reports for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR INFORMATION (Pages 337 - 476)**
14. **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal upon the Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report Qtr. 3 2022/23 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
FOR INFORMATION (Pages 477 - 510)**
15. **Any other matter the Chairman decides is for the urgent attention of the Cabinet**

Members are reminded to sign the Attendance Register.

A Translation Service will be provided at this meeting and those present are welcome to speak in Welsh or English at the meeting.

Yours faithfully



**Miss Lowri Edwards
Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services**

**To: The Leader of the Council and Members of the Cabinet
The remaining Members of the Council for information7**

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

Notice of the Decisions of the **Meeting of the CABINET** held at the Council Chamber, Neuadd Cyngor Ceredigion, Penmorfa, Aberaeron and remotely on **Tuesday, 4 April 2023**

This Notice is published at 5.00pm on Thursday, 6 April 2023. Requests to call-in any decision to be delivered to the Head of Democratic Services by 5.00pm on Monday, 17 April 2023. The decisions will come into force (if no valid call-in application is received) on Tuesday, 18 April 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor Bryan Davies (Chair), Councillors Catrin M S. Davies, Clive Davies, Gareth Davies, Keith Henson, Wyn Thomas, Matthew Vaux and Alun Williams.

Also in attendance: Councillors Eryl Evans, Keith Evans, Rhodri Evans, Maldwyn Lewis and Gareth Lloyd.

(10.00am- 10.57am)

182 **Apologies**

Eifion Evans, Chief Executive, Barry Rees, Corporate Director and Duncan Hall, Corporate Lead Officer: Finance and Procurement apologised for their inability to attend the meeting.

183 **Personal matters**

- i. Congratulations were extended to Sioned Harries on winning her 71st cap against Scotland in the Women's Six Nations Championship held recently.
- ii. Congratulations were extended to Emlyn Lewis and Lee Jenkins on being included in the Cymru C football squad for the International Challenge Match against England C held recently.
- iii. Best wishes were extended to Elgan Jones, Grounds Maintenance Operative on his retirement following 46 years of service to Dyfed County Council, and later, Ceredigion County Council.
- iv. Congratulations were extended to Gareth Ward, Ynyshir Restaurant on successfully retaining two Michelin Stars in the Michelin Guide Great Britain and Ireland 2023.
- v. Congratulations were also extended to Chris and Rachel Welch, Yr Hen Printworks on being awarded the Bib Gourmand award in the Michelin Guide Great Britain and Ireland 2023.
- vi. Congratulations were extended to all involved in Ceredigion Music Service's Musical Showcase held at Aberystwyth Arts Centre recently.

184 **Disclosure of Personal/ Prejudicial Interests**

Councillor Keith Henson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to item 192 and withdrew from the meeting whilst the matter was being discussed.

- 185 To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Cabinet and any matters arising from those Minutes**
To confirm as a true record the Minutes of the previous Meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 March 2023.

Matters arising: There were no matters arising from the minutes.

- 186 Any petitions received: Reduction of speed limit to 40mph in Tynreithyn, Tregaron**
It was noted that the above petition had been received and would be dealt with in accordance with the guidelines in the Petitions Protocol.

- 187 Reports of any decisions (if any) having been called in from Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
None.

- 188 Any feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee not otherwise on the agenda**
None.

- 189 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Policy, Performance and Public Protection upon the Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-2028 including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:
i. To approve the Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan 2023-2028.
ii. To note the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Reason for the decision

As a Statutory Member of the Ceredigion PSB the Council needs to approve the Ceredigion Local Well-being Plan before the PSB can give final agreement to publish the Plan.

- 190 To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Legal and Governance upon the Amended Code of Conduct of Local Government Employees, Declarations of Interest Form and Declarations of Hospitality & Gifts Form including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DECISION:

- a) To approve the amendments to the:
1. Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees (**Appendix 2**);
2. Officer Declaration of Interests form (**Appendix 3**); and
3. Officer Declaration of Hospitality & Gifts Form (**Appendix 4**).
b) To note the feedback from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that the Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees, Officer Declarations of Interest Form and Officer Declarations of Hospitality & Gifts Form are kept up to date and for clarity and transparency for Officers.

- 191 **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Legal and Governance upon the Amendments to the Whistleblowing Policy including feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

DECISION:

- i. To approve the amendments to the Whistleblowing Policy as shown in **Appendix 1**.
- ii. To note the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that the Whistleblowing Policy is up to date and remains fit for purpose.

- 192 **To consider the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal upon the Care Home Fees Setting - Independent Sector & Local Authority Fees**

DECISION:

1. To approve the fees for private Care Homes in Ceredigion for 2023/24 at the following weekly levels, effective from 10/04/2023:

Residential	£827.00
Residential EMI	£884.00
Nursing	£961.00
Nursing EMI	£961.00

2. To approve the fees for Council run Residential Care Homes in Ceredigion for 2023/24 at the following weekly levels, effective from 10/04/2023:

Residential	£827.00
Residential EMI	£884.00

Reason for the decision

To agree and set Older Person fees for 2023/24.

- 193 **To note the report of the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cymorth Cynnar upon the Ceredigion Youth Council Meeting Minutes (03.02.23)**
Cabinet noted the report.

- 194 **Any other matter the Chairman decides is for the urgent attention of the Cabinet**

None.

Confirmed at the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 May 2023

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

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CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 2nd May 2023

Title: Petitions received

Purpose of the report: To inform Cabinet of any petitions received

For: Information

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: N/A

The following Petition has been received by the Council:

Petition Title	Number of signatories	Cabinet Member	Local Member (if applicable)
Objection to the proposed imposition of 20mph speed limit at Stags Head No. 69.1 – B4578 & B4343 intersection	19	Cllr Keith Henson	Cllr Rhodri Evans

The relevant service will now consider the contents of the petition.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why	N/A – this report informs Cabinet of the receipt of petitions only
Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Summary: Long term: N/A Integration: N/A Collaboration: N/A Involvement: N/A Prevention: N/A	
Recommendation(s):	For Cabinet to note receipt of the following petition - Objection to the proposed imposition of 20mph speed limit at Stags Head No. 69.1 – B4578 & B4343 intersection	
Reasons for decision:	To inform Cabinet of the receipt of petition, for further consideration by the relevant service.	
Overview and Scrutiny:	N/A	
Policy Framework:	Council Constitution and Petitions Protocol	

Corporate Priorities: N/A

Financial and Procurement implications: N/A

Statutory Powers: N/A

Background Papers: N/A

Appendices: None

Corporate Lead Officer: Lowri Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Democratic Services

Reporting Officer: Lowri Edwards

Date: 24th April 2023

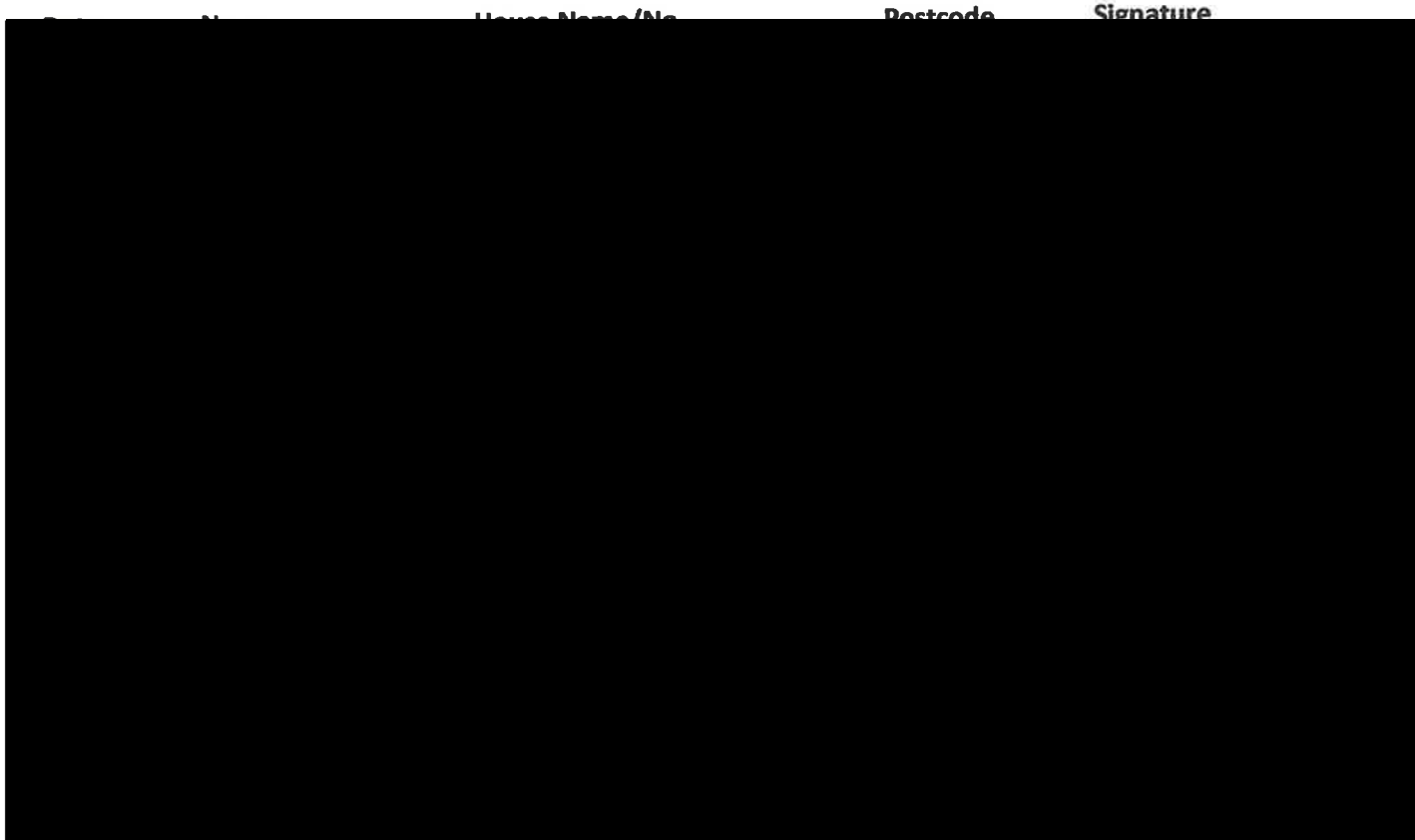
Objection to the Proposed Imposition of 20mph Speed Limit at Stags Head, No.69.1 - B4578 & B4342 intersection

We, the undersigned, object to the above proposal on the following grounds:

- A. The proposed 20mph limit is not necessary because:
 - 1) The roads involved have a very low accident rate.
 - 2) The roads involved have a low volume of traffic.

- B. The proposed 20mph limit is not desirable because:
 - 1) It will increase noise and air pollution as the vehicles will be in a low gear, especially ascending the three gradients to Stags Head crossroads.
 - 2) Drivers will pay more attention to the finer detail of their speedometers at the expense of paying attention to the road ahead.
 - 3) The very slow pace of vehicles could actually encourage children to play in the road.

- C. The 20mph limit proposals across the county are a gross waste of public money which should be spent maintaining the road surfaces properly, keeping road drains clear and clearing debris from the sides of the highway. All of these are essential to primary road safety but are deliberately ignored by Ceredigion Council Highways Department in their ongoing negligence.



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CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	2.5.23
Title:	Action Plan - Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32
Purpose of the report:	To receive the Action Plan for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
For:	Decision
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills

In accordance with section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 every Local Authority in Wales is expected to submit a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to the Welsh Government. The plan drawn up complies with the Welsh Government Welsh in Education Strategic Plans regulations 2019; the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was adopted by Ceredigion Council Cabinet on 22nd February 2022. The plan was approved by the Welsh Government on 20 July 2022.

It was strategically planned for the following areas to develop and strengthen the Welsh language:

- Outcome 1:** More nursery children/three year olds educated through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 2:** More reception class children/five year olds educated through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 3:** More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another
- Outcome 4:** More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 5:** More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school
- Outcome 6:** An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018)
- Outcome 7:** An increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

Following its approval under section 85(7) of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 local authorities must take all reasonable steps to implement their WESP and prepare an action plan which will be monitored annually in the form of a review report.

The Action Plan sets out the Local Authority's position in 2022 in these areas and explains the aim in 5 years and how this is achieved. Additionally, the aims for the

end of the Plan's life in a decade are set out. The Action Plan presented specifies a 5-year overview of the procedures, and there is a more detailed operational plan for the first two years noting the responsibilities of specific staff to fulfil the necessary actions.

The draft action plan was submitted to the Government on 23 December 2022. Confirmation was received on 28 February 2023 stating that the actions and timetable are clear and appropriate. The comments received have been incorporated into the action plan presented. The Welsh Government considers the action plan to be a live, flexible document that will need to be amended along the way according to local needs and developments. The action plan will be monitored every term by the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Forum and sub-committees as necessary.

One of the steps set out in the Action Plan is to start the consultation process for changing the language medium in the Foundation Phase of five schools in the county. In order to ensure consistency in the admission age of the five schools it was agreed in the WESP that three schools would change their admission age to 3 years instead of 4 years. In accordance with the 2018 School Organisation Code, consent is required by the Council's Cabinet to start the consultation process and a paper will go before Cabinet on 2.5.23. If consent is given by Cabinet at that meeting, it is aimed to follow the following timetable in terms of the statutory process of carrying out a consultation.

30 March 2023	Scrutiny Committee
2 May 2023	Cabinet
15 September – 30 October 2023	Publishing Consultation Documents School Organisation Code 3.4 <i>The consultation document must be published on a school day of the school or schools subject to the proposal and consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with at least 20 of these being school days</i>
9 January 2024	Cabinet School Organisation Code 3.6 <i>The proposer must publish a consultation report on their website or that of the relevant local authority. The report must be published at least two weeks prior to the publication of a statutory notice</i>
22 January – 19 February 2024	School Organisation Code 4.1 <i>Publishing a statutory notice</i> <i>The statutory notice must be published on a school day but not on a school day which includes a session which is devoted (wholly or mainly) to improving teaching standards or management practices of staff at the school (INSET days). The objection period must include 15 school days (in addition to the day on which it is published). It must be published for 28 days</i>
4 June 2024	Cabinet Decision to proceed or not

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why Yes, for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

Summary: The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies across Wales named in the Act to work towards achieving seven well-being goals, including 'a Wales of vibrant culture where the Welsh language thrives'. There is also a statutory basis to the system for planning Welsh-medium education provision. The Welsh Government has a duty to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language and to work towards achieving the well-being goals.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Long term: Ceredigion County's WESP action plan 2022-32 will be a document that sets out the steps to carry out the actions within the plan with the aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the county by 2032. Short and long term targets and focused actions in the short and long term will have been identified over the period

Collaboration: Collaboration between partners and stakeholders will be at the core of the plan. The main collaboration will be between the authority's officers and the schools and their governing bodies as well as parents through local consultations (Outcome 1 and 2)

Involvement: Stakeholders and partners will be involved throughout the planning period and any consultation periods

Prevention: The procedures that will prevent any problems that may arise or escalate throughout the plan period will be set out in it

Integration: In essence, the proposal involves supporting Ceredigion County Council's aspiration to strengthen the position of the Welsh language through its Language Strategy. The proposal also supports the Council's Strategic Objectives and the Welsh Government's Strategy, Cymraeg 2050: a million Welsh speakers

Recommendation(s):	<p>That Cabinet agree:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. to adopt the Action Plan for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022- 2032, to implement it from the beginning of the Summer term 2023 and to review it annually ii. that the Action Plan will be monitored through the WESP Language Forum meetings and the Bilingual Futures committee iii. that an annual report on progress against the Action Plan for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is presented to the Language Forum, the Bilingual Futures committee, the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Cabinet iv. in accordance with the School Organisation Code, that the Local Authority starts the statutory consultation process of changing the language medium in the Foundation Phase at Comins Coch, Llwyn yr Eos, St Padarn's, Plascrug and Cei Newydd school; v. that the consultation regarding changing the admission age at three schools namely Comins Coch, St Padarn's and Cei Newydd, to commence on 15th September 2023.
Reasons for decision:	To comply with Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh Government Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) regulations 2019
Overview and Scrutiny:	The recommendations were discussed in the Scrutiny Overview and Committee on 30.03.23
Policy Framework:	Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh Government Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) regulations 2019
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	Providing the best start in life and enabling learning at all ages
Finance and Procurement implications:	Within departmental budget
Legal Implications:	Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh Government Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) regulations 2019

Staffing implications:	Not applicable
Property / asset implications:	Not applicable
Risk(s):	Not applicable
Statutory Powers:	Section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Welsh Government Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) regulations 2019
Background Papers:	Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032
Appendices:	Appendix A- Action Plan- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 5-year overview
Corporate Lead Officer:	Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools and Culture
Reporting Officer:	Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools and Culture
Date:	4.4.23



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Caru·Love
Ceredigion

Action Plan - Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

5 year overview

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 (Target at the end of the 10 years: all foundation learning children receiving Welsh medium education)5

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Outcome 7: An increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh13

Background Notes

Following the recent approval of our Welsh Language Strategic Plan, we have drawn up this document to facilitate the process of implementing the first half of the plan. Some actions are long-term and ongoing and others are time-specific. Below are the early steps that have been established since September 2022. These steps are key to the actions of the action plan.

- Create an overview and action plan per outcome for two years
- Re-establish a forum and appoint a chairman
- Establish sub-committees to discuss the draft action plans
- Create a timetable for the meetings over the first two years.
- Appoint a member of staff for two years to facilitate and co-ordinate the work of the 5 transitional primary schools

Through our forum, we will monitor the actions and plan every term.

Outcome 1: More nursery children/three year olds educated through the medium of Welsh

Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5 2026-27
<p>1.1/1.2/1.3/1.8/1.9/1.10 Improve the skills of individual childminders in Child Care supporting them to attend learning and language improvement courses Child Care – all child care – child minders/day nurseries/wrap-around care to expand Welsh-medium provision – focusing on the Aberystwyth area. Specific plans and resources.</p>				
<p>1.9 Training programme/Language Improvement (Gloywi Iaith)</p> <p>1.10 Immersion</p> <p>1.16 Sufficiency assessment to strengthen and expand the provision</p>	<p>Assess the use and impact of the resource receiving feedback in the form of questionnaires before and after implementation.</p> <p>Refine as necessary.</p> <p>A Programme drawn up and shared with childminders and childcare organisations. Offer training on Immersion methodology as Professional Learning</p> <p>Assess the use and impact of the Resource receiving feedback in the form of questionnaires before and after implementation</p> <p>Refine as necessary.</p>			
<p>1.4/1.11 Establish Further Education Colleges partnership with Mudiad Meithrin to increase the Welsh-medium workforce in the childcare sector. Mudiad Meithrin Apprenticeships.</p>	<p>Ensure that a member of the College and Mudiad Meithrin are executive members of the forum.</p>			
<p>1.5/1.6 Prepare Consultation 1 – Change language medium x 5 schools - Comins Coch, St Padarn’s, Cei Newydd, Plascrug and Llwyn yr Eos</p> <p>Consultation 2 – Nursery Classes – x 3 schools - Comins Coch, St Padarn’s, Cei Newydd</p> <p>Appoint a Welsh Language Support Teacher to co-ordinate the work.</p>	<p>Undertake a Consultation in October 2023 and plan towards its implementation in accordance with the responses.</p> <p>Request Cabinet approval to go to consultation in May 2023.</p> <p>Consultation 1 – Change language medium x 5 schools - Comins Coch, St Padarn’s, Cei Newydd, Plascrug and Llwyn yr Eos</p>	<p>Action following Consultation 1</p> <p>Change language medium x 5 Nursery - September 2024</p> <p>Consultation 2 – Nursery Classes – Comins Coch, St Padarn’s, Cei Newydd</p>	<p>Welsh-medium Provision – Reception</p>	<p>Welsh-medium Provision – Year 1</p>

	Consultation 2 – Nursery Classes – Comins Coch, St Padarn’s and Cei Newydd			
1.7 Additional Transitional School Support Officer to work with Dechrau’n Deg – Penparcau and the team to support the work	A Programme drawn up and shared with childminders and childcare organisation. Offer training on Immersion methodology as Professional Learning Assess the use and impact of the resource receiving feedback from Flying Start Penparcau staff and the officer Refine as necessary.			
1.12/1.13 Prepare - Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron – new schools – Welsh-medium - 3 year olds	Prepare - ysgol Dyffryn Aeron – new schools – Welsh-medium - 3 year olds	Ysgol Dyffryn Aeron – new schools – Welsh-medium - 3 year olds	In operation – School’s marketing campaign – collaboration with Mudiad Meithrin/Child Care	
1.14 Pre 2-3 year old children – expand the provision - ‘Set up and Succeed’ and the Child Care team focusing on the Aberystwyth area specifically				
1.15 Cyngor Sir Ceredigion website – the advantages of speaking Welsh – collaboration between the education and child care departments. Share the ‘Byw a Bod: One Life Two Languages’ information booklet with Mudiad Meithrin/Child Care				
1.17/1/18 Internal Processes – Clic and Admissions information	Operational by Easter admissions			
1.19 Play groups provision. Continue to support specific groups – increase provision and share the team’s digital work. Collaboration between Mudiad Meithrin/Cylch Ti a Fi, Family Centres/Dechrau’n Deg particularly in the Aberystwyth area.				

Outcome 2 : More reception class children/five year olds educated through the medium of Welsh
 (Target at the end of the 10 years: all foundation learning children receiving Welsh-medium education)

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Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5
<p>2.1/2.2/2.3 Support the Consultation (D1) Nursery Classes</p>	<p>Undertake the consultation process To coincide with the Nursery Classes Consultation Undertake a Consultation in October 2023 and plan towards its implementation in accordance with the responses Request Cabinet’s approval at the May 2023 meeting to go to Consultation. Consultation 1 – Change language medium x 5 - Comins Coch, St Padarn’s, Cei Newydd, Plascrug and Llwyn yr Eos Consultation 2 – Nursery Classes – Comins Coch, St Padarn’s and Cei Newydd</p>	<p>Implementation following Consultation 1 Change language medium x 5 - Nurseries - September 2024 Consultation 2 – Nursery Classes – September 2024</p> <p>Nursery Classes operational Reception Classes Year 1</p>		
<p>2.11 Following a grant allocation towards the extension at Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth – space for 28 additional primary school pupils – teacher and support teacher at the Language Centre</p>	<p>Building timetable Support for teachers teaching through the medium of Welsh for the first time</p>	<p>Following a grant allocation towards the extension at Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth – space for 28 additional primary school pupils – teacher and support teacher at the Language Centre</p>	<p>Admission of Year 2 pupils to the latecomers/language improvement (Gloywi Iaitth) classes</p>	

Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another

Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5 2026-27
3.7 School categorisation – draw up an action plan to develop the provision over the next 5 years. Appoint a new Welsh Language Support Teacher to facilitate the work over two years.	Implement Primary and Secondary Schools action plans. Monitor the progress of the Action Plans and respond to any challenges Set and monitor practical targets as part of the action plans.			
3.7 - 3.5 - 3.7 Improve progression and numbers studying for qualifications through the medium of Welsh – undertake an audit of the Welsh-medium provision and draw up action plans.	Continue discussions with Governing bodies/support	Take action on discussions with Governing bodies. Consultations in accordance with those.		
3.2 Percentage increase in progression from KS2 to KS3 in the Aberystwyth area	Target years 5 and 6 primary school pupils to transfer to Welsh-medium education and create an accelerated Learning course and provision.	Use bespoke extension building at Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth.	Use bespoke extension building at Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth.	Use bespoke extension building at Ysgol Gymraeg Aberystwyth.
				3.3 Build on the solid foundation laid down in the Foundation Phase so that 7-11 year old pupils continue to develop their language skills.
3.4 Support Mathematics and Science through the medium of Welsh	Support the schools and provide support, training and any resources.			
3.8 Begin support discussions with a Category 1 school	Support by a Welsh Language Support Teacher to draw up the action plan	Monitor the action plan and consult on development across the continuum.		

Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh

Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5 2026-27
4.1 - 4.2 Continue with the current language progression across the County				
4.3 Transfer from the Primary school to the Secondary school in the Aberystwyth area	Monitor transfer targets for KS2/3			
4.4 Welsh language improvement (Gloywi laith) training for teachers lacking confidence.				
4.5 - 4.6 Support schools with the changes following Curriculum for Wales in the Areas of Learning and Experience in Literacy, Language and Communication. Support at school level with specific support relating to planning provision and pedagogy mainly through the support of a Curriculum for Wales Co-ordinator and the Team of Welsh Support Teachers. Promote School to School work Establish cluster networks to ensure there is an agreed understanding on progression principles Ensure that the action plan following categorisation leads schools along a strong and ambitious language continuum.	Continue to work in Partnership with the network of Heads of Departments of Welsh in Secondary Schools.			
4.7 Following categorisation, offer support to schools to increase the provision of subjects through the medium of Welsh				
4.8 Collaborate with schools to ensure that Welsh is offered as an Advanced level course in accordance with the findings of the post-16 Consultation.				
4.9 Collaborate with schools to promote the advantages of studying Welsh as a subject amongst pupils and parents/carers. Share and use national resources.				

Outcome 5: More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school

Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5 2026-27
5.1 The Welsh in Education Promotion Officer to lead on the work of the Siarter Iaith and to collaborate with a variety of stakeholders with the specific aim of encouraging the use of Welsh on an informal basis amongst Ceredigion pupils.				
5.2 Confidence Campaign – Welsh in Education Promotion Officer to collaborate with our Secondary schools specifically.	Set up a Working Group to discuss the idea and look at various options. Set a plan	Commence the work	Continue with the work	Review the plan
5.3 Draw up a questionnaire on confidence and perception as a baseline for the above to be completed by the County's Secondary School pupils.	Prepare - Summer term 2023 Publish September 2023	January – analyse and draw up an action plan	Prepare - Summer term 2025 Publish September 2025	January – analyse and draw up an action plan
	5.4 That the vast majority of after-school clubs offer Welsh language provision mainly over the course of this plan.	Collect data and report on progress		
5.5 Collaborate with Ysgol Henry Richard from September 2022 onwards and use and share evidence from the research project 'A study of the out-migration and aspirations of young people from Welsh-speaking areas' to develop positive aspects further.	Request for the research to revisit the Tregaron area to assess whether there has been any change since the last report Share findings			
5.6 Draw up and analyse the Welsh in Education questionnaire every two years in order to collect information and evidence on school needs, linguistic trends, obstacles, details of the Siarter Iaith etc. The questionnaire will offer practical action targets over a period of time. 5.6 a 5.3 Undertake the questionnaires in the same period.	Prepare in the Summer term 2023 Publish in September 2023 Analyse and draw up an action plan, November 2023			
5.7 Establish from scratch a forum for monitoring the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan with particular attention to the element of the informal use of Welsh. A sub-committee of children's and young people's partner organisations to be established in October 20/10/22.				
5.8 Collaborate with Welsh-medium providers in order to expand provision where pupils can have access to extra-curricular activities through the medium of Welsh. Combining Work 5.7, 5.8, 5.17	September 2023 - Establish a working group of various organisations to contribute to mapping the provision			

<p>5.10 Within 5 years, we wish to see more pupils studying Physical Education through the medium of Welsh and that the county's leisure services staff are confident to teach/train bilingually</p>	<p>Collect existing data and measure the impact of the Hyder - Sports Residential Course scheme</p>			<p>50% of the County's pupils studying Physical Education do so through the medium of Welsh</p>
<p>5.11 Develop the confidence of certain individuals to support Leisure bilingually.</p>				
<p>Continue with network meetings for the Siarter laith leaders to share ideas, frustrations, good practice and joint planning etc.</p>				
<p>Provide activities for specific days to promote the Welsh language such as Shwmae Su'mae Day, Welsh Language Music Day, St David's Day etc.</p>	<p>On-going</p>			
<p>Cardi-laith (@Cardiiaith): set up a Facebook page to share information, introduce language skills, language patterns, involvement and support for parents, promote Welsh language opportunities in the county within education and share the activities of other Welsh language organisations/bodies.</p>	<p>Annual impact report to the Communications team</p>			
<p>Music Project</p>	<p>Project underway. Develop a further relationship with the service following a new appointment</p>			
<p>Provide online training that will promote elements of the Welsh language digitally e.g. Podcasts, provide resources etc.</p>				
<p>Collaborate with Welsh language partners locally and nationally to see what is possible in terms of the use of computer games, social media influences and influencers etc through the medium of Welsh. Arrange with Stwnsh/PopT, S4C's youtube page to undertake a promotional and marketing campaign</p>				
<p>Hand in hand with key partners we will continue to amend our provision map annually as a record of what is available to school-age children so that they can use their Welsh skills in the community and socially. Combine Work 5.7, 5.8, 5.18</p>				

Outcome 6: An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN)

Year 1 2022 - 23	Year 2 2023 - 24	Year 3 2024 - 25	Year 4 2025 - 26	Year 5 2026 -27
6.1 Continue with the current situation in terms of securing Welsh-language provision in our schools and appropriate resources for support				
6.2 Continue to develop the situation in terms of training thus creating more specialist digital/virtual presentations in both languages so that school staff can choose the language they want to use on an individual basis				
6.7 Develop our systems in order to act on the requirements and implications of the Act and the ALN Code in our schools as well as our central provision				
6.5 Ensure that any new staff that are appointed can speak Welsh and provide input through the Welsh language. Where this is not possible due to the expertise of the professional skills, that the staff undertake to learn Welsh within two years of being appointed.				
6.8 Continue to collaborate and share good practice with other Local Authorities				
6.3 Establish Welsh language provision in all cases including input from the advisory teacher for hearing impairment by making reasonable adjustments e.g. securing a partnership with a Welsh Teaching Assistant as a translator and using a language and speech therapist where signing is necessary				
6.6 Raise the awareness and expectations of the early years workforce in terms of developing Welsh language skills and refer them to professional development that is available free of charge. Include this information in the annual conference.				
6.10 Collaborate across the Hywel Dda region on the positive impact of the early years strategy and the integration system in the development of Welsh language skills				
6.9 Collaborate with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) and other agencies in terms of the importance of the Welsh language skills of the workforce and provision.				

Outcome 7: An increase in the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh

Year 1 2022-23	Year 2 2023-24	Year 3 2024-25	Year 4 2025-26	Year 5 2026-27
7.1 Ensure there is a career path and support for the teachers/deputy headteachers/senior teachers. Create an up-to-date database of who has received what leadership training and revise annually				
7.2 Use the Welsh Government's 'Welsh in Education Workforce' plan document and share it with Human Resources, using annual staff census data as a means of planning the Workforce.	Update as necessary.			
7.3 Collaborate with the Leadership Academy to attract headteachers to Ceredigion - Marketing campaign				
7.4 a 7.5 Support the linguistic skills of transitional schools Additional capacity January 2023				
7.7 – 7.15 Collaborate with Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and Teacher Training Institutions, Schools and Year 10 - 13 pupils, Further Education Colleges and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to attract more workers to the sector.				
7.16 Create a training plan on bilingual learning methodology.	Consider collaborating with suitable partners to create a package of resources/training for teachers who teach in linguistically mixed classes.			
7.17 Continue with high level training relating to the Welsh language. A series of county level training sessions and collaboration with the Welsh Language Leaders' working group regionally to support Welsh in English schools	Discuss with external providers as well as planning more specific provision.			

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 2 May 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid

TITLE: Feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 - Action Plan

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To provide feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March 2023

BACKGROUND:

The Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-32 - Action Plan at its meeting on 30th March 2023. In accordance with section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 every Local Authority in Wales was expected to submit a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to the Welsh Government. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was adopted by Ceredigion Council Cabinet on 22nd February 2022. The plan was approved by the Welsh Government on 20 July 2022.

Following its approval under section 85(7) of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 local authorities must take all reasonable steps to implement their WESP and prepare an action plan which would be monitored annually in the form of a review report. The Action Plan sets out the Local Authority's position in 2022 in these areas and explains the aim in 5 years and how this is achieved. Additionally, the aims for the end of the Plan's life in a decade were set out. The Action Plan presented specifies a 5-year overview of the procedures, and there was a more detailed operational plan for the first two years noting the responsibilities of specific staff to fulfil the necessary actions.

The draft action plan was submitted to the Government on 23 December 2022. Confirmation was received on 28 February 2023 stating that the actions and timetable are clear and appropriate. The comments received have been incorporated into the action plan presented to the Committee.

The Committee heard that one of the steps set out in the Action Plan was to start the consultation process for changing the language medium in the Foundation Phase of five schools in the county. In order to ensure consistency in the admission age of the five schools it was agreed in the WESP that three schools would change their admission age to 3 years instead of 4 years. In accordance with the 2018 School Organisation Code, consent was required by the Council's Cabinet to start the consultation process and a paper would go before Cabinet on 2.5.23. The Committee received details of the timetable in terms of the statutory process of carrying out a consultation if consent was given by Cabinet at that meeting.

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to recommend to Cabinet:

- i. to adopt the Action Plan for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022- 2032, to be implemented from the beginning of the Summer term 2023 and to review it annually;
- ii. that the Action Plan would be monitored through the WESP Language Forum meetings and the Bilingual Futures Committee;
- iii. that an annual report on progress against the Action Plan for the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan was presented to the Language Forum, the Bilingual Futures Committee, the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Cabinet; and
- iv. in accordance with the School Organisation Code, that the Local Authority starts the process of changing the language medium in the Foundation Phase at Comins Coch, Llwyn yr Eos, St Padarn's, Plascrug and Cei Newydd schools. Additionally, a consultation regarding changing the admission age at three schools namely Comins Coch, St Padarn's and Cei Newydd would coincide with this. These consultation periods would commence on 15th September 2023.

Councillor Endaf Edwards
Chairman of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	2 May 2023
Title:	Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure
Purpose of the report:	To present the 'Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure' document which will replace the 'Developing Education Provision to 2020'
For:	Decision
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning & Skills

Background

In November 2018, the Welsh Government updated its statutory code in terms of school organisation and introduced a presumption against closure clause for rural schools.

The definition of a rural school has been determined by the Welsh Government using the rural and urban categories of the Office for National Statistics, and as a result, 28 schools in Ceredigion have been defined as rural schools.

Due to the introduction of the new statutory guidance by Welsh Government, the School Review Policy was replaced by a School Reorganisation Handbook which provides a summary of the procedures that need to be followed when undertaking a school review and adopted by Cabinet on the 15 June 2021.

Current Situation

The statutory code requires Local Authorities to follow a series of more detailed procedures and requirements when drawing up a proposal to close a rural school, when consulting on that proposal, and when deciding whether the proposal to close a rural school should be implemented.

Before deciding whether to proceed with a consultation, a proposal paper must be prepared and submitted to the Learning Communities Work Stream. Following the meeting of the Scrutiny Work Stream, the proposal paper is submitted to the Cabinet to consider whether to:

- a) Approve the proposal and proceed to conduct a statutory consultation
- b) Reject the proposal
- c) Offer an alternative option

The proposal paper will then be presented to the Learning Communities Scrutiny Committee before undertaking a Statutory Consultation.

The 'Planning Education Provision to 2020' document is now out of date, and it is therefore timely to present a document that outlines the principles for maintaining a sustainable education infrastructure for the future.

The Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure' document is attached (**Appendix A**). This replaces the 'Planning Education Provision to 2020' document.

The principles noted in Section 1.2 of the 'Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure' document (Appendix A) will form the basis for any decision on future school re-organisation proposals.

The Welsh Government statutory guidance details the procedures to be followed when undertaking any school re-organisation proposal and have been summarised in the 'School Organisation Handbook' (Appendix C).

Wellbeing of Future Generations:	<p>Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why –</p> <p>N/A as it does not refer to a policy change</p> <p>Summary: Long term: Collaboration: Involvement: Prevention: Integration:</p>
Recommendation(s):	Cabinet to approve the 'Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure' document (Appendix A)
Reasons for decision:	Any future re-organisation proposal will be based on one or more of the principles noted in Section 1.2 of the Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure document and in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.
Overview and Scrutiny:	Presented to Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 30 March 2023
Policy Framework:	
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
Finance and Procurement implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	N/A

Staffing implications: N/A

Property / asset implications: N/A

Risk(s):

Statutory Powers: School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
School Organisation Code – Welsh Government
Statutory Code – 011/2018

Background Papers: N/A

Appendices: Appendix A- Principles for Ensuring Sustainable
Education Infrastructure
Appendix B- School Organisation Code 011/2018
Appendix C- School Re-organisation Handbook 2021
Appendix D- Developing Education Provision to 2020

Corporate Lead Officer: Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools and Culture

Reporting Officer: Nia James, Corporate Manager- Learning Resources

Date: 31 March 2023

Ceredigion County Council



Principles for Ensuring Sustainable Education Infrastructure



Version: Draft V8 03.04.23

Approved:

SECTION 1: Introduction and Principles

1.1 Introduction

The purpose is to outline the principles of Ceredigion County Council in developing the school provision and infrastructure.

The **aims and objectives** of this strategy are to provide the children and young people of Ceredigion with the best possible opportunities:

1. to learn and thrive in a school/setting that offers the best possible learning experiences in a fit for purpose learning environment
2. to promote and support well-being, and an integrated childcare model for families
3. to ensure that our children and young people are well equipped to meet the future needs of employers and communities
4. to ensure that our children and young people continue to develop their Welsh language skills and are proud to contribute to a bilingual society

The aims and objectives of this strategy are aligned to other key documents and ways of working as outlined below:

- Future Generations and Well-being Act
- United Nations Rights of the Child
- Curriculum for Wales
- Additional Learning Needs Bill and Code
- Cymraeg 2050
- Local Well-being plan 2023-2028
- Ceredigion Corporate Strategy 2022-2027
- Local Development Plan 2007-2022
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2021-2031
- Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
- Ceredigion Economic Strategy 2020-
- Growing Mid Wales
- Through age and Wellbeing Strategy

1.2 Core principles

1. Continue to ensure excellent provision, leadership and standards in schools/settings for all groups of pupils, which reflects the requirements of Curriculum for Wales and the Additional Learning Needs Code
2. Continue to build capacity to ensure that School Leaders have the appropriate time to lead and manage their schools
3. Continue to develop Welsh language provision to ensure the bilingual competencies of our children and young people
4. Continue to develop education provision for 3 year olds in schools as is appropriate
5. Provide excellent learning environments for children, young people, staff and the wider community
6. Make effective and efficient use of resources to ensure a sustainable infrastructure
7. Ensure parity and equity of access to a broad range of learning opportunities post 14 and 16 courses to prepare highly skilled and well-qualified children and young people for their next steps in education, training or the workplace

Any future re-organisation proposal will be based on one or more of the principles noted above in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.

2.1 How Education Infrastructure has changed since the turn of the 21st Century

- Built 3 new Welsh medium 3-11 area primary schools – Bro Sion Cwilt, T. Llew Jones and Dyffryn Cledlyn
- Developed 3 new all-through schools – Ysgol Bro Pedr, Ysgol Henry Richard and Ysgol Bro Teifi
- Established a variety of formal and informal federations between schools
- Established 5 Additional Learning Needs Specialist Resource Centres within the Primary sector and 4 within the Secondary sector
- Increased the number of schools providing education for 3 year olds
- Changed the language category of 2 primary schools
- Reduced the number of primary schools from 70 to 36
- Developed 3 immersion centres for latecomers to the Welsh language
- Developed a PRU Centre in order to support pupils with social, emotional and behavioural problems and reintegrate them back into mainstream school.
- Delivered the Welsh Government's 21st Century Band A programme at a cost of £40.1m. This included:
 - a new 3-19 school at Llandysul, Ysgol Bro Teifi;
 - a new 3-11 area school at Drefach, Ysgol Dyffryn Cledlyn
 - a new primary wing and refurbishment of secondary school at Tregaron in order to create a 3-16 school, Ysgol Henry Richard
 - Comins Coch Primary – extension and removal of demountable classroom
 - Llanilar Primary School – extension and removal of demountable classroom

2.2 Band B 21st Century School Programme and other capital Grants

Band B

The Local Authority is committed to providing the following as part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Band B programme:

- Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi – refurbishment and extension to the existing school
- Ysgol Gynradd Aberteifi – refurbishment and extension
- Dyffryn Aeron 3-11 School – new 3-11 area school in the Aeron Valley
- Canolfan y Môr – extension to the current provision at Aberaeron Secondary School

100% Capital Grants

- Extension to Ysgol Gynradd Pontrhydfendigaid
- A contribution to the works at Ysgol Gynradd Aberteifi project
- Extension to Ysgol Gynradd Cenarth
- Remodelling to Ysgol Henry Richard

Sustainable Communities for Learning

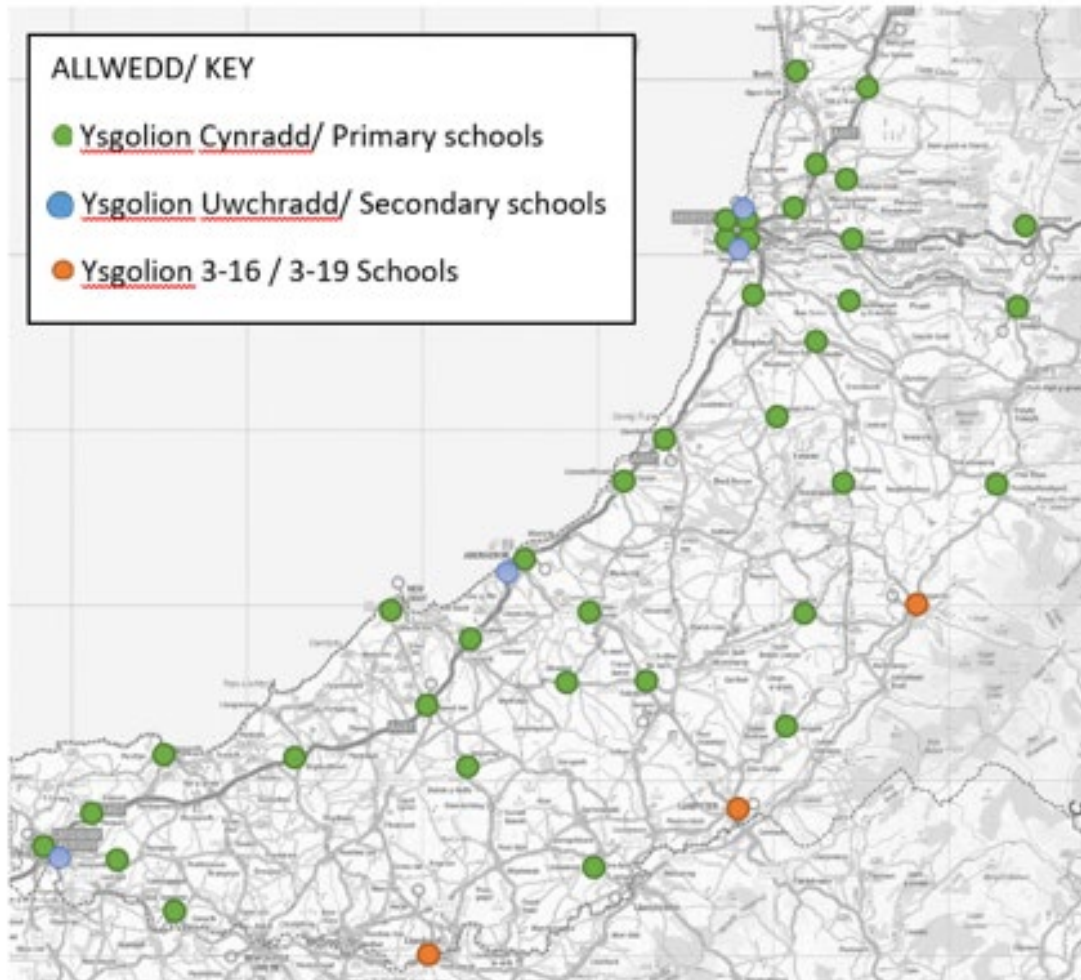
- The Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning is a 9 year rolling programme that Local Authorities can access when they are 60% through Band B subject to the approval of the Strategic Outline Programme.

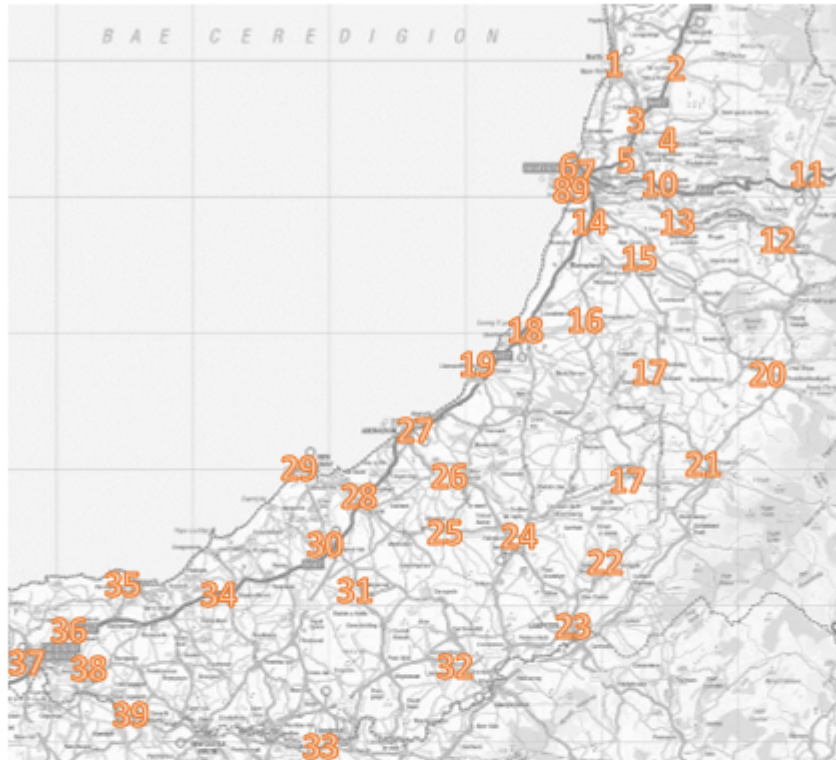
Years	Expectation
1, 2 and 3	Projects expected to reach Full Business Case within the 3 years
4, 5 and 6	Projects being developed and going through Statutory consultation
7, 8 and 9	Pipeline projects

- The expectation is that the SOP, subject to Cabinet approval is presented to Welsh Government by March 2024 which will include the Local Authority's plans for education infrastructure for the next 9 years (2024 – 2033).
- Match funding will need to be identified for any projects included in the SOP

3. Maps of Education Provision

Map showing location of Primary, Secondary and middle schools within Ceredigion

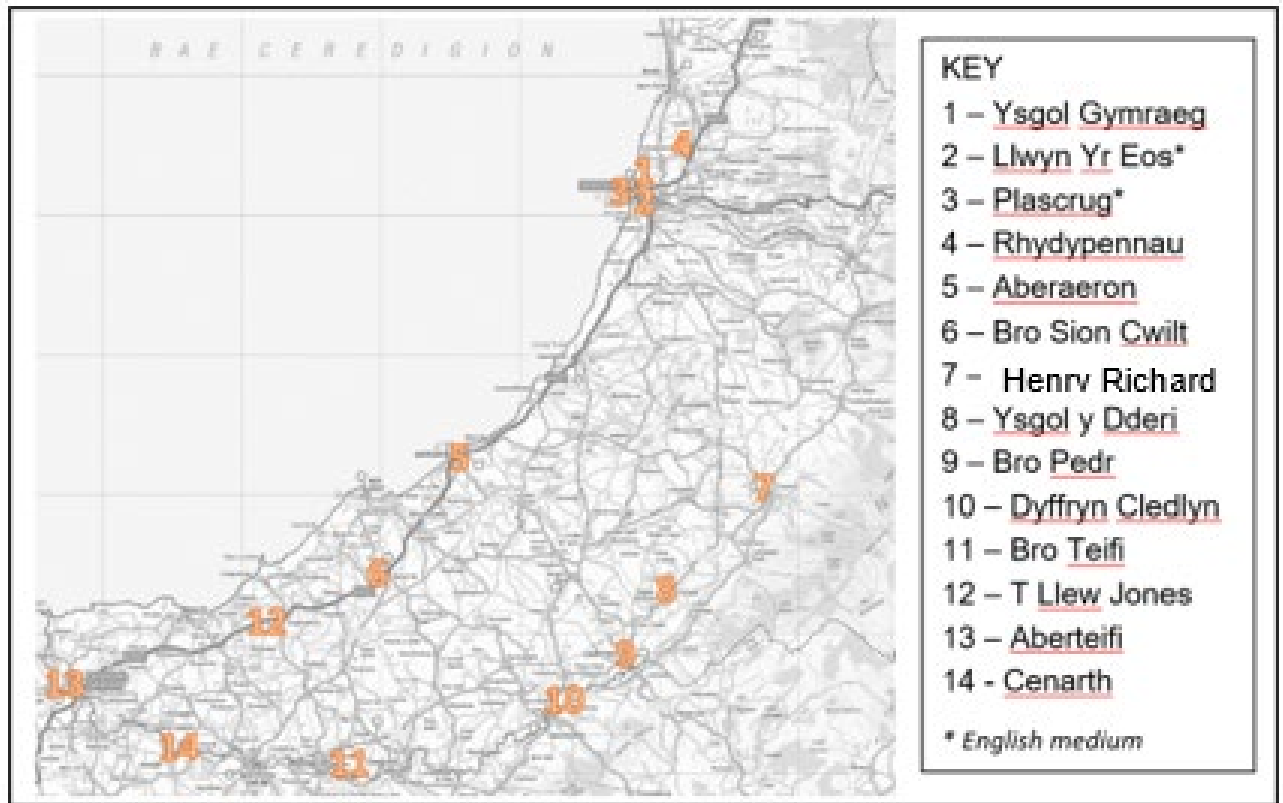




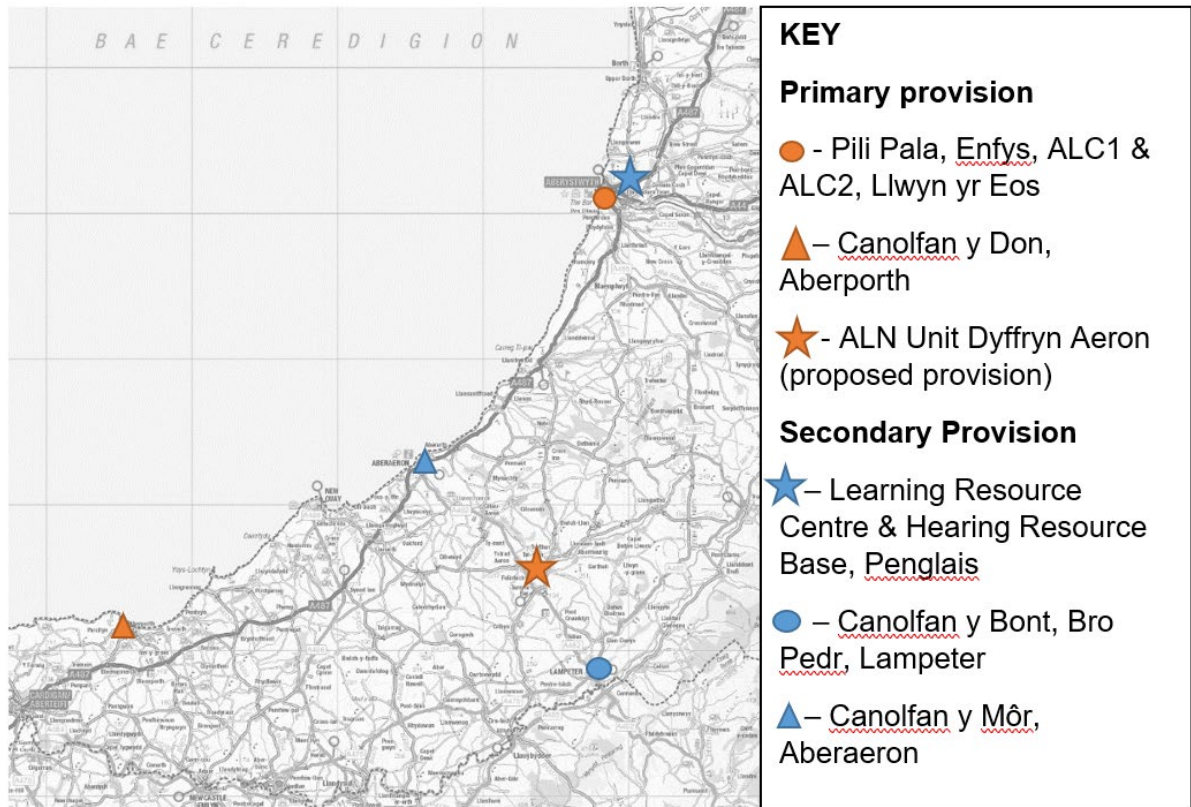
ALLWEDD/ KEY

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 – Craig yr Wylfa | 21 – Henry Richard |
| 2 – Talybont | 22 – Y Dderi |
| 3 – Rhydypennau | 23 – Bro Pedr |
| 4 – Penrhyncoch | 24 – Felinfach |
| 5 – Comins Coch | 25 – Dihewyd |
| 6 – Padarn Sant | 26 – Ciliau Parc |
| 7 – Ysgol Gymraeg | 27 – Aberaeron |
| 8 - Plascrug | 28 – Llanarth |
| 9 – Llwyn yr Eos | 29 – Ceinewydd |
| 10 – Penllwyn | 30 – Bro Sion Cwilt |
| 11 – Syr John Rhys | 31 – Talgarreg |
| 12 – Mynach | 32 – Dyffryn Cledlyn |
| 13 – Llanfihangel y Creuddyn | 33 – Bro Teifi |
| 14 - Llanfarian | 34 – T. Llew Jones |
| 15 – Llanilar | 35 - Aberporth |
| 16 - Llangwryfon | 36 - Penparc |
| 17 – Rhos Helyg | 37 - Aberteifi |
| 18 - Myfennydd | 38 - Llechryd |
| 19 - Llanon | 39 - Cenarth |
| 20 - Pontrhydfendigaid | |

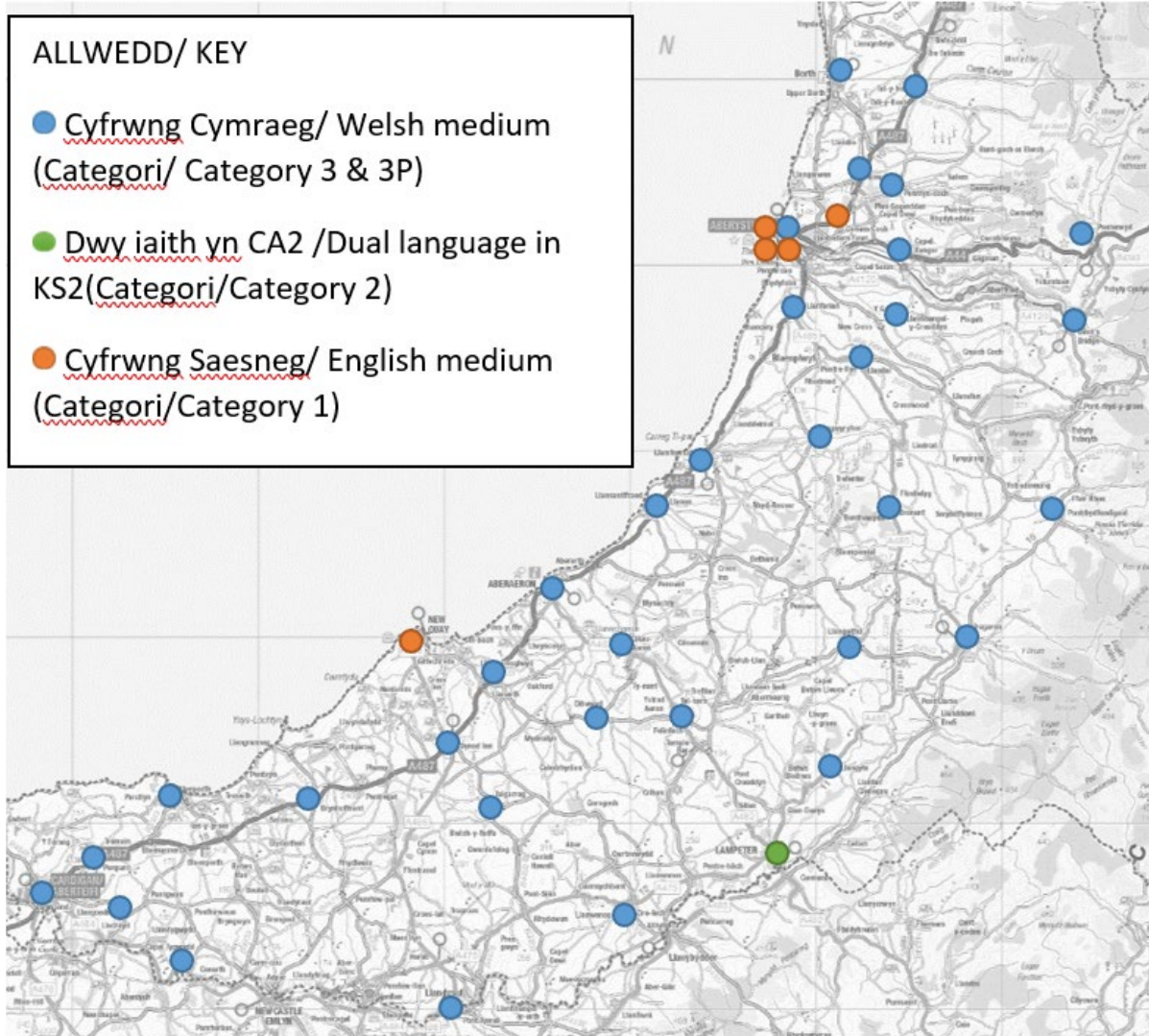
Map showing location of schools with nursery provision



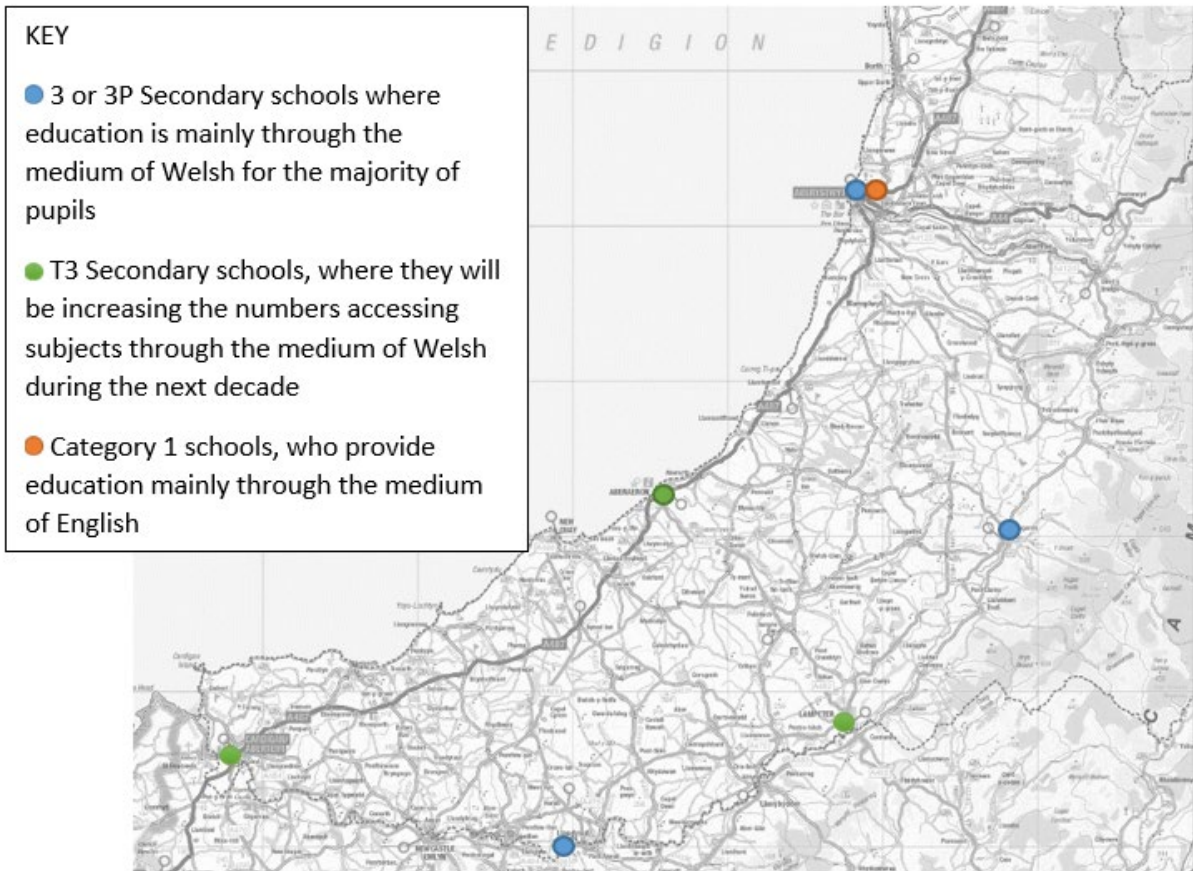
Map showing location of specialist resource centres within mainstream schools



Map showing location of Welsh/English/Dual stream Schools within the Primary sector



Map showing location and language provision of schools within the Secondary sector



3.5 Pupil numbers

current situation

Table showing pupil numbers, capacity and surplus places within Ceredigion schools for the past 3 years

Primary

	Pupil no.	Capacity
PLASC 2021	4,696	5,516
PLASC 2022	4,582	5,516
PLASC 2023*	4,568	5,538

Secondary

	Pupil no.	Capacity
PLASC 2021	4,220	5,873
PLASC 2022	4,299	5,873
PLASC 2023*	4,309	5,873

* PLASC data submitted January 2023 - Data yet to be verified

Primary pupil numbers per school – PLASC data

	2021	2022	2023*	Capacity
Aberaeron (Cynradd)	197	196	197	201
Aberporth	146	157	161	181
Aberteifi (Cynradd)	378	374	367	421
Bro Pedr	321	321	322	376
Bro Sion Cwilt	99	100	93	147
Bro Teifi	306	309	300	360
Cei Newydd	77	82	83	98
Cenarth	61	75	75	73
Ciliau Parc	76	62	71	68
Comins Coch	174	153	144	185
Craig Yr Wylfa	35	27	24	74
Dihewyd	34	30	28	35
Dyffryn Cledlyn	103	103	101	120
Felinfach	48	50	54	60
Henry Richard	112	115	119	120
Llanarth	52	52	61	86
Llanfarian	47	42	38	56
Llanfihangel-y-Creuddyn	26	24	22	37
Llangwryfon	39	30	26	55
Llanilar	113	115	105	129
Llanon	32	36	41	59
Llechryd	62	67	62	99
Llwynyres	210	195	189	219
Myfenydd	70	71	70	91
Mynach	38	35	35	51
Padarn Sant	135	122	138	134
Penllwyn	42	38	35	55
Penparc	102	93	90	146
Penrhyncoch	94	89	94	110
Plascrug	395	395	396	409
Pontrhydfendigaid	71	67	67	74
Rhos Helyg	62	59	61	104
Rhydypennau	162	162	165	193
Syr John Rhys	23	22	21	39
T. Llew Jones	163	153	145	180
Talgarreg	45	38	37	63
Talybont	74	70	78	127
Y Dderi	106	101	98	133
Yr Ysgol Gymraeg	366	352	355	370
TOTAL	4,696	4,582	4,568	5,516

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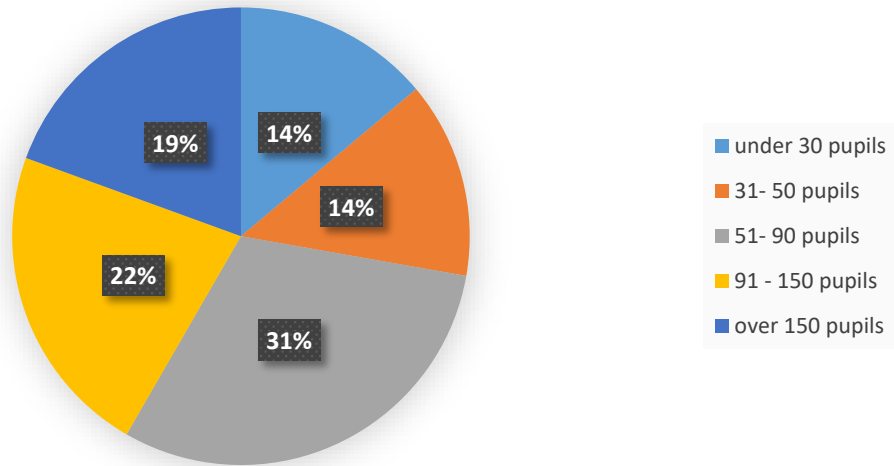
* PLASC data submitted January 2023 - Data yet to be verified

PLASC Data 2023* - Primary Sector per school year

School	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	R-6	Cap
Aberaeron (Cynradd)	32	28	29	28	27	22	31	197	201
Aberporth	23	25	21	23	27	17	25	161	181
Aberteifi (Cynradd)	50	48	48	52	54	58	57	367	421
Bro Pedr	34	37	44	45	49	50	63	322	376
Bro Sion Cwilt	15	14	16	5	12	17	14	93	147
Bro Teifi	44	50	41	54	39	38	34	300	360
Cei Newydd	13	7	12	9	15	12	15	83	98
Cenarth	14	16	11	9	8	10	7	75	73
Ciliau Parc	11	6	8	11	9	13	13	71	68
Comins Coch	12	12	18	21	24	26	31	144	185
Craig Yr Wylfa	3	2	6	3	2	4	4	24	74
Dihewyd	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	28	35
Dyffryn Cledlyn	13	13	19	21	10	15	10	101	120
Felinfach	9	11	8	10	6	4	6	54	60
Henry Richard	17	15	14	22	8	20	23	119	120
Llanarth	17	9	9	9	4	3	10	61	86
Llanfarian	6	4	7	8	8	2	3	38	56
Llanfihangel-Y-Creuddyn	5	2	-	2	3	4	6	22	37
Llangwryfon	3	4	4	4	2	6	3	26	55
Llanilar	11	17	14	14	15	20	14	105	129
Llannon	8	6	4	6	5	6	6	41	59
Llechryd	8	7	11	9	10	11	6	62	99
Llwyn yr Eos	22	23	27	31	28	31	27	189	219
Myfenydd	11	12	10	12	10	10	5	70	91
Mynach	6	2	7	7	5	4	4	35	51
Padarn Sant	12	18	20	22	23	20	23	138	134
Penllwyn	3	6	2	7	5	6	6	35	55
Penparc	12	15	16	13	12	12	10	90	146
Penrhynoch	12	10	19	15	17	12	9	94	110
Plascrug	45	56	59	60	58	60	58	396	409
Pontrhydfendigaid	13	6	9	14	3	12	10	67	74
Rhos Helyg – (Llangeitho)	4	3	5	8	2	3	8	33	61
Rhos Helyg – (Rhos y Wlad)	6	3	4	2	5	3	5	28	43
Rhydypennau	17	25	31	21	17	25	29	165	193
Syr John Rhys	2	1	1	6	4	2	5	21	39
T Llew Jones	19	10	21	26	27	16	26	145	180
Talgarreg	5	4	7	5	3	8	5	37	63
Tal-y-bont	10	7	9	12	9	13	18	78	127
Y Dderi	11	8	15	21	11	11	21	98	133
Yr Ysgol Gymraeg	52	42	52	44	51	54	60	355	370
Ceredigion	613	587	662	695	631	665	715	4,568	5,538

* PLASC data submitted January 2023 - Data yet to be verified

Primary School pupil numbers: PLASC 2023*



Secondary

	2021	2022	2023*	Capacity
Aberaeron	557	570	573	933
Aberteifi	623	608	604	691
Penglais	1073	1092	1085	1287
Penweddig	592	621	619	1070
Bro Pedr	625	632	643	841
Henry Richard	193	212	231	373
Bro Teifi	557	564	554	678
Total	4,220	4,299	4,309	5,873

PLASC Data 2023* - Secondary Sector per school year

School	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7-13	Capacity
Aberaeron	101	115	83	90	103	37	44	573	933
Aberteifi	106	106	103	113	110	37	29	604	691
Penglais	166	188	153	165	192	106	115	1085	1287
Penweddig	105	124	97	81	106	55	51	619	1070
Bro Pedr	111	114	85	114	92	73	54	643	841
Henry Richard	40	46	52	44	49	-	-	231	373
Bro Teifi	100	90	80	99	84	48	53	554	678
TOTAL	729	783	653	706	736	356	346	4,309	5,873

* PLASC data submitted January 2023 - Data yet to be verified

School Organisation Code



Statutory Code

Statutory Code document no: 011/2018

Date of issue: November 2018

Replaces statutory code document no: 006/2013

School Organisation Code

Audience

Local authorities, governing bodies of maintained schools, diocesan authorities and Estyn.

Overview

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that the Welsh Ministers issue a School Organisation Code.

The Code imposes requirements in accordance with which relevant bodies (the Welsh Ministers, local authorities, governing bodies and other promoters) must act. It also includes practical guidance to which relevant bodies must have due regard and sets out the policy context, general principles and factors that should be taken into account by those bringing forward proposals to reconfigure school provision and by those responsible for determining proposals.

Action required

See above.

Further information

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Additional copies

This document can be accessed from the Welsh Government's website at gov.wales/educationandskills

Related documents

School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision (2007)

Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales Welsh Government Circular

No: 021/2011 (2011)

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Summary

This Code on School Organisation (“the Code”) is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”).

Section 38 requires the Welsh Ministers to issue a Code that may impose requirements and include guidelines in respect of school organisation on the following (known collectively in this Code as “relevant bodies”):

- the Welsh Ministers;
- local authorities;
- the governing bodies of maintained schools¹; and
- the promoters of proposals to establish voluntary schools.

The Code applies to proposals in respect of maintained schools as defined at Section 98 of the 2013 Act. That is a school in Wales, which is a community, foundation or voluntary school, a community special school or a maintained nursery school. This does not include pupil referral units (PRUs).

The first edition of the Code came in to force on 1 October 2013 and applied in respect of all school organisation proposals published by way of statutory notice on or after that day. This is the second edition of the Code and it comes in to force on 1 November 2018 and comes into effect immediately subject to the following paragraph.

If a proposer has commenced consultation before 1 November 2018 the proposal **must** be published and determined in accordance with the first edition of the Code. Consultation will be considered to have commenced where a consultation document, required by section 3.2 of the first edition of the code, has been published.

The Code contains the following elements:

1. It imposes requirements in accordance with which relevant bodies (or persons exercising a function for the purpose of the discharge, by a local authority or the governing body of a maintained school, of functions in Part 2 (changes which require proposals)) must act. Failure by a relevant body to comply with the requirements set out in this Code may result in a complaint to the Welsh Ministers or to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Where mandatory requirements are imposed by the Code or by the 2013 Act or another statute or statutory instrument, it is stated that the relevant bodies **must** comply with the particular provision. Where practices are prohibited, it is stated that the relevant bodies **must not** use this practice.

¹ The categories of maintained schools in Wales are community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and community special.

2. It includes statutory guidance to which relevant bodies **must** have regard and sets out the policy context, general principles and factors that should be taken into account by those bringing forward proposals to reconfigure school provision and by those responsible for determining proposals. Where guidance is given by the Code, it is stated that relevant bodies **should** follow this guidance unless they can demonstrate that they are justified in not doing so.
3. It provides a description of the statutory requirements set out in the 2013 Act.

The Code builds on good practice which already exists amongst local authorities and others, but does not aim to give exhaustive guidance on all aspects of school organisation. Local authorities and others will need to ensure that in carrying out their school organisation functions they act at all times in ways which are reasonable and founded on the interests of learners.

The Code is primarily designed for the use of the relevant bodies but all those with an interest in school organisation matters may also find it useful.

Presumption against the closure of rural schools

This second edition of the Code makes special arrangements for rural schools (defined within the Code), establishing a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. This requires proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal. These are set out mainly in sections 1.8 and followed through in sections 3, 5, 7 and Annex A of this Code.

1. Development and consideration of proposals

1.1 Key background principles and policies

The planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes.

Relevant bodies **should** aim to ensure that proposals support the Welsh Government's commitment to increase school effectiveness, and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals.

A list of legislation, overarching principles and policies which will assist proposers in the development and consideration of proposals is included at annex E. This list is not exhaustive.

1.2 Factors to be taken into account in preparing, publishing, approving or determining school organisation proposals

The following paragraphs set out the factors which **should** be taken into account by relevant bodies when exercising their functions of preparing and publishing school organisation proposals, or approving/determining them. Paragraphs 1.3 to 1.6 are applicable in the case of all proposals.

1.3 Quality and standards in education

Relevant bodies **should** place the interests of learners above all others. With reference to the five inspection areas of the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales (Estyn) Common Inspection Framework (as of September 2017), they **should** consider the likely impact of the proposals on:

- standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills;
- wellbeing and attitudes to learning;
- teaching and learning experiences (quality of teaching, the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and the provision of skills);
- care support and guidance (tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding); and
- leadership and management (quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning, professional learning, and use of resources)

at the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals and at any other school or educational institution which is likely to be affected. Relevant bodies

should pay particular attention to the impact of the proposals on vulnerable groups, including children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)².

Relevant bodies **should** also consider the ability of the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education. This consideration **should** include the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this.³

Where proposals involve the transfer of learners to alternative provision there **should** normally be evidence that the alternative would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners (including learners with SEN). Advice from Estyn might reasonably be used as evidence in relation to alternative provision which is brand new. Proposers **should** ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised.

In assessing the impact of proposals on quality and standards in education and how effectively the curriculum is being delivered, relevant bodies **should** consider any relevant advice from Estyn, refer to the most recent Estyn reports or other evidence derived from performance monitoring, and take into consideration any other generally available information available on a school's effectiveness.

1.4 Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools

Local authorities **must** ensure that there are sufficient schools providing primary and secondary education for their area. Schools are regarded as sufficient if they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education⁴. In order to fulfil these duties, local authorities **must** ensure that they plan thoroughly and engage fully with relevant partners, including the appropriate religious bodies⁵ for schools serving their area which have a designated religious character.

In the light of the above, relevant bodies **should** have regard to the following factors:

Where a school closure⁶, reduction in capacity or age range contraction is proposed:

- whether alternative school-based provision will have sufficient capacity and provide accommodation of at least equivalent quality, for existing and projected pupil numbers;

² The term Special Educational Needs (SEN) may in future be replaced by Additional Needs (AN)

³ Primary legislation sets out the statutory aims of the school curriculum in Wales at section 99 of the Education Act 2002.

⁴ Section 14 of the Education Act 1996.

⁵ An appropriate religious body is, in the case of a Church in Wales or Roman Catholic school, the appropriate diocesan authority, or in the case of other schools, the body representing the religion and religious denomination stated in relation to the school in an order made under section 69(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

⁶ Any reference to 'school closure' included in this document means the discontinuance of a maintained school as set out in section 40 of the 2013 Act.

*In considering proposals relevant bodies **should** have regard to the relevant Building Regulations and associated Building Bulletins, and to the ‘Welsh Government’s circular on ‘Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales’ (Circular No: 021/2011). In addition, the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 set out the standards for school premises, including minimum areas of team game playing fields to which schools **must** have access. Statutory proposals **should** ensure that these standards are met.*

- with reference to the nature of the schools subject to proposals, whether the alternative school-based provision is sufficient to meet existing and projected demand for schools of the same:
 - a. language category as set out in “Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision” Welsh Assembly Government Information document No: 023/2007 or any successor documents; and
 - b. (if relevant) designated religious character.

*Proposals **should** ensure that the balance of school provision reflects the balance of demand. This means that where school provision is being reduced or removed, alternative school provision of the same nature (language category or, if relevant, religious character), wherever possible, **should** remain available and accessible to pupils in the local area. However in some areas it may not be compatible with the cost effective provision of education to continue to maintain access to schools of the same nature.*

*In all cases, existing pupils of compulsory school age at a school where a school closure, reduction in capacity or age range contraction is proposed **must** be able to continue receiving an education in their current language medium. Specific transition arrangements may be necessary in order to achieve this.*

*Where proposals affect schools where Welsh is a medium of instruction (for subjects other than Welsh) for some or all of the time, local authorities **should** carry out a Welsh Language Impact Assessment.*

In all cases local authorities should consider:

- *The extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).*
- *How the proposal would expand or reduce Welsh language provision and in the case of the latter, set out why provision will be reduced.*

In the case of proposed school closures local authorities should consider:

- the nature of journeys to alternative provision and resulting journey times for pupils including SEN pupils; in particular whether primary school pupils will have one-way journeys in excess of 45 minutes or secondary school pupils one way journeys of over an hour.

*Arrangements for accessing the alternative provision should encourage sustainable transport; and **should** address the possible effect of any transport*

*difficulties on pupils' engagement with and attendance at school. Likely walking or cycling routes for safety and accessibility **should** be assessed prior to bringing forward proposals⁷*

Where a new school, increase in capacity or age range expansion is proposed;

- that there is evidence of current or future need/demand in the area for additional places, with reference to the school or proposed school's language category, designated religious character, and the gender intake (i.e. co-educational/single sex);

*The demand for additional provision of any type in an area **should** be assessed and evidenced. (In the case of Welsh medium provision this would include an assessment of the demand for Welsh Medium education conducted in accordance with any regulations made under section 86 of the 2013 Act).*

- whether proposals will improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

1.5 Resourcing of education and other financial implications

It is important that funding for education is cost effective. Relevant bodies **should** take into account the following factors in relation to the resourcing of education:

- What effect proposals will have on surplus places in the area;

Some spare places are necessary to enable schools to cope with fluctuations in numbers of pupils, but excessive numbers of unused places that could be removed mean that resources are tied up unproductively.

*Where there are more than 10% surplus places in an area overall, local authorities **should** review their provision and **should** consider whether to make proposals for their removal if this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of provision. A significant level of surplus provision is defined as 25% or more of a school's capacity (as defined in Circular 21/2011) **and** at least 30 unfilled places.*

Although local authorities are asked to manage excessive surplus places this does not automatically mean closing schools. Sections 1.7 and 1.8 of the Code encourage proposers to look at other options available to them and their schools, for example clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools to increase the school's viability or making use of the existing buildings as a community resource. They are also encouraged to rationalise school space by co-locating services within the school to offset costs.

*It **should not** normally be necessary to provide additional places at schools when there are others of the same type with surplus places within a reasonable distance.*

⁷ The Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance June 2014 Chapter 5.

However, proposals to increase the number of places in response to demand for a particular type of provision, e.g. Welsh medium, may still be appropriate; particularly if effective provision of school places is planned for the local authority area.

- whether proposals form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contribute to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate.

Relevant bodies **should** also take into account the following factors in relation to finance:

- the recurrent costs of proposals over a period of at least 3 years and whether the necessary recurrent funding is available;
- additional transport costs incurred as a result of proposals;

*Proposers **should** take into account the requirement on local authorities to provide free transport provision under the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and **should** seek the advice of the relevant local authority transport department in relation to the impact the proposal might have on associated transport costs and their affordability.*

- the capital costs of proposals and whether the necessary capital funding is available;
- the scale of any projected net savings (taking into account school revenue, transport and capital costs);

*In relation to proposals where substantial upfront capital investment is required (for example to support a substantial remodelling, refurbishment or a new build project), the costs and savings of the proposals **should** be calculated over the lifespan of the relevant building, and compared against the costs and savings associated with the maintenance of the status quo.*

- whether, without the proposals, the schools affected would face budget deficits;
- whether any savings in recurrent costs will be retained in the local authority's local schools' budget; and
- whether the proceeds of sales (capital receipts) of redundant sites are to be made available to meet the costs of the proposal or contribute to the costs of future proposals which will promote effective management of school places.

*In general, local authorities **should** look to recycle assets from any surplus school buildings and sites in their ownership into the overall improvement of their schools estate rather than allocate those proceeds to projects outside the education portfolio, although these decisions ultimately rest with local authorities.*

1.6 Other general factors

Relevant bodies **should** take into account the following general factors:

- what impact proposals will have on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds;
- any equality issues, including those identified through equality impact assessments; and
- whether the school or schools involved are subject to any trust or charitable interests which might be affected by the proposals, for example in relation to the use or disposal of land.

*Proposals which affect charities **must** be consistent with charity law or the stated purpose of the charitable trust.⁸ Advice **should** be sought from the Charity Commission or the Welsh Ministers (as the Principal Regulator of governing bodies which are charities) where there is any uncertainty.*

Under section 82 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 the Welsh Ministers have the power to order modifications of a trust deed. The power is discretionary and Welsh Ministers would ordinarily expect trustees to approach the Charity Commission first.

1.7 Specific factors in the consideration of school closures

The prime purpose of schools is the provision of education and any case for closure **should** be robust and in the best interests of educational provision in the area. Nevertheless, in some areas, a school may also be the main focal point for community activity, and its closure could have implications beyond the issue of the provision of education. This may be a particular feature in rural areas if school buildings are used as a place to provide services to the local community.

The case prepared by those bringing forward proposals **should** show that the impact of closure on the community has been assessed through the production of a **Community Impact Assessment** and how any community facilities currently provided by the school could be maintained.

When considering whether a closure is appropriate, special attention **should** be given to the following:

- whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings, or the reasons for not pursuing this option;

⁸ All foundation and voluntary school governing bodies are charities under section 23 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and community school sites may also be subject to charitable interests.

- whether alternatives to closure, such as clustering, collaboration or federation with other schools, might be considered (taking account of the scope for use of ICT links between school sites) or the reasons for not pursuing these as an alternative;
- whether the possibility of making fuller use of the existing buildings as a community or educational resource could be explored;

(Local authorities **should** consider whether it would be feasible and economical to co-locate local services within the school to offset the costs of maintaining the school);

- the overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community; and
- how parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils; particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities).

Although under the 2013 Act the requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to discontinue small schools with fewer than 10 pupils at the preceding January census point⁹ local authorities and governing bodies bringing forward such proposals **must** still take into account the factors set out in this Code.

1.8 Presumption against the closure of rural schools

This second edition of the Code makes special arrangements in regard to rural schools establishing a procedural presumption against their closure. This requires proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

This does not mean that a rural school will never close but the case for closure must be strong and all viable alternatives to closure must have been conscientiously considered by the proposer, including federation.

Designation of 'rural school' for the purposes of the presumption against closure

A rural school for the purposes of the presumption against closure is identified using the Office for National Statistics' rural and urban classification, as being located within villages in the sparsest context, other (hamlet or dispersed) in sparsest context and other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context

⁹ Section 56 of the 2013 Act defines a 'small school', for the purposes of deciding whether consultation is required, as a school with fewer than 10 registered pupils on the third Tuesday in January immediately preceding the date on which the proposals are made.

A list of schools derived from this classification is attached at annex F. Proposers should refer to the designation and the list of schools to establish whether the proposed closure under consideration concerns a rural school and the procedural presumption against closure applies.

Specific further steps required to be taken by the proposer in formulating a rural school proposal

As well as taking into account the factors in chapter 1 (paragraphs 1.3 to 1.6) which are relevant in the case of all proposals the proposer is required to follow the further steps below where the proposal relates to the possible closure of a rural school.

Formulating the proposal

Where the proposer is considering formulating a proposal to close a rural school, the proposer must clearly identify the reasons for formulating the proposal. This will be the key challenges which the school faces and the proposer wishes to address by proposing closure of the school.

The proposer is required to consider these reasons when making their decision on a proposal or any reasonable alternatives, so it is important that they are as clear and specific as possible. For example, reasons might relate to a falling school roll, difficulties delivering the curriculum or concerns about the school building.

Rather than simply stating that the school is no longer viable, the proposer should carefully consider and set out the reasons why it considers the school is no longer viable.

Identifying reasonable alternatives

The proposer must identify any reasonable alternatives to the proposal which might also address the reason for formulating the proposal. It is important to ensure that all reasonable alternatives identified are properly explored **before** the proposer decides to proceed to consult on closure.

The aim is to ensure that when an option to close a rural school is proposed, the decision to consult on that option is only taken after very careful consideration, and after all other reasonable alternatives have been considered and a clear assessment undertaken of their merits and viability.

Federation has been shown to have particular benefits for rural schools. Proposers **must** show how they have considered federation as an alternative to closure of a rural school.

Schools are major public and community assets; it is important that their future is considered not just from an education perspective, but across the full range of a local authority's responsibilities. Consideration of alternatives to closure could include whether there is scope for the school to be better integrated into a local authority's wider asset management and community planning process. This could for example, include building effective links with local community regeneration strategies.

Examples of alternatives to closure that might merit consideration include:

- clustering, collaboration with other schools (taking account of the scope for use of ICT links between school sites);
- Using the school as a 'community hub' to accommodate and support provision of a range of community services, e.g. health, childcare facilities, family and adult learning, community education, sport, recreation, social activity etc.
- Whether it would be feasible and economical to co-locate local services within the school to offset the costs of maintaining the school);
- Whether the establishment of multi-site schools might be considered as a means of retaining buildings:

As with all closure proposals the proposer must prepare a community impact assessment to explore the overall and long term impact on people and the community of the closure of the rural school and the loss of the building as a community facility. Examples of what the proposer **should** consider as part of the Community Impact Assessment are included at Annex C.

Once the proposer has identified all the reasonable alternatives, the proposer **must** assess for each alternative its

- likely impact on Quality and Standards in Education;
- likely impact on the community; and
- likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

Preparing a proposal paper for the decision maker

Before determining whether to proceed to consultation in accordance with chapter 3 of this code, the person(s) who determine whether or not a proposal should proceed to consultation must be presented with a paper ("the proposal paper") which, in addition to detailing the general factors in paragraphs 1.3 to 1.6 of Chapter 1 of this Code must also include:

- The reason for the closure proposal
- A list of the reasonable alternatives to closure that have been identified; and
- An assessment of the following for each of reasonable alternatives that has been identified:
 - The likely impact on Quality and Standards in Education.
 - The likely impact on the community.
 - The likely effect of different travelling arrangements;

The proposer should not make a decision as to whether to proceed to consultation until these preliminary requirements have been carried out and unless they are satisfied that implementation is the most appropriate response to address the key challenges identified as the reason for proposing discontinuance of the school.

Although under the 2013 Act the requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to discontinue small schools with fewer than 10 pupils at the preceding January census point¹⁰ local authorities and governing bodies bringing forward such proposals **should** still take into account the factors set out in Chapter 1 of this Code when developing and considering proposals. If the school is on the list of “rural schools” this includes satisfying the requirements set out in 1.8 “*Presumption against the closure of rural schools*”.

1.9 Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to add or remove nursery classes

Relevant bodies **should** take into account the following specific factors:

- the standard of nursery education and the sufficiency of accommodation and facilities offered, both in the classroom and outdoors, and the viability of any school that wishes to add nursery places;
- whether there is a need for additional nursery places in the area;
- the levels of demand for certain types of nursery education e.g. Welsh medium or provision with a religious character;
- the effect of the proposals on other institutions, including private and third sector providers; and
- the extent to which proposals will integrate early years education with childcare services or are consistent with an integrated approach.

1.10 Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to reorganise secondary schools or to add or remove sixth forms

Relevant bodies **should** take into account the following specific factors:

- whether proposals will lead to an improvement in the educational or training achievements of persons who are above compulsory school age but below the age of 19;
- whether proposals will contribute to an appropriate range of relevant courses and qualifications and high quality, employer informed, vocational learning routes targeted at pupils of all abilities, whilst maintaining GCSE, AS/A level and other established courses, as required under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 for 14-19 year old learners;
- whether proposals are likely to lead to increased participation in learning by pupils beyond compulsory school age, taking into account transport issues and costs to the learner and others, the affordability of such costs, and the likelihood of learners being willing to travel;

¹⁰ Section 56 of the 2013 Act defines a ‘small school’, for the purposes of deciding whether consultation is required, as a school with fewer than 10 registered pupils on the third Tuesday in January immediately preceding the date on which the proposals are made..

- the extent to which proposals contribute to the 14-19 agenda taking account of the views of regional 14-19 networks.;
- the effect of proposals on 11-16 provision in schools;
- how proposals would affect the viability of institutions already providing good-quality post-16 provision, including school sixth forms, Further Education Institutions and private training organisations;
- how proposals might affect the sustainability or enhancement of Welsh medium provision in the regional 14-19 network and wider area and promote access to availability of Welsh medium courses in post-16 education;
- the extent to which proposals will provide additional learner benefits compared with the status quo and other tenable options for post-16 organisation; and
- how proposals might affect the discretionary transport provision a local authority may provide to learners¹¹ above compulsory school age.

1.11 Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to increase provision in voluntary schools or establish a new voluntary school

Relevant bodies **should** take into account whether:

- the local authority has confirmed that it will meet its liability to maintain the school;
- the governing body of a voluntary aided school will be able to meet its financial responsibilities for repairs and capital work; and
- the proposed land tenure arrangements give the school sufficient security of occupation of the site.

Where land tenure arrangements are not settled those determining proposals might indicate that they are minded to approve the proposals subject to satisfactory resolution of those issues. Such a decision could be appropriate where the promoters are unwilling to incur legal expenses to resolve the tenure issue until they know that there is a strong likelihood that the proposals will be approved.

¹¹ Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 gives a local authority the power to provide discretionary transport where they think fit to facilitate the travel of learners. Paragraphs 1.98 – 1.105 of the Welsh Government Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 provide further guidance on this provision.

1.12 Specific factors in the consideration of proposals for the change of language medium

Relevant bodies **should** take into account the following specific factors:

- the extent to which existing provision by the local authority of education in the medium of English and/or Welsh exceeds or falls short of demand or projected demand from parents for that type of provision, and the contribution the proposal would make to remedying that situation.
- the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in a local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

1.13 Specific factors in the consideration of proposals for the change of school category

Relevant bodies **should** take into account the following specific factors:

- all categories of school - community, foundation, voluntary controlled or voluntary aided - are of equal status;
- all permissible proposals to change the category of a school will be considered on their individual merits¹² ; and
- whether any benefits can be identified.

*Changing category has the potential to cause disruption to the running of the school and/or place added burdens on the governing body and/or add complexity to school reorganisation or admissions. Therefore, there **should** be a presumption against changes where benefits cannot be identified.*

- Whether any trust deed relating to the school allows for the change of category proposed. If there is any doubt, or if a variation in the trust deed is clearly necessary, proposers **should** make early contact with the Charity Commission.

1.14 Additional factors to be taken into account in preparing, publishing, approving or determining proposals for the reorganisation of SEN provision

Policies and principles

The principles and plans set out elsewhere in this Code **should** be taken into account in the consideration of proposals for the reorganisation of maintained special schools and specialist resource bases in mainstream schools.

¹² Schools are not permitted to change their category to foundation and schools with a religious character may not become community schools.

Relevant bodies **should** consider how proposals fit with the local authority's plans for promoting inclusion (i.e. providing for a higher proportion of pupils with SEN to attend mainstream settings) wherever that is appropriate in meeting a child or young person's individual needs, and with its overall strategy for ensuring adequate provision for the full range of SEN.

Relevant bodies **should** have regard to the factors set out below in relation to proposals affecting special schools and specialist resource bases in mainstream schools.

Standards of provision

In addition to the usual considerations in relation to standards of provision, relevant bodies **should** consider:

- whether proposals will improve standards of accommodation for pupils with SEN, including building accessibility;
- how proposals will address any health, safety and welfare issues;
- how proposals, where appropriate, will support increased inclusion; and
- the impact of proposals on other SEN provision within the immediate and wider local authority area including out of county where appropriate.

Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools

In addition to the considerations listed in 1.4, relevant bodies **should** consider:

- whether there is a need for a particular type of SEN provision within the area;
- whether there is surplus SEN provision within the area;
- whether SEN provision would be more effective or efficient if regional provision were made; and
- the impact of proposals on the transportation of learners with SEN.

Other factors

Relevant bodies **should** consider:

- how changes to SEN provision in schools are likely to impact on all other services provided in an area for pupils with disabilities and/or SEN.

1.15 Factors to be taken into account in approving/determining school organisation proposals

When approving proposals, relevant bodies who are the proposer:

- **must** consider whether there are any other related proposals;
- **must** ensure that the statutory consultation has been conducted in accordance with this Code (the requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to discontinue a school which is a small school);
- **must** ensure that the proposal has been published in accordance with this Code and the notice contains all the required information;
- **must** consider the consultation document and consultation report;
- **must** consider the objections and the objection report and any responses to the notice supporting the proposals;
- **should** consider, in the case of a proposal to change the category of a school, whether, there are any benefits. If no benefits can be identified, such proposals **should not** be approved; and
- **must not** approve change of category proposals where a variation in the trust deed is necessary but has not yet taken place.

When determining proposals relevant bodies:

- **must** consider whether there are any other related proposals;
- **must** consider the extent to which the statutory consultation has been conducted in accordance with this Code (the requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to discontinue a school which is a small school);
- **must** consider the extent to which the proposal has been published in accordance with this Code and whether the notice contains all the required information;
- **must** consider the consultation document and consultation report;
- **must** consider the objections and the objection report and any responses to the notice supporting the proposals;
- **should** consider, in the case of a proposal to change the category of a school, whether, there are any benefits. If no benefits can be identified, such proposals **should not** be approved; and
- **must not** approve change of category proposals where a variation in the trust deed is necessary but has not yet taken place.

2. Changes that require proposals

Statutory procedures are usually necessary to make significant changes to schools. The procedures are designed to enable changes to be made where they are considered necessary, but in a way which protects the interests of learners and allows interested parties the opportunity to have their say in the process.

2.1 Elements of school reorganisation that require the publication of proposals

Proposals **must** be published for the following elements of school reorganisation:

1. the opening of a maintained school (including a special school);
2. the closing of a maintained school (including a special school);
3. to make a regulated alteration to a maintained school; and
4. to change the category of a maintained school¹³.

2.2 Proposals to change the category of a school

The governing bodies of maintained schools may make proposals to change the category of their school. However, it should be noted that no alteration may be made to a maintained school that changes its designated religious character or causes it to acquire or lose a designated religious character. Community schools are not permitted to have a religious character. It is not possible for voluntary aided, voluntary controlled or foundation schools with a designated religious character to become a community school through a change of category proposal. Similarly community schools cannot become voluntary schools with a designated religious character. No proposals may be made for any category of school to become a foundation school.

2.3 Regulated alterations

Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act describes a number of regulated alterations to maintained schools (including special schools) which must not be carried out unless the relevant local authority and/or the governing body have complied with the requirements imposed by this Code. Although the regulated alterations are described below reference should also be made to Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act.

Regulated alterations to community, foundation, voluntary schools, community special schools and maintained nursery schools

- the transfer of any school to a new site or sites unless a main entrance of the school on its new site or sites would be within 1.609344 kilometres (one mile) of any of a main entrance of the school on its current site or sites;

¹³ Except to foundation – the 2013 Act prohibits schools from changing their category to foundation.

- changing a school (including a special school) from single-sex to mixed or vice-versa. (A school is treated as admitting pupils of one sex only if the admission of pupils of the other sex is limited to pupils over compulsory school age, and does not exceed 25% of the age group in question).

Regulated alterations to community, foundation, voluntary schools, and community special schools

- a change in the age range of a school (including a special school) by a year or more (not including the introduction or discontinuation of part-time or full-time Further Education or changes to provision for pupils over compulsory school age who are repeating a course of education completed before they reached the end of compulsory school age);
- the introduction of, or ending of, sixth form provision at a school;
- the alteration of the medium of instruction of a class of pupils in an age group or groups (including nursery pupils) at a primary school (or primary education in relation to middle or special schools) which falls within the description in column 1 of the table below so that it falls within the description in the corresponding entry in column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
At least 20% but no more than 80% of the teaching is conducted through the medium of English.	An increase or decrease of more than 20% in the teaching which is conducted through the medium of Welsh.
At least 20% but no more than 80% of the teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh.	An increase or decrease of more than 20% in the teaching which is conducted through the medium of English.
More than 80% of the teaching is conducted through the medium of English, and some teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh.	An increase of more than 10% in the teaching which is conducted through the medium of Welsh.
More than 80% of the teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh, and some teaching is conducted through the medium of English.	An increase of more than 10% in the teaching which is conducted through the medium of English.
No teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh.	More than 10% of the teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh.
No teaching is conducted through the medium of English.	More than 10% of the teaching is conducted through the medium of English.
Some teaching is conducted through the medium of English.	No teaching is conducted through the medium of English.
Some teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh.	No teaching is conducted through the medium of Welsh.

- the alteration of the teaching of pupils in a year group at a secondary school (or secondary education in relation to middle or special schools) which falls within the description in column 1 of the table below so that it falls within the description in the corresponding entry in column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
Five or more relevant subjects are taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of Welsh to any pupils.	A decrease by four or more in the number of the relevant subjects taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of Welsh to any pupils.
Five or more relevant subjects are taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of English to any pupils.	A decrease by four or more in the number of the relevant subjects taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of English to any pupils.
Every relevant subject is taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of Welsh to all pupils.	Three or more relevant subjects are taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of English to any pupils.
Every relevant subject is taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of English to all pupils.	Three or more relevant subjects are taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of Welsh to any pupils.
One or more relevant subject is taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of Welsh to any pupils.	No relevant subject is taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of Welsh to any pupils.
One or more relevant subject is taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of English to any pupils.	No relevant subject is taught (wholly or mainly) through the medium of English to any pupils.

(Relevant subjects are defined as any subjects apart from English and Welsh which are taught at a school).

Regulated alterations to community, foundation and voluntary schools

- an enlargement of the premises of a school (excluding nursery and special schools), which would increase the capacity of the school by at least 25% or 200 pupils as compared with the school's capacity on the appropriate date. In determining an increase in capacity all enlargements that have taken place since the appropriate date are to be taken into account together with the proposed enlargement. The "appropriate date" is the latest date of:
 - the date falling five years before the date on which it is planned to implement the proposals to make the enlargement;
 - the date when the school first admitted pupils;

- the date (or the latest date) when any previous statutory proposals that involved enlarging the premises of the school were implemented. This includes where there has been a previous decrease in a school's capacity in the last five years.

For the purposes of an enlargement of school premises "capacity" is to be determined in accordance with the formulae set out from time to time by the Welsh Ministers (currently Circular No: 21/2011);

A "temporary enlargement" is the enlargement of a school's premises which it is anticipated, at the time of its making, will be in place for fewer than three years.

- the making permanent of a temporary enlargement of the school where that temporary enlargement would have been a regulated alteration when undertaken but for the fact that it was temporary;
- the reduction in the physical capacity of a mainstream school, except where the proposed capacity will be greater than the highest number of pupils on roll at the school at any time in the previous two school years prior to the publication of the proposal. In this context, "capacity" is to be determined in accordance with the formulae set out from time to time by the Welsh Ministers (currently Welsh Government Circular No: 21/2011 Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales)¹⁴;
- the introduction or removal of SEN provision or any change in the type of such provision. This is where the provision is in a mainstream school but the pupils who are admitted are in addition to admission number of the school. The provision **must** also be recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with SEN;
- the introduction or ending of banding arrangements for the admission of pupils into a mainstream school (under section 101 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (the 1998 Act));
- the introduction or ending of boarding, or an increase or decrease in boarding provision in mainstream schools by 50 pupils or 50% of capacity, whichever is the greater;

Regulated alterations to community special schools

- for special schools (except where the school is in a hospital) an increase in the number of pupils for whom the school makes provision which, when taken together with all such previous increases in the number of pupils, would increase the number of pupils by 10% or the relevant number of such pupils (whichever is the lesser). The relevant number is 5 where the school only makes boarding provision, and is 20 in other cases. Any

¹⁴ The effect of this is that where schools have spare capacity that capacity can be removed without the need for a statutory proposal. However, where schools are full or near full, a proposal must be published to reduce the school's capacity.

previous increase in the number of pupils is taken from the appropriate date. The appropriate date is whichever is the latest date of the following:

- 19 January 2012;
 - the date when the school first admitted pupils; and
 - the date (or the latest date) when any previous statutory proposals that involved enlarging the premises of the school were implemented.
- for a special school, the introduction or ending of boarding provision, or the alteration of boarding provision such that the number of pupils for whom provision is made is increased or decreased by 5 pupils;
 - a change in the type of special educational needs for which a special school makes provision;

Regulated alterations to maintained nursery schools

- the enlargement, or making permanent of a temporary enlargement, of the teaching space at a nursery school, by 50% or more;
- the addition or removal of provision (in a nursery school) which is recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with special educational needs, or any change in the type of such provision;
- for a nursery school at which a group of pupils is taught wholly or mainly through the medium of Welsh, an alteration so that all the pupils are taught wholly or mainly through the medium of English;
- for a nursery school at which a group of pupils is taught wholly or mainly through the medium of English, an alteration so that all the pupils are taught wholly or mainly through the medium of Welsh.

2.4 Who can make a proposal?

A local authority may make proposals to:

- establish, discontinue or make a regulated alteration (see 3.3 of Code) to community or maintained nursery schools;
- discontinue a voluntary or foundation school;
- increase or decrease the capacity of a foundation or voluntary school without a religious character.

Governing bodies of foundation or voluntary schools may make proposals to:

- discontinue their school;
- make a regulated alteration to their school.

Any person may make proposals to establish a new voluntary school. However, local authorities **should** work with the relevant religious body when the proposal is to establish a voluntary school with a religious character.

No new foundation school or foundation special school may be established in Wales.

Local authorities may also make proposals to add or remove school sixth forms at voluntary and foundation secondary schools, but only if they have first gained the consent of the Welsh Ministers to do so. Consent **must** be sought by means of a written application that clearly sets out the local authority's rationale for the proposal.

In addition, the 2013 Act provides the Welsh Ministers with the power to make proposals to:

- a) remedy excessive or insufficient provision of school places (where they have already issued a direction to a local authority or governing body to that effect) (section 59);
- b) secure regional provision for special educational needs (where they have already issued a direction to a local authority/local authorities/governing bodies to that effect) (section 68); and
- c) add or remove school sixth forms (section 71) .

3. Consultation

3.1 Principles

Section 48 of the 2013 Act requires that before school organisation proposals are published under sections 41-45, they **must** first be subject to consultation. In addition, proposals published under section 68 by the Welsh Ministers to secure regional provision for special educational needs or published under section 71 to reorganise sixth forms **must** also be subject to prior consultation.

The requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to discontinue a small school¹⁵ made under section 43. However, where a closure proposal relates to a small school with fewer than 10 pupils which is designated as a rural school local authorities and governing bodies bringing forward such proposals **should** still take into account the factors set out in Chapter 1 this Code, including the further requirements which relate to the closure of rural schools set out in 1.8 “*Presumption against the closure of rural schools*”.

Case law has established that the consultation process **should**:

- be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response;
- provide adequate time for consideration and response; and;
- ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.

The process and guidance which follow have been developed with due regard to the principles listed above. Those considering bringing forward proposals will need to be fully aware of this process and guidance. However, proposers **must** be mindful of the four underlying principles and take any necessary additional steps to ensure that those principles are fully upheld.

3.2 Attention to detail

It is essential that proposers seek and achieve high standards both in the information that underpins school consultations and in the consultation documents that are published. These will be examined closely by communities, school staff and parents, and errors in details can easily undermine confidence in a proposal. Failure to provide accurate, high quality consultation documents can result in consultations being abandoned, taking much longer than expected and to increased conflict with communities.

¹⁵ The 2013 Act defines a small school as a school with fewer than 10 registered pupils on the third Tuesday in the January immediately preceding the date on which the proposals are made. This date is chosen as it is the date that all schools in Wales are required to submit the Pupil Level Annual Census to the Welsh Government; this includes the number of pupils on roll.

From time to time proposers will have conducted 'informal' consultation with particular stakeholders at an earlier stage in the development of proposals. Such consultation **must not** be seen as a substitute for any part of the formal consultation processes set out below.

3.3 Procedures

There is no requirement for proposers to hold consultation meetings although there will be circumstances where proposers will consider that meeting with certain groups of consultees will assist greatly in the dissemination of information and provide a suitable platform for the consultees to make their views known.

Proposers may use other ways to engage consultees as they think appropriate. For example, open days or 'drop-in' sessions might provide interested parties with a convenient way to access information seek clarification and provide comments.

In the case of proposals to reorganise schools for which land and/or buildings are held on trust or which have a designated religious character, the proposer **must** conduct consultation with the trustees and/or appropriate religious body before the consultation document is published. The proposer **must** allow 28 days for the receipt of comments and **must** have due regard to those comments before any decision is made to proceed to general consultation.

Where, in the course of consultation, a new option emerges which the proposers decide to pursue, they **must** consult afresh on this option before proceeding to publication.

3.4 Consultation document

Those bringing forward statutory proposals **must** publish a consultation document in hard copy and electronically on their website or that of the relevant local authority. Hard copies **must** be available on request. Consideration **should** be given to publishing in other formats where accessibility might otherwise be an issue.

The consultation document **must** be published on a school day of the school or schools subject to the proposal and consultees **must** be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with at least 20 of these being school days.¹⁶ Consultation documents should not be published on a school day which includes a school session which is devoted (wholly or mainly) to improving teaching standards or management practices of staff at the school (INSET days).

The following **must** be advised by letter or email of the availability of the consultation document and that recipients can, if they wish, obtain a hard copy of the consultation document on request (but see also section 3 on Consultation with Children and Young People):

¹⁶ A school day is defined in section 579 of the Education Act 1996 as any day on which at that school there is a school session. A school session can be a morning session or an afternoon session, so a school day is any day when the school meets for all or part of the day.

- Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools affected by the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school;
- the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- any other local authority (including those in England, where appropriate) likely to be affected - including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it;
- the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located;
- any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the governing body of other schools which the proposer consider are likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the Welsh Ministers*;
- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Estyn;
- teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the relevant Regional Education Consortium;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- any community or town council for the area served by/ intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- in the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school; and

- in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner.

* In the case of the Welsh Ministers emails should be sent to the following Welsh Government mailbox: Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales. It is not necessary to send emails to individual Welsh Ministers.

In the case of all proposals, the consultation document **must** contain the following information:

Description and Benefits

- a detailed description of the status quo setting out its strengths and weaknesses and the reasons why change is considered necessary;
- a detailed description of the proposal or proposals (a proposer may consult on more than one potential proposal), the projected timetable for statutory procedures and for implementation of the proposals and any proposed interim arrangements which might be necessary for their implementation. In describing the proposals, proposers **should** normally refer to them using the terms set out this Code (e.g. school closure) but where two or more existing schools become one school operating on more than one site (e.g. where former infant and junior schools become a primary school) the terms 'merger' or 'amalgamation' might be used;
- the expected benefits of the proposals and disadvantages when compared with the status quo;
- any risks associated with the proposals and any measures required to manage these;
- a description of any alternatives considered and the reasons why these have been discounted (but see para 1.8 "*Presumption against the closure of rural schools*");
- information on any changes to learner travel arrangements were the proposals to be implemented and the impact on accessibility of provision.

Details of affected schools

- the names, locations and categories (i.e. community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation) of all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals (for example, in the case of a proposal to close a school information **should** be provided about all the surrounding schools to which it might reasonably be considered that pupils may wish to transfer);

- the number of pupils on roll currently¹⁷ and the figures recorded for the previous four annual school censuses at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals;
- five year forecasts of pupil rolls at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals both currently (i.e. based on the existing configuration of schools) and if the proposals are implemented;
- the pupil places capacity¹⁸ of all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the number of nursery places at any existing school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- information about the quality of accommodation at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals including reference to the local authority's most recent condition survey using the categories of the original 21st Century Schools Survey;
- the language medium of all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals (using the Welsh Government Circular 23/2007 "Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision").

Quality and standards in education

- an analysis of the likely impact of the proposals on the quality of the following (reference to relevant Estyn five inspection areas are included in brackets):
 - a) standards (standards and progress overall, of specific groups and in skills); wellbeing and attitudes to learning;
 - b) teaching and learning experiences (quality of teaching, the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and the provision of skills);
 - c) care support and guidance (tracking, monitoring and the provision of learning support, personal development and safeguarding); and
 - d) leadership and management (quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self evaluation processes and improvement planning, professional learning, and use of resources)

at the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals and at any other school or educational institution which is likely to be affected.

- information from the most recent Estyn reports for each school likely to be affected;
- the likely impact of the proposals on the ability of school or schools which are the subject of the proposals or any other school which is likely to be

¹⁷ For primary schools, the number of nursery pupils should be shown separately and excluded from forecasts.

¹⁸ The Welsh Government Circular 21/2011 "Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales".

affected, to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

- the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
- How the proposal would expand or reduce Welsh language provision. In the case of the latter, set out why provision will be reduced.

Finance

- the financial costs of the proposal and any potential savings (including where appropriate the current costs per pupil and the projected costs upon completion) – capital and recurrent (including school transport and staff costs);
- the sources from which capital funding will be provided;
- how any capital receipts or recurrent costs savings will be deployed;

Land and buildings

- details of any potential transfer or disposal of land or buildings that may need to occur as a result of the proposals.

Consultation details

- details of how people can make their views known including the address to which comments in writing can be made and the deadline for those comments;
- details of how people can ask further questions about the proposals or suggest alternatives to the proposals;
- a statement to the effect that responses to consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal and that objections can only be registered following publication of the notice;
- an explanation of the publication process, the making of objections and determination of published proposals.
- a space for consultees to respond to the consultation
- an opportunity for consultees to register their wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report.

Where proposals involve establishing a new school the following information **must** also be included in the consultation document:

- the new school's:
 - a. proposed admission number and admission arrangements;

- b. age range;
- c. pupil places capacity and/or number of nursery places;
- d. location;
- e. category (i.e. Community, Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled);
- f. language category (as defined by Information document No. 023/2007);
- g. details of the proposed accommodation to include a list of proposed facilities;
- h. in the case of a special educational needs (SEN) resource base in a mainstream school or a special school, information on the special needs of the pupils proposed to be admitted;
- i. home to school transport arrangements (including any transitional arrangements) and the local authority's transport policy.¹⁹

Where proposals involve the closure of a school the following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- details of any alternatives to closure that have been considered and the reasons why these have not been taken forward (but see para 1.8 "*Presumption against the closure of rural schools*"); ;
- the impact of proposals on the local community, the likely impact on staff of schools named in proposals;
- in the case of alternative provision:
 - a. the name and location of the proposed alternative provision;
 - b. a comparison of the quality and standard of education provided at the school from which pupils would be transferred and the proposed alternative school or schools and an outline of any steps necessary in order to ensure that any shortcomings in the latter are addressed;
 - c. admission arrangements at the proposed alternative school;
 - d. a comparison of the quality of accommodation at the school from which pupils would be transferred and at the proposed alternative and an outline of any steps necessary in order to ensure that any shortcomings in the latter are addressed;
 - e. information on any building works necessary to ensure that transferred children can be accommodated at the alternative provision;
 - f. the impact on pupils' journeys to school and on school transport costs;

¹⁹ Section 3 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 sets a threshold for entitlement for free home to school transport provision at 2 miles or further for primary education and 3 miles or further for compulsory aged secondary school education.

g. information regarding available walking routes to the alternative provision;

h. the language medium at the proposed alternative school.

Where proposals involve the closure of a rural school and the decision has been made to consult on the proposal, the following information **must** be contained in the consultation document along with the information that **must** be contained for all proposals:

- The reason for the closure proposal (i.e. a description of the key challenges that the school faces and the proposer wishes to address);
- The alternatives to closure that have been identified and an assessment of these alternatives to include:
 - the likely impact on quality and standards in education,
 - the likely impact on the community and
 - the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

In addition consultees must be informed of their opportunity to:

- make representations regarding the alternatives to closure that have been identified by the proposer as well as the main proposal;
- suggest other alternatives to closure which would address the reasons for closure (i.e. the key challenges the school faces which the proposer is seeking to address).

Where the proposal concerns adding or removing nursery provision. The following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- the sufficiency of accommodation and facilities offered, both in the classroom and outdoors, and the viability of any school that wishes to add nursery places;
- whether there is a need for additional nursery places in the area;
- the levels of demand for certain types of nursery education e.g. Welsh medium or provision with a religious character;
- the effect of the proposals on other institutions, including private and third sector providers; and
- the extent to which proposals will integrate early years education with childcare services or are consistent with an integrated approach.

Where the proposal concerns adding or removing sixth form provision. The following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- whether proposals will lead to an improvement in the educational or training achievements of persons who are above compulsory school age but below the age of 19 in the area;
- whether proposals will contribute to an appropriate range of relevant courses and qualifications and high quality, employer informed, vocational learning routes targeted at pupils of all abilities, whilst maintaining GCSE, AS/A level and other established courses, as required under the Learning and Skills (Wales) Measure 2009 for 14-19 year old learners;
- whether proposals are likely to lead to increased participation in learning by pupils beyond compulsory school age, taking into account transport issues and costs to the learner and others, the affordability of such costs, and the likelihood of learners being willing to travel;
- the extent to which proposals contribute to the 14-19 agenda taking account of the views of local 14-19 networks and learning partnerships;
- the effect of proposals on 11-16 provision in schools;
- how proposals would affect the viability of institutions already providing good-quality post-16 provision, including school sixth forms, Further Education Institutions and private training organisations;
- how proposals might affect the sustainability or enhancement of Welsh medium provision in the local 14-19 network and wider area and promote access to availability of Welsh medium courses in post-16 education;
- the extent to which proposals will provide additional learner benefits compared with the status quo and other tenable options for post-16 organisation; and
- how proposals might affect the discretionary transport provision a local authority may provide to learners²⁰ above compulsory school age.

Where proposals relate to a special school or involve specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools the following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- the impact on SEN provision;
- how proposals will contribute more generally to enhancing the quality of education and support for children with SEN.

Where the proposal concerns a change of language medium. The following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- projected demand from parents for the type of provision proposed; and

²⁰ Section 6 of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 gives a local authority the power to provide discretionary transport where they think fit to facilitate the travel of learners. Paragraphs 1.98 – 1.105 of the Welsh Government Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014 provides further guidance on this provision.

- the extent to which existing provision, of the type proposed exceeds or falls short of demand or projected demand.

Where any school involved or affected provides teaching through the medium of Welsh the following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- an assessment of the impact of proposal on the Welsh language (a Welsh language impact assessment must be included either in the main part of the consultation document or as an Annex); and
- an explanation of how the proposal forms part of the WESP.

Where the proposal concerns a school with a designated religious character the following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- the impact on availability and access to places at a school with the same designated religious character.

Where the proposal concerns a change of category the following information **must** be included in the consultation document:

- the effect of the change of category on governance arrangements and the governing body's powers over policies and arrangements in respect of admissions, employment and the curriculum; and
- any proposed changes to policies and arrangements in respect of admissions, employment and the curriculum.

In some circumstances, proposers may consider it appropriate to consult on a range of options rather than one specific proposal, but in such cases, all of the information set out above **must** be provided in relation to each of the identified options.

3.5 Consultation with children and young people

Proposers **must** also make suitable arrangements to consult with pupils of any affected school (or part of a school in the case of provision reserved for children with SEN) and, where possible, with children and young people who are likely to attend those schools. As a minimum, this **must** include consultation with the school councils of the affected schools, but **should** also include consultation with individual learners where this is appropriate and practicable. Governing bodies **must** help facilitate this aspect of the consultation.

The information given to children and young people **must** be presented in such a way that it is relevant to their age and level of likely understanding and allows them to reach an informed opinion. The agreed children and young people's participation standards for Wales are available on the Welsh Government's website; proposers **should** refer to these and act in accordance with them.

<https://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/rights/ParticipationforChildrenandYoungPeople/?lang=en>

If consulting with individual learners, proposers **should** produce and distribute a version or versions of the consultation document appropriate to the age/ages of the children and young people affected. The consultation document **should** also clearly explain to children and young people the difference between the consultation and objection periods and how and when they can object to proposals. Where necessary, proposers **should** provide assistance to children and young people who wish to submit a consultation response.

3.6 Consultation reports

The proposer **must** publish a consultation report on their website or that of the relevant local authority. The report **must** be published at least two weeks prior to the publication of a statutory notice:

- summarising each of the issues raised by consultees;
- responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons;
- setting out Estyn's response to the consultation in full; and
- responding to Estyn's response by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons.

The consultation report might also make recommendations – for example, to the local authority's executive or the governing body – about how to proceed i.e. to publish the proposals as consulted on with any appropriate modifications, to abandon the proposals and retain the status quo or to significantly recast the proposals and re-consult.

Proposers **must** ensure that any views expressed by children and young people affected by the proposals are highlighted in the consultation report and that it is accessible to them.

Where the proposal relates to the closure of a rural school in addition to the steps to be taken in respect of the consultation report for all schools the following special requirements apply:

Following the consultation period, when the proposer is reviewing the proposal prior to publication the proposer is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal and each of the alternatives that were set out in the proposal paper. This involves the same matters that the proposer was required to assess in formulating the proposal:

- the likely impact on quality and standards in education,
- the likely impact on the community and
- the likely effect of different travelling arrangements.

The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

In its consultation report, the proposer is required to explain its assessment of the proposal and the reasonable alternatives identified, how this assessment differs from their earlier assessment (if at all) and its assessment of any further reasonable alternatives. Finally, the proposer is required to confirm whether it considers the implementation of the proposal, (wholly or partly) to be the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for the proposal and give reasons for its conclusion.

Although under the 2013 Act the requirement to consult does not apply to proposals to discontinue small schools with fewer than 10 pupils at the preceding January census point²¹ local authorities and governing bodies bringing forward such proposals **should** still take into account the factors set out in Chapter 1 of this Code when developing and considering proposals. If the school is on the list of “rural schools” this includes satisfying the requirements at 1.8 “*Presumption against the closure of rural schools*”.

The consultation report **must** be published electronically, either on the proposer’s website or on the relevant local authority’s website. In addition, hard copies **must** be available on request. This **must** take place before any proposal is published.

The following **must** be advised by letter or email of the availability of the consultation report:

- parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools which are subject to the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school; and
- consultees who had requested notification.
- the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- any other local authority (including, those in England, where appropriate) likely to be affected – including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place statement pupils in it;
- the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located;
- any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the governing body of other schools which the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposals;

²¹ Section 56 of the 2013 Act defines a ‘small school’, for the purposes of deciding whether consultation is required, as a school with fewer than 10 registered pupils on the third Tuesday in January immediately preceding the date on which the proposals are made.

- the Welsh Ministers*;
- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Estyn;
- teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the relevant Regional Education Consortium;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- any community or town council for the area served by/ intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- in the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school; and
- in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner.

* In the case of the Welsh Ministers emails should be sent to the following Welsh Government mailbox: Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales. It is not necessary to send emails to individual Ministers.

Unless proposers have applied for and been granted a time extension by the Welsh Ministers, proposals **must** be published within 26 weeks of the end of the period allowed for consultation responses, otherwise the proposals will lapse and a new consultation document **must** be issued to revive them.

Applications to the Welsh Ministers for a time extension **must** be made in writing before the 26 week period has elapsed and **must** set out the reasons why an extension is considered necessary. In deciding whether to approve an extension, the Welsh Ministers will take into account the reasons given for the application, the nature of the proposals and any other relevant factors. The Welsh Ministers would be unlikely to approve any application which would result in more than a year

elapsing between the end of the period allowed for consultation responses and the publication of a statutory notice.

Statutory proposals are sometimes brought forward as a result of strategic reviews into school provision carried out by local authorities. Whilst it is good practice to consult on such reviews, such consultation **must not** take the place of the formal consultation necessary on individual proposals as required by the Code.

Where the prospective proposers are not a local authority they **should** discuss their intentions with the local authority which would maintain any proposed new or altered provision at an early stage, i.e. before formal consultation commences.

Proposers **should not** refer to the period allowed for objections as the consultation period. The term consultation only applies to the period before final decisions are made to proceed to publish a proposal.

Consultees can submit views either in favour of or against a proposal. Consultees **should** be advised that unfavourable comments made during the consultation period will not be treated as objections and that if they wish to object, that they need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period. If consultees submit a request during the objection period that a response submitted at consultation stage should be treated as an objection, this **should** normally be accepted. Those responsible for publishing proposals **should** make every effort to ensure that those who have expressed opposition or concern during the consultation period are aware that statutory notices have been published.

4. Publication of statutory proposals

4.1 Manner of publication

If the proposer decides to proceed with a proposal they **must** publish the proposal²² by way of a notice (referred to in this Code as a “statutory notice”).

The statutory notice **must** be published on a school day but not on a school day which includes a session which is devoted (wholly or mainly) to improving teaching standards or management practices of staff at the school (INSET days).

The objection period (see 4.2) **must** include 15 school days²³ (in addition to the day on which it is published).

The statutory notice **must** be published:

- i. on the proposer’s website (if it has one);
- ii. on the website of the existing/proposed maintaining local authority, where the local authority is not the proposer;
- iii. by being posted at or near the main entrance to any existing school which is the subject of the proposal, or, if there is more than one main entrance, all of them;
- iv. where a new school is being established, in a conspicuous place in the area to be served by the school;
- v. by providing any school which is the subject of proposals with copies of the notice to distribute to pupils, parents carers and guardians, and staff members (the schools may distribute the notice by email);
- vi. in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school.

Furthermore, on the day that the statutory notice is published, the following **must** be sent either a hard copy of the notice or be emailed a link to the relevant website:

- the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- any other local authority (including, where appropriate, a local authority in England) likely to be affected - including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it;
- the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located;

²² Section 48 2013 Act.

²³ A school day is defined in section 579 of the Education Act 1996 as any day on which at that school there is a school session. A school session can be a morning session or an afternoon session, so a school day is any day when the school meets for all or part of the day.

- any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals
- other schools which the proposers consider are likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the Welsh Ministers*;
- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Estyn;
- teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the relevant Regional Education Consortium;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- any community or town council for the area served by/ intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- in the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school; and
- in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner.

* In the case of the Welsh Ministers emails should be sent to the following Welsh Government mailbox: Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales It is not necessary to send emails to individual Ministers.

It is no longer a requirement to publish the proposal in a newspaper.

4.2 Length of objection period

The 2013 Act provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the proposer before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published ("the objection period").

4.3 Content of published statutory notice

The published statutory notice **must** contain the following information:

- the name of the persons or body publishing the proposal;
- the planned date of implementation (or dates if implementation is to be staged);
- details of how to obtain a copy of the consultation report;
- the date by which objections should be sent and the address to send them to, including the relevant email address.

Additionally

- a statutory notice for a proposal to establish a new school **must** state:
 - the proposed language category of the school as defined by Information Document No: 023/2007;
 - the name of the proposed maintaining local authority;
 - the location of the site of the school (and where appropriate the postal address);
 - whether the school will be single or mixed sex;
 - the age range of the school;
 - the category of the school - community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, community special;
 - whether the governing body or the local authority will be the admission authority;
 - the proposed arrangements for transport of pupils;
 - the admission number for each relevant age group in the first year of implementation or at each stage of implementation - “admission number” is to be determined in accordance with the calculation set out from time to time by the Welsh Ministers (currently contained in the Welsh Government Circular No: 21/2011);
 - the proposed capacity of the school – “capacity” is to be determined in accordance with the formulae set out from time to time by the Welsh Ministers (currently Welsh Government Circular No: 21/2011);
 - for a special school, information on the type of SEN for which provision will be made;
 - whether the school will have a religious character, and if so the nature of that character and the proposed appropriate religious body;
 - whether the admission arrangements of the school will make any provision for selection by ability permitted by section 101 of the School Standards and Framework act 1998 (pupil banding);

- in the case of a new voluntary school, whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local authority or the promoters and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, the extent to which they are to be implemented by each such body.
- A statutory notice for a proposal to alter a school or change its category **must** state:
 - the name and address of the school subject to the proposal;
 - the name of the maintaining local authority;
 - a description of the proposed alteration or change of category;
 - where the alteration involves enlargement, or a reduction in capacity, the current number of pupils, the capacity of the school and the proposed capacity – “capacity” is to be determined in accordance with the formulae set out from time to time by the Welsh Ministers (currently Welsh Government Circular No: 21/2011);
 - the number of pupils to be admitted in each relevant age group in the first year of implementation or at each stage of implementation;
 - in the case of a change in the type of SEN provision, the alternative provision for pupils and the impact on school transport; and
 - any implications the alteration might have on home to school transport provision.
- A statutory notice for a proposal to discontinue a school **must** state:
 - the name and address of school to be closed;
 - the name of the maintaining local authority;
 - the school’s religious character if it has one, and if so, the appropriate religious body;
 - details of the alternative school/s which pupils can attend, including any interim arrangements and the language category of the alternative school/s as defined by Information Document No: 023/2007;
 - details of any measures being taken to increase the number of places available in alternative schools; and
 - arrangements for transport of pupils to alternative schools.

Note: Sometimes a proposal will need to incorporate two separate elements, e.g. a school might transfer to a new site and also be enlarged. In this case two proposals, which can be incorporated into one statutory notice, may be necessary.

Annex B comprises several recommended statutory notice templates which proposers may find helpful in the construction of a statutory notice.

5. Determining proposals (other than proposals made by the Welsh Ministers)

5.1 Objection reports

Under section 49 of the 2013 Act when objections have been received proposers **must** publish a summary of the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections ("the Objection Report"). This **must** take place:

(a) in the case of a local authority that is required to determine its own proposals under section 53 of the Act (see 5.4 below), before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of its determination; and

(b) in all other cases, before the end of 28 days beginning with the end of the objection period.

The Objection Report **must** be published by being posted:

- i. on the proposer's website (if it has one);
- ii. on the website of the existing/proposed maintaining local authority, where this differs from i. above.

In addition, hard copies **must** be made available on request.

The following **must** be advised by letter or email of the availability of the Objection Report:

- Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools which are the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school;
- the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- any other local authority (including, where appropriate, a local authority in England) likely to be affected - including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it;
- the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located;
- any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the governing body of other schools which the proposer consider are likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the Welsh Ministers*;

- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Estyn;
- teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposal;
- the relevant Regional Education Consortium;
- the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- any community or town council for the area served by/ intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected, including Mudiad Meithrin;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People’s Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- in the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school; and
- in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner.

* In the case of the “Welsh Ministers” emails should be sent to the following Welsh Government mailbox: Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales It is not necessary to send emails to individual Ministers.

5.2 Approval by the Welsh Ministers (section 50 of the 2013 Act)

Proposals require approval by the Welsh Ministers under section 50 of the 2013 Act if:

- (a) the proposals affect sixth form education; or
- (b) the proposals have been made by a proposer other than the relevant local authority and an objection has been made by that authority and has not been withdrawn in writing before the end of 28 days beginning with the end of the objection period.

Proposals affect sixth form education if:

- (a) they are proposals to establish or discontinue a school providing education suitable only to the requirements of persons above compulsory school age; or
- (b) they are proposals to make a regulated alteration to a school, the effect of which would be that provision of education suitable to the requirements of persons above compulsory school age at the school increases or decreases.

Where a proposal requires approval by the Welsh Ministers, the proposers **must** notify the Welsh Ministers within 35 days of the end of the objection period and forward to them copies of the statutory objections in addition to the objection report set out at paragraph 5.1. The proposer **must** also send to the Welsh Ministers any proposals which it considers are related to the proposals requiring determination. The Welsh Ministers will then decide whether these other proposals require determination by them.

A proposal shall be regarded as “related” if its implementation (or non-implementation) would prevent or undermine the effective implementation of another proposal. Where proposals are “related”, the decisions should be compatible.

The Welsh Ministers may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposals with modifications.

Modifications would normally only include changes to matters such as the timing of implementation or admission numbers. The Welsh Ministers **must not** make modifications that would in effect substitute a new proposal for the proposal which was published. Before making any modification, the Welsh Ministers **must** first consult with the proposer and the relevant governing body/ies and local authority (where they are not the proposers), and obtain the proposer’s agreement to the modification.

Approvals can be made conditional on a specified event occurring by a specified date.

5.3 Approval by the local authority (section 51 of the 2013 Act)

Proposals published under section 48 require approval under section 51 of the 2013 Act if:

- (a) they do not require approval by the Welsh Ministers;
- (b) they have been made by a proposer other than the relevant local authority; and
- (c) an objection to the proposals has been made and has not been withdrawn in writing before the end of 28 days beginning with the end of the objection period.

Procedures

Where proposals require approval by the local authority, the proposer **must** notify the local authority of a proposal requiring approval and forward to them the documents listed below within 35 days of the end of the objection period:

- a copy of the consultation document;
- a copy of the consultation report;
- a copy of the published notice;
- a copy of the objection report;
- copies of the statutory objections;
- copies of all of the above in relation to any proposals which are related to the proposals requiring approval.

Local authorities **must** decide whether any related proposals sent to them require their approval.

They **must** deal with all proposals which require approval without delay in so far as that is compatible with the proper consideration of the issues. In any event, the local authority **must** issue its decision, within 16 weeks (112 days) beginning with of the end of the objection period. However a failure to comply with that time limit does not affect the validity of any decision reached.

Local authorities **must** decide whether to approve, reject or approve with modifications, the proposals.

Modifications can only include changes to matters related to implementation such as changes to admission numbers or to the timing of implementation. The local authority **must not** make modifications that would, in effect, substitute a new proposal for the proposal which was published. Before making any modification, the local authority **must** first consult with the proposer and obtain their consent to the modification. They **must** also obtain the consent of the Welsh Ministers. If consent cannot be obtained, and the local authority believes that the proposals are not acceptable in their published state, they **must** reject the proposals. The local authority **must** also consult with the governing body of any school to which the proposals relate (where the governing body is not the proposer).

Approvals may be made conditional on a specified event occurring by a specified date.

5.4 Determination by proposers (section 53 of the 2013 Act)

Where proposals do not require approval under section 50 and 51 of the 2013 Act, they fall to be determined by the proposer.

Under section 53 of the 2013 Act, determination by the proposer **must** be made within 16 weeks (112 days) of the end of the objection period. Where the proposer fails to determine the proposal within the period of 16 weeks it is taken to have

withdrawn the proposal and it is required to republish the proposals if it wishes to proceed.

Where a local authority's proposals have received objections, and require determination under section 53 of the 2013 Act, the local authority **must** not approach the determination of these proposals with a closed mind. Objections **must** be conscientiously considered alongside the arguments in respect of the proposals and in the light of the factors set out in section 1.3 – 1.14 of this Code. In these cases the objection report **must** be published at the same time as the decision is issued rather than within 28 days beginning with the end of the objection period.

5.5 Local authority decision making

Where local authorities are required to approve or determine proposals which have received objections, an amendment²⁴ to Schedule 2 to the Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Functions and Responsibilities) (Wales) Regulations 2007 (as amended) permits the local authority's executive to exercise this function. Executives and/or Cabinets are already responsible for overseeing school organisation planning, including decisions to consult on and to publish school organisation proposals and will have a well developed understanding of school organisation issues. This understanding, combined with their more general experience of decision making and the fact that they are democratically accountable to the local electorate, makes executives well placed to decide whether or not contested school organisation proposals should be approved.

However, if they choose to do so, local authorities will not be prevented by Schedule 2 to the relevant regulations from adopting alternative, locally agreed processes for taking such decisions. These might include the formation of a local decision making committee, potentially in collaboration with other local authorities in their region.

Where local authorities choose to follow this route, they will need to consider carefully how they will ensure that such bodies deliver fair and robust decision making.

Annex D provides details of a possible model for a local decision making committee.

²⁴ The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Functions and Responsibilities) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 No.2438 (W. 235).

5.6 Decision notification

Decisions (in relation to proposals which require approval or determination) **must** be made and issued in the form of a decision letter. The decision letter **must** set out clearly the reasons for the decision with reference to sections 1.3 to 1.6 of this Code and the specific factors in sections 1.7 to 1.14 [which includes the additional factors to be considered and requirements in relation to the closure of rural schools].

Additionally a decision letter for a proposal to discontinue a school designated as a rural school must state why the proposer is satisfied that such implementation is the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for formulating the proposal.

Decision letters **must** be published electronically on the proposer's website (if it has one) and that of the relevant local authority (if different).

The following **must** be advised by letter or email of the availability of the decision letter:

- Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools which are the subject of the proposals;
- In the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school;
- the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- any other local authority (including, where appropriate, a local authority in England) likely to be affected - including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it;
- the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located;
- any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the governing body of other schools which the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposals;
- the Welsh Ministers;
- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Estyn;
- teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- the relevant Regional Education Consortium;

- the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- any community or town council for the area served by/ intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin;
- in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- in the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest;
- in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school; and
- in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner.

* In the case of the Welsh Ministers emails should be sent to the following Welsh Government mailbox: Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales It is not necessary to send emails to individual Ministers.

5.7 Referral of local authority decisions to the Welsh Ministers

Under section 54 of the 2013 Act where proposals have been approved or rejected by a local authority the following bodies may, before the end of 28 days beginning with the day of the decision, refer the proposals to the Welsh Ministers for consideration:

- i. Another local authority affected by the proposals;
- ii. The appropriate religious body for any school affected;
- iii. The governing body of a voluntary or foundation school subject to the proposals;
- iv. A trust holding property on behalf of a voluntary or foundation school subject to the proposals; and
- v. A further education institution affected by the proposals.

Referrals should be sent by email to the Welsh Government mailbox schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales. The body referring the decision **should** inform the relevant local authority that a referral has been made.

The body making the referral will need to set out in a letter why they believe that the decision reached by the local authority is wrong.

The Welsh Ministers will decide whether the bodies referred to in i, ii and iv are affected by the proposals and therefore require consideration.

Where a proposal requires consideration by the Welsh Ministers, the local authority **must** provide them, on request, with copies of the statutory objections and any other information considered necessary by the Welsh Ministers.

Where a proposal requires their consideration the Welsh Ministers may decide to approve, reject or approve the proposals with modifications.

Modifications would normally only include changes to matters such as the timing of implementation or admission numbers. The Welsh Ministers **must not** make modifications that would in effect substitute a new proposal for the proposal which was published. Before making any modification, the Welsh Ministers **must** first consult with the proposer and the relevant governing body/ies and local authority (where they are not the proposers), and obtain the proposer's agreement to the modification.

Approvals can be made conditional on a specified event occurring by a specified date.

Proposals to discontinue a small school²⁵ may not be referred to the Welsh Ministers.

²⁵ Under section 54 of the 2013 Act proposals made under section 43 or 44 to discontinue a school which is a small school (see section 56) may not be referred to the Welsh Ministers under this section. Section 56 defines a small school as a school with fewer than 10 registered pupils on the third Tuesday in January immediately preceding the date on which the proposals are made.

6. Implementing proposals

6.1 Implementation – general

Proposals **must** normally be implemented as determined or approved (with or without modifications). Proposers **should** notify the Welsh Ministers by email when a proposal is implemented. Emails should be sent to the following Welsh Government mailbox: Schoolsmanagementdivision3@gov.wales. It is not necessary to send emails to individual Welsh Ministers.

However, under Section 55 of the 2013 Act if a proposer is satisfied, after consultation with any affected governing body, that a proposal would be unreasonably difficult to implement on the original implementation date, or that circumstances have so altered since the proposal was approved that its implementation on the original date was inappropriate, it may modify the proposal so that its implementation is delayed by up to three years.

If a proposer is satisfied, after consultation with any affected governing body, either that implementation of proposals would be unreasonably difficult or that circumstances have so altered since the proposals were approved that their implementation would be inappropriate altogether, it may determine that the proposals should be abandoned.

In the case of proposals to close a school, and after consultation with any affected governing body, a proposer may also determine to bring forward implementation by a period of up to 13 weeks. Implementation **must** only be brought forward where a school has no remaining pupils on roll or so few pupils that delivery of the curriculum is severely compromised.

Where proposals have received approval by the local authority (under section 51 of the 2013 Act) or the Welsh Ministers (under section 50 of the 2013 Act), proposers **must** only make a determination to delay, bring forward or abandon a proposal with the agreement of the Welsh Ministers. Any such application for agreement **must** be made in writing with the proposer's reasons clearly set out.

Where a proposal has been determined by the local authority under section 53 of the 2013 Act the local authority itself may determine to delay, bring forward or abandon the proposal.

Notification of any determination to delay, bring forward or abandon a proposal **must** be given to relevant parties including the Welsh Ministers, Estyn, the maintaining local authority, and the governing bodies, parents, pupils and staff of any affected school, as appropriate, within seven days of it being made. The notification **must** set out, briefly, the reasons for that determination.

If a proposal has been approved by the Welsh Ministers or by a local authority subject to a specified event occurring by a specified date, and that condition is not met by that date, the proposals **must** be considered as rejected unless the proposer has sought and received agreement from the Welsh Ministers or the local authority to have that condition varied by the substitution of a later date.

6.2 Implementation – change of category

Part 3 of Schedule 5 to the 2013 Act sets out full details relating to the transfer of land. Any transfers will take place on the implementation date. Where a community school becomes a voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school, any land other than playing fields held by a local authority transfers automatically to the school's trustees.

Where a foundation, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school without a religious character becomes a community school any publicly funded land transfers automatically to the local authority. Publicly funded land is defined in schedule 4 to the 2013 Act and includes land provided by the local authority or by means of a capital grant (within the meaning of Chapter 6 of Part 3 to the Education Act 1996). Any other land held by trustees or the governing body **must** be transferred to the local authority by means of a transfer agreement to be drawn up by the parties. Such a transfer may be subject to an agreed payment by the local authority. If the parties are unable to reach agreement in relation to a transfer, either party may apply to the Welsh Ministers to exclude the transfer of any area of land. The Welsh Ministers **must** then decide whether or not to direct its exclusion.

7. The closure of a school with fewer than 10 registered pupils

Where a school has fewer than 10 registered pupils (or there are no pupils remaining at a school) at the January census point the 2013 Act permits governing bodies/local authorities to undertake a streamlined procedure to bring about official closure.²⁶

This consists solely of the issue of the notice of closure – the requirement for general consultation being waived, provided sufficient equivalent school places have been identified which would be reasonably accessible to those pupils actually or potentially displaced. If objections are made, the proposal would be determined in all cases by the proposer. However, before bringing forward such proposals, proposers **must** seek the views of any trust with an interest in the school or the appropriate religious body and take these views into account before proceeding.

In the case of schools where some pupils remain, proposers **must** make sure that the closure notice is brought to the pupils' attention, that its meaning is made clear to them, and that appropriate steps are taken to enable these pupils to respond to the notice if they so wish. It is essential that pupils are provided with the opportunity to contribute to the decision making process and proposers **must** ensure that full account is taken of any views they express before a final decision is taken.

Proposers are encouraged to share information with parents and other schools and **should** ensure that they receive a copy of the notice. Any schools identified as those most likely to receive pupils **must** also be notified.

The existence of streamlined procedures in relation to the proposed closure of schools with fewer than 10 registered pupils does not mean that governing bodies or local authorities are required to bring forward closure proposals in relation to such schools.

The possible closure of such schools **should** be considered in the light of the factors set out at section 1. If the school is on the list of "rural schools" this includes considering the factors and satisfying the requirements set out in section 1.8 "*Presumption against the closure of rural schools*" before issuing a closure notice. This means that the proposer should also:

- identify clear and specific reasons for formulating the proposal;
- identify any reasonable alternatives to closure which might also address the reasons for the proposal and provide evidence to show that it has carefully considered all other viable options (including federation), with a clear assessment of the merits and their viability including:
 - ✓ The likely education benefits;
 - ✓ The likely impact on the community;
 - ✓ The likely impact on travelling arrangements; and
- set out in the proposal paper (which is a paper to be presented to the decision maker) the alternatives that have been identified, give an assessment of these and explain why

the proposer considers in the light of the assessment that implementation of the closure proposal would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.

8. Proposals by the Welsh Ministers to rationalise school places

Where the Welsh Ministers have previously directed a local authority or governing body to bring forward proposals to remedy excessive or insufficient school places, they may publish their own proposals to the same effect.

The specific criteria upon which the Welsh Ministers might decide to issue a direction or subsequently publish a proposal would vary depending on the circumstances pertaining to a particular area, but in general terms these are powers of last resort and would be used where a local authority has failed to ensure that:

- their area is served by schools which are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education; or
- each child in their area has reasonable access to one of those schools; or
- funding for education is cost effective and resources are used to secure the best possible educational outcomes for children and young people.

The proposals **must** be published in accordance with the provisions included in Chapter 4 above.

Any person may object to the proposals within the 28 day objection period. If objections are received, the Welsh Ministers **must** cause a local inquiry to be held to consider the proposals. Any other school organisation proposals which have been published and not determined **must** be referred to the local inquiry if the Welsh Ministers believe they are related to the proposal which is the subject to objection (and unless the Welsh Ministers form the opinion that they should be implemented).

The local inquiry **must** be conducted by a person appointed for that purpose by the Welsh Ministers and in accordance with any procedures set out by them at the time of the local inquiry's establishment.

Where a local inquiry has been held, the Welsh Ministers **must** consider the report of the person conducting the local inquiry. They may then do one of the following:

1. adopt with or without modifications, or determine not to adopt any of the proposals made by the Welsh Ministers;
2. approve with or without modifications, or reject any other proposals which are referred to the local inquiry;
3. make further proposals to rationalise school places.

If the Welsh Ministers decide to make further proposals there is no requirement to cause a further local inquiry to be held.

Where these further proposals made by the Welsh Ministers have not been referred to a local inquiry the Welsh Ministers may after considering any objections:

1. adopt the proposal with or without modifications; and
2. determine not to adopt the proposal.

Modifications made by the Welsh Ministers **should** normally extend only to include changes to admission numbers or to the timing of implementation. The Welsh Ministers **must not**

make modifications that would in effect substitute a new proposal for the proposal which was published.

Proposals can be approved or adopted subject to a specified event occurring by a specified date.

Proposals approved or adopted **must** be implemented in accordance with Chapter 6 above.

9. Proposals by the Welsh Ministers for regional provision for special educational needs

Where the Welsh Ministers have previously made an order directing a local authority or a governing body to bring forward school organisation proposals for the purpose of securing regional provision for children with special educational needs, they may publish their own proposals to the same effect.

The proposals **must** be consulted upon in accordance with Chapter 3 above and published in accordance with Chapter 4.

Any person may object to the proposals within the 28 day objection period.

The Welsh Ministers may, after considering any objections;

1. adopt the proposals with or without modification;
2. determine not to adopt the proposals.

Modifications made by the Welsh Ministers **should** normally extend only to include changes to admission numbers or to the timing of implementation. The Welsh Ministers **must not** make modifications that would in effect substitute a new proposal for the proposal which was published.

Proposals can be adopted subject to a specified event occurring by a specified date.

Proposals which are adopted **must** be implemented in accordance with Chapter 6 above.

10. Proposals by the Welsh Ministers to restructure sixth form education

Under section 71 of the 2013 Act, the Welsh Ministers may make proposals for:

1. the establishment by a local authority of a school or schools to provide secondary education suitable to the requirements of sixth formers only (a 'sixth form school');
2. the introduction or ending of sixth form provision at a school, or;
3. the discontinuance of a sixth form school.

The proposals **must** be consulted upon in accordance with Chapter 3 above and published in accordance with Chapter 4.

Any person may object to the proposals within the 28 day objection period.

The Welsh Ministers may, after considering any objections;

1. adopt the proposals with or without modification
2. determine not to adopt the proposals

Modifications made by the Welsh Ministers **should** normally extend only to include changes to admission numbers or to the timing of implementation. The Welsh Ministers **must not** make modifications that would in effect substitute a new proposal for the proposal which was published.

Proposals can be adopted subject to a specified event occurring by a specified date.

Proposals which are adopted **must** be implemented in accordance with Chapter 6 above.

11. Governing body notice to discontinue a foundation or voluntary school

Section 80 of the 2013 Act permits the governing body of a foundation or voluntary school to discontinue the school by giving the Welsh Ministers and the local authority responsible for maintaining the school two years notice of its intention to do so. Before given notice, the governing body **must**:

1. gain the consent of the Welsh Ministers if expenditure has been incurred on the school premises (otherwise than in connection with repairs) by the Welsh Ministers or local authority;
2. consult the Welsh Ministers if discontinuing the school would affect facilities for full time education suitable to requirements of persons over compulsory school age who have not attained the age of 19; and
3. consult the trustees for any land or buildings held on trust and/or the appropriate religious body where the school has a designated religious character and have regard to any comments which are received.

Where governing bodies require advice in relation to property held on charitable trust, they should contact the Charity Commission.

Annex A: Illustrative flow chart for statutory proposals

Step 1

The proposer should refer to the designation of rural schools and the list of rural schools derived from it to establish if a proposed closure involves a rural school and the presumption against closure of rural schools set out in this Code applies.

Step 2

The proposer should refer to section 1 of the School Organisation Code (the Code) which provides the factors to be taken into account in preparing, publishing, approving or determining all school organisation proposals.

Step 3

In the case of proposals to reorganise schools for which land and/or buildings are held on trust, or which have a designated religious character the proposer must consult the trustees and/or appropriate religious body before the consultation is published and allow 28 days for the receipt of comments and must have due regard to those comments before any decision is made to proceed to general consultation.

Step 4

Approval to proceed to formal consultation should be obtained. Where the proposer is the local authority the decision is normally made by the executive committee or cabinet. Where the governing body of a school is the proposer the governing body must make the decision.

Step 5

The proposer must publish a consultation document on its website and make it available in hard copy. If the proposer is other than the local authority the consultation document can also be published on the relevant local authority's website. The consultation document must be published on a school day and consultees must have at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these being school days. Section 3 of the Code sets out the information that all consultation documents and the additional information that consultation documents on proposed closure of rural schools must contain and provides a list of those parties who must be advised of its availability. The proposer must make suitable arrangements to consult with pupils of any school affected.

Step 6

The proposer must publish a summary of the consultee's comments and the proposer's own responses to the comments (the consultation report) at least 2 weeks prior to publishing a notice. Section 3 of the Code provides information about the consultation report and lists the parties that must be advised of its availability.

Step 7

Where the local authority is the proposer normally the executive committee or cabinet meets to consider the consultation and whether or not to proceed with the proposal. Where the governing body of a school is the proposer they should meet to consider the consultation and decide whether or not to proceed. If the decision is to proceed, Step 8 is taken. If a new option emerges during consultation which the proposers wish to consider, then Steps 1-5 are repeated.

Step 8

Proposals must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period allowed for consultation responses, otherwise the proposal will lapse and a new consultation is required.

If the proposer decides to proceed with the proposal the proposer must publish a statutory notice providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice **must** be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period. Section 4 of the Code sets out the information a notice must contain and explains how it must be published.

Step 9a

If there are no objections and the proposal does not require the approval of the Welsh Ministers. Where the proposer is the local authority normally the executive committee or cabinet meets to determine whether or not to proceed. Where the proposer is the governing body of the school the governing body should meet and determine whether or not to proceed.

Step 9b

If objections are received, the proposer **must** publish a summary of the objections and their responses to those objections (the objection report).

Step 10a

If the proposal does not require approval by the Welsh Ministers or the local authority, it **must** receive final determination by proposers within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period.

Step 10b

If the proposal requires determination by the Welsh Ministers, the proposer **must** send to the Welsh Ministers within 35 days of the end of the objection period the objections and the objection report. The Welsh Ministers will

Step 10c

If the proposal requires determination by the local authority, the proposer **must** send to the local authority within 35 days of the end of the objection period the consultation document, the consultation report, the published notice, the objections and the objection

	<p>normally aim to determine proposals within 16 weeks of the end of objection period.</p>	<p>report.</p> <p>The local authority must issue a decision within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period.</p> <p>Within 28 days of the local authority's determination proposals may be referred to the Welsh Ministers by the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Another local authority; ii. The appropriate religious body for any school affected (the diocesan authority); iii. The governing body of a voluntary or foundation school; subject to the proposals iv. A trust holding property on behalf of a voluntary or foundation school; subject to the proposals v. A further education institution affected by the proposals.
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Step 11

If proposals receive approval or the proposer determines to implement them, they **should** be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

Annex B: Examples of statutory notices

Example of a statutory notice to establish a new community or voluntary school

[Insert name and address of those publishing the proposals].

Notice is given in accordance with section 41 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that [*proposer's name*], having consulted such persons as required, propose to establish a new [*state language category*²⁷] school to be maintained by [*state name of maintaining local authority*] at [*state location and, where appropriate, the postal address*] for [*boys*]/ [*girls*] / [*boys and girls*] aged [*insert age range*].

The [*insert name of proposer*] undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response is available on [*insert the proposer's website or if one is not available the relevant local authority's website*].

It is proposed to implement the proposal on [*insert date*]. [*Where implementation is planned in stages, the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented **should** be given*].

The proposed new school will be a [*insert community or voluntary aided or voluntary controlled*] school.

[*insert the governing body or the name of the local authority*] will be the admission authority.

The admission number for [*state the relevant age group or age groups*²⁸] at the new school in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented is [*state number*] [*Where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, the admission number in the first school year in which each stage has been implemented **must** be given*]. [*If there is to be a separate admission number for the sixth form it **should** be included*].

The new school's pupil capacity will be [*insert capacity figure*²⁹]. [*It would also be useful to include the number of nursery places being provided if appropriate*].

[*For a special school, information on the special educational needs of pupils for which provision will be made*].

[*Give information on whether it is proposed that the admission arrangements for the new school will make provision for pupil banding*].

[*In the case of a new voluntary school, give information about its religious character and proposed appropriate religious body if it is to have a religious character*].

²⁷ Proposers should refer to the Welsh Assembly Government information document 23/2007 Defining schools according to Welsh medium provision.

²⁸ A "relevant age" group" is defined in section 142(1) of the 1998 Act as meaning "an age group in which pupils are normally admitted (or, as the case may be, will normally be admitted) to the school". There could, therefore, be more than one relevant age group, in which case the number to be admitted must be given in relation to each such relevant age group.

²⁹ Proposers should refer to the Welsh Government Circular 21/2011 Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales or any successor document.

[Give information about the proposed arrangements for transport of pupils to the new school].

[In the case of proposals to establish a new voluntary school, state whether the proposals are to be implemented by the local education authority or the promoters, and, if the proposals are to be implemented by both, the extent to which they are to be implemented by each such body].

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by *[insert date]* any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to *[name and address of proposer]*.

Signed

For the *[local authority]*.

*[Date – **should** be the same as the date of publication].*

EXPLANATORY NOTE

[It may be useful to include an Explanatory Note explaining the proposals in simple language and providing further information and background to the proposals].

Example of a statutory notice to discontinue a maintained community, foundation, voluntary or nursery school

[Insert name and address of those publishing the proposals].

Notice is given in accordance with section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that *[proposer's name]*, having consulted such persons as required, propose to discontinue *[name and address of school]*. The school is currently maintained by *[state name of maintaining local authority]* *[and if relevant, state school's religious character]*.

The *[insert name of proposer]* undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response is available on *[insert the proposer's website or if one is not available the relevant local authority's website]*.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on *[insert date]* (2).

[Insert details of the schools which pupils at the school to be discontinued may attend, including any interim arrangements and the language category of the alternatives as defined by Information Document No: 023/2007].

[Insert details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance].

[Insert particulars of the proposed arrangement for transport of pupils to other schools].

[Proposals to discontinue a rural school must state the reasons why the proposer is satisfied that such implementation is the most appropriate response to the reasons the proposer identified in formulating the proposal.]

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by *[insert date]* any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to *[name and address of the proposer]*.

Signed

For the *[local authority or governing body]*.

*[Date – **should** be the same as the date of publication].*

EXPLANATORY NOTE

[It may be useful to include an Explanatory Note explaining the proposals in simple language and providing further information and background to the proposals].

Example of a statutory notice to make a regulated alteration to a maintained community, foundation, voluntary or nursery school

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that [*proposer's name*], having consulted such persons as required, proposes to alter [*name and address of school*] so that [*add description of proposed change/s*]. The school/s is/are currently maintained by [*state name of maintaining local authority*].

The [*insert name of proposer*] undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and Estyn's full response is available on [*insert the proposer's website or if one is not available the relevant local authority's website*].

It is proposed to implement the proposal on [*insert date*]. [*Where implementation is planned in stages, the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented **should** be given*].

[*Where the alteration involves enlargement, or a reduction in capacity, insert*] The current number of pupils at the school is [*insert number*], the pupil capacity of the school is [*insert pupil places capacity³⁰*] and the proposed capacity once the proposal is implemented will be [*insert proposed capacity*].

[*Where the alteration involves enlargement or a reduction in capacity insert*] The admission number for [*state the relevant age group or age groups³¹*] at the school in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented will be [*state number*] [*include a separate sixth form number if appropriate*] [*Where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, the admission number in the first school year in which each stage has been implemented **must** be given*]. [*where appropriate*] There will be xx nursery places.

[*Where the alteration involves a change in the type of provision, provide information on the alternative provision for pupils and the impact on school transport*].

Within a period of one 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published, that is to say by [*insert date*] any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to [*name and address of the proposer*].

Signed

For the [*local authority or governing body*].

[*Date – **should** be the same as the date of publication*].

³⁰ Proposers should refer to the Welsh Government Circular 21/2011 Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales or any successor document.

³¹ A "relevant age group" is defined in section 142(1) of the 1998 Act as meaning "an age group in which pupils are normally admitted (or, as the case may be, will normally be admitted) to the school". There could, therefore, be more than one relevant age group, in which case the number to be admitted must be given in relation to each such relevant age group.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

[It may be useful to include an Explanatory Note explaining the proposals in simple language and providing further information and background to the proposals].

Annex C: Community impact and Welsh-medium impact assessments

The Welsh Government takes the view that the requirement for assessments should not be overly burdensome and does not consider that it is necessary to commission such work from external consultants. Local authorities are already under a duty to carry out equality impact assessments which could provide the basis for the impact assessments specified in this guidance.

Community Impact

Impact assessments **should** ideally be included in consultation documents. Whilst these notes do not prescribe what should be included in a community impact assessment, proposers might include the following:

- information on the proportion of pupils from the catchment area that attend the school;
- information on the proportion of pupils from outside the catchment area that attend the school;
- information about any other facilities the school accommodates e.g. youth club/play group;
- information about any other facilities or services the school provides e.g. after school clubs, community library;
- if accommodation, facilities or services are provided by a school, where they would be provided in the event of closure;
- whether other facilities available in the immediate local or wider community will or could be enhanced in the event of a school closure (e.g. improvements to village halls, playgrounds, provision of holiday play schemes);
- information about the facilities and services provided at any alternative school;
- information about the distance and travelling time involved in attending an alternative school of the same language category;
- how parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils (and particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities);
- impact on health and wellbeing e.g. if pupils would be less able to walk or cycle to school;
- Information about any wider implications the changes would have on public transport provisions;
- Information on wider community safety issues.

There are many other considerations that are also likely to be relevant in terms of an impact assessment for a rural school closure for example:

- Whether closure would encourage families with school-age children to leave the community or discourage young families from moving to the community;
- What impact closure might have on other services provided locally, for instance if the school is the only remaining public building in a community;
- Whether, or not, the school is a real hub of community life, used for other purposes – such as public meetings, local events, fetes, surgeries, and other get togethers – which would either cease or be diminished by being required to move elsewhere;
- Whether or not the loss of the school, and potentially families, will have a detrimental effect on the wider economy of the community;
- how parents' and pupils' engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils; particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped to participate in after school activities);
- the overall effect of closure on the local community (including the loss of school based facilities which are used by the local community).

Early engagement and communication with the local community is a good way of establishing and understanding all of the relevant factors.

Welsh language Impact

These notes are not prescriptive or exhaustive but the impact assessment in respect of the Welsh language might include the following:

- information on the language category of the school;
- information on the language category of any alternative school;
- information about standards in the Welsh language in the school and any alternative school;
- information about after school activities which provide additional opportunities to use Welsh in the school and any alternative school (e.g. the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith clubs);
- information about whether the school provides facilities for members of the community to learn Welsh, or undertake activities through the medium of Welsh, and where any alternative facilities could be provided;
- whether it might be appropriate to provide additional after school facilities at any alternative school to further secure standards in the Welsh language;
- how parents' and pupils' engagement with any alternative school and any specific language enhancement it offers could be supported (e.g. how pupils will be helped to participate in activities provided by the Urdd, Mentrau Iaith);
- observations provided by the local authority's Welsh medium education forum (if it has one)³²;
- information on how the proposal fits with the authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and any future actions that will be needed in consequence of the change to continue to comply with the scheme or meet targets in the scheme.

³² The Welsh in Education Strategic Plans and Assessing Demand for Welsh Medium Education (Wales) Regulations 2013 provides a definition of a Welsh medium education forum. However, it should be noted that a local authority is not required to have such a forum.

Annex D: Local decision-making committee

The model set out below represents one potential way of establishing a 'local decision making committee'.

The size of the committee would be significant in shaping its effectiveness. Too large and it would be unwieldy and difficult to establish a consensus. Too small and there might be too little debate and too narrow a perspective. A committee with five members might represent an ideal size.

The make up of the committee will also be important in determining how it is perceived. If the intention is to emphasise its separation from the local authority's executive, it might be necessary to 'disqualify' members of the executive and anyone who has a connection to the local authority, proposer (if different from the local authority) or the school to which the proposals relate, which might raise doubts over their ability to act impartially regarding the proposal.

Providing they are not 'disqualified', local authorities might decide to appoint committees made up of local authority members only, or of persons unconnected with the local authority (including members of another local authority), or of any combination of the two.

Where a school with a designated Church in Wales or Roman Catholic religious character (or which is intended to have such a religious character) is the subject of a proposal, the local authority might invite the Diocesan Board of Education for the relevant diocese of the Church in Wales or the Bishop of the relevant Roman Catholic Church diocese to nominate a representative to be one of the members of the committee. In the case of any other voluntary school with a designated religious character, the person or persons by whom the foundation governors are appointed might be invited to nominate a representative.

Local authorities might want to ensure that at least one member of the committee has direct experience of working in the education sector. An existing or former member of a school's senior management team or an experienced school governor might be suitable in this respect.

In the event that the committee is to be comprised of local authority members only, the local authority might want to consider making it politically balanced in the sense set out at sections 15 and 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The local authority may wish to recruit, train and retain a pool of eligible persons and appoint to a committee as and when required. This would provide a number of advantages including reducing the time needed to set up a committee when required and helping the local authority to ensure potential committee members have sufficient training.

Local authorities could also co-operate to develop shared regional pools. This would increase the potential number of eligible and suitably experienced candidates whilst at the same time providing more opportunities for committee members to gain experience and develop expertise in making school organisation decisions. However, when appointing panels from any such regional pool, local authorities might want to ensure at least some members have specific local knowledge.

The local authority would want to ensure that all committee members receive appropriate training before considering proposals, and that experienced committee members are kept

abreast of any amendments to guidance and are given the opportunity of undertaking refresher training. Training need not be extensive but might look to ensure that committee members are familiar with the guidance contained in the Code and are familiar with the relevant parts of the 2013 Act. Two or more local authorities could collaborate to deliver training which, in addition to possible financial savings, could provide benefits such as the wider sharing of good practice.

It would be advisable for the committee to have the services of a clerk provided by the local authority. Whilst the clerk would not be a member of the committee they might act as an independent source of advice. To enable this, clerks would need a good understanding of the Code and the relevant parts of the 2013 Act and would have received appropriate training. The local authority, where necessary, would need to provide the committee with appropriate legal advice. It would be advisable for the clerk not to have been involved at any stage in the proposal that the committee are considering or to have any interest in any decision reached by the committee members.

The key tasks of the clerk would be to:

- make the necessary administrative arrangements for the committee;
- be an independent source of advice on procedure, the Code and the relevant parts of the 2013 Act;
- record the proceedings, decision and the reasons for it; and
- ensure notification and publication of the decision in accordance with paragraph 5.13.

To enable a committee to reach an informed decision, the local authority would need to forward to the appointed clerk the documents set out paragraph 5.3 above, shortly after of the end of the objection period. It would be advisable for the committee to reach its decision on the basis of this written evidence rather than seek or consider new information (unless they consider it will assist in the determination within the timescale), or consider oral representations.

Annex E: Legislation and national policies which will assist in the development of proposals

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (see below)
- Cymraeg 2050, A Million Welsh Speakers
- Action Plan, Cymraeg 2050
- One Wales: One planet, a new sustainable development scheme for Wales May 2009 or any successor strategy
- Child Poverty Strategy for Wales (issued February 2011 Information document number 95/2011), or any successor strategy
- Faith in Education
- Local plans for economic or housing development
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (made under part 4 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013)
- Children and Young People's Plans (or successor plans)
- 21st Century Schools – Capital Investment Programme and the relevant wave of investment
- Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014
- Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales, Circular No: 021/2011
- Children and Young People's National Participation Standards

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the 2015 Act') sets out new ways of working – of planning and making decisions – for local authorities and other public bodies it lists. The aim is that, by improving these things, the overall well-being of Wales will be better improved by the things public bodies collectively do. The Act and the statutory guidance makes it clear that local authorities must, in the course of their corporate planning and their delivery against those plans:

- balance short term needs against the ability to meet **long term** needs;
- think about the impact their objectives have on other organisations' objectives, and on the well-being of Wales, in an **integrated** way;
- **involve** in those processes people who reflect the diversity of the population they serve;
- work together **collaboratively** with other organisations to better meet each others' objectives; and
- deploy their resources to **prevent** problems from getting worse or from occurring in the first place.

The statutory guidance, for organisations subject to the Act, sets out the expectations for how the duties should be met:

<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

The Act itself is available to view online:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/2/contents/enacted>

Current practice on the use of surplus school accommodation, Information document No 158/2014

Annex F: List of rural schools

School Ref	School Name	Local Authority
6602133	Ysgol Gymuned Bodffordd	Isle of Anglesey
6602135	Ysgol Gymuned Bryngwran	Isle of Anglesey
6602141	Ysgol Gynradd Garreglefn	Isle of Anglesey
6602142	Ysgol Gymuned y Ffridd	Isle of Anglesey
6602145	Ysgol Gymuned Moelfre	Isle of Anglesey
6602146	Ysgol Gynradd Llanbedrgoch	Isle of Anglesey
6602153	Ysgol Gymuned Llanfechell	Isle of Anglesey
6602155	Ysgol Gynradd Llangoed	Isle of Anglesey
6602156	Ysgol Henblas	Isle of Anglesey
6602157	Ysgol Gymuned Llannerch-y-Medd	Isle of Anglesey
6602160	Ysgol Pencarnisiog	Isle of Anglesey
6602162	Ysgol Penysarn	Isle of Anglesey
6602163	Ysgol Santes Gwenfaen	Isle of Anglesey
6602165	Ysgol Gynradd Rhosybol	Isle of Anglesey
6602173	Ysgol Gynradd y Tywyn	Isle of Anglesey
6602227	Ysgol Rhyd y Llan	Isle of Anglesey
6605200	Ysgol Caergeiliog	Isle of Anglesey
6612008	Ysgol Gynradd Abererch	Gwynedd
6612010	Ysgol Beddgelert	Gwynedd
6612015	Ysgol Gynradd Borth-y-Gest	Gwynedd
6612017	Ysgol Brynaerau	Gwynedd
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6612046	Ysgol Gynradd Edern	Gwynedd
6612048	Ysgol Bro Plenydd	Gwynedd
6612049	Ysgol Gynradd Garndolbenmaen	Gwynedd
6612059	Ysgol Gynradd Llanaelhaearn	Gwynedd
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6612066	Ysgol Gynradd Llangybi	Gwynedd
6612070	Ysgol Gynradd Llanllyfni	Gwynedd
6612075	Ysgol Babanod Morfa Nefyn	Gwynedd
6612078	Ysgol Baladeulyn	Gwynedd
6612081	Ysgol Gynradd Nebo	Gwynedd
6612093	Ysgol Gynradd Pentreuchaf	Gwynedd
6612103	Ysgol Sarn Bach	Gwynedd
6612110	Ysgol y Gorlan	Gwynedd
6612111	Ysgol yr Eifl	Gwynedd
6612112	Ysgol Gynradd Tudweiliog	Gwynedd
6612185	Ysgol Gynradd Dyffryn Dulas	Gwynedd
6612189	Ysgol Gynradd Dyffryn Ardudwy	Gwynedd
6612190	Ysgol Bro Cynfal	Gwynedd
6612192	Ysgol Edmwnd Prys	Gwynedd
6612194	Ysgol Gynradd Llanbedr	Gwynedd

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6612211	Ysgol Gynradd Tanygrisiau	Gwynedd
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6612214	Ysgol Bro Tryweryn	Gwynedd
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6612229	Ysgol Bro Llifon	Gwynedd
6613004	Ysgol Pont y Gof	Gwynedd
6613010	Ysgol Foel Gron	Gwynedd
6613018	Ysgol Gynradd Llandwrog	Gwynedd
6613023	Ysgol Gynradd Llanystumdwy	Gwynedd
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6622043	Ysgol Dolwyddelan	Conwy
6622086	Ysgol Penmachno	Conwy
6622107	Ysgol Tal-y-Bont	Conwy
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6622222	Ysgol Capel Garmon	Conwy
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6623340	Ysgol y Plas	Conwy
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6632164	Ysgol Gellifor	Denbighshire
6632168	Ysgol Pentrecelyn	Denbighshire
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6653042	Eyton V.C. School	Wrexham
6653054	Borderbrook V.C. School	Wrexham
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6653347	St Paul's V.A.School	Wrexham
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6662003	Arddleen C.P. School	Powys
6662004	Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Dyffryn Banw	Powys

6662005	Berriew C.P. School	Powys
6662008	Caersws C.P. School	Powys
6662009	Ysgol Gynradd Carno	Powys
6662018	Leighton C.P. School	Powys
6662019	Ysgol Llanbrynmair	Powys
6662020	Llandinam C.P. School	Powys
6662021	Ysgol Gynradd Llanfair Caereinion	Powys
6662033	Meifod C.P. School	Powys
6662041	Ysgol Pontrobert	Powys
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6662051	Buttington Trewern C.P. School	Powys
6662053	Brynhafren C.P. School	Powys
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6662057	Ysgol Gynradd Llanfyllin	Powys
6662058	Ysgol Gynradd Glantwymyn	Powys
6662059	Ysgol Pennant	Powys
6662066	Franksbridge C.P. School	Powys
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6662071	Llanfihangel Rhydithon C.P. School	Powys
6662076	Radnor Valley C.P. School	Powys
6662077	Crossgates C.P. School	Powys
6662084	Ysgol Dolafon	Powys
6662092	Sennybridge C.P. School	Powys
6662115	Cradoc C.P. School	Powys
6662122	Irfon Valley C.P. School	Powys
6662129	Ysgol Rhiw-Bechan	Powys
6662146	Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant C.P. School	Powys
6663000	Llanfechain School	Powys
6663002	Montgomery School	Powys
6663016	Forden School	Powys
6663021	Llandysilio School	Powys
6663022	Castle Caereinion School	Powys
6663026	Gldestry School	Powys
6663031	Newbridge-On-Wye School	Powys
6663033	Clyro School	Powys
6663036	Rhayader School	Powys
6663037	Llanelwedd School	Powys
6663046	Llangedwyn School	Powys
6663301	St. Michael's School	Powys
6663303	Llansantffraid School	Powys
6663316	Llanbedr School	Powys
6663317	Archdeacon Griffiths Primary School	Powys
6665200	Ysgol Gynradd Llanerfyl	Powys
6672284	Ysgol Cilcennin	Ceredigion
6672285	Ysgol Ciliau Parc	Ceredigion

6672288	Ysgol Gynradd Dihewyd	Ceredigion
6672289	Ysgol Felinfach	Ceredigion
6672291	Ysgol Gynradd Llanarth	Ceredigion
6672293	Ysgol Llannon	Ceredigion
6672298	Ysgol Talgarreg	Ceredigion
6672303	Ysgol Comins Coch	Ceredigion
6672308	Ysgol Llanfarian	Ceredigion
6672309	Ysgol Llanfihangel-y-Creuddyn	Ceredigion
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6672312	Ysgol Mynach	Ceredigion
6672313	Ysgol Penllwyn	Ceredigion
6672315	Ysgol Syr John Rhys	Ceredigion
6672316	Ysgol Rhydypennau	Ceredigion
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6672363	Ysgol Penrhyn coch	Ceredigion
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6672369	Ysgol Bro Siôn Cwilt	Ceredigion
6672371	Ysgol T Llew Jones	Ceredigion
6672372	Ysgol Rhos Helyg	Ceredigion
6672373	Ysgol Dyffrfryn Cledlyn	Ceredigion
6673058	Ysgol Myfenydd	Ceredigion
6682209	Ysgol Eglwysrwr	Pembrokeshire
6682223	Ysgol Brynconin	Pembrokeshire
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6682254	Wolfscastle C.P. School	Pembrokeshire
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6682270	Ysgol Croesgoch	Pembrokeshire
6682273	Roch C.P. School	Pembrokeshire
6682384	Coastlands C.P. School	Pembrokeshire
6682385	Ysgol Clydau	Pembrokeshire
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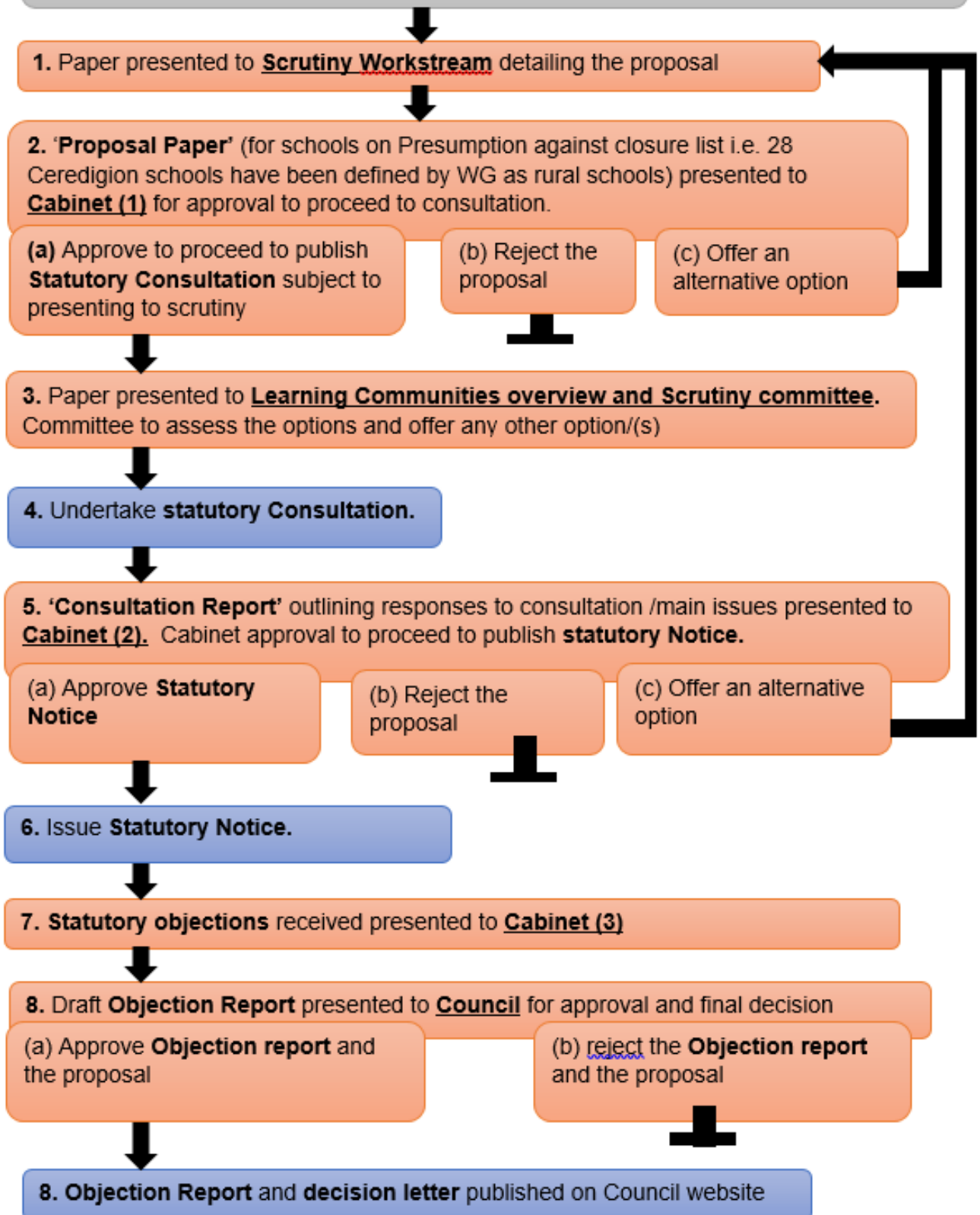
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6683321	St Oswalds School	Pembrokeshire
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6692109	Llanpumsaint School	Carmarthenshire
6692119	Llanmiloe C.P. School	Carmarthenshire
6692166	Ysgol Llansteffan	Carmarthenshire
6692170	Abernant C.P. School	Carmarthenshire
6692180	Beca School	Carmarthenshire
6692182	Ysgol Gynradd Hafodwenog	Carmarthenshire
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6692185	Ysgol y Fro	Carmarthenshire
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6692386	Ysgol Carreg Hirfaen	Carmarthenshire
6692387	Ysgol Cae'r Felin	Carmarthenshire
6692389	Ysgol Bro Brynach	Carmarthenshire
6693000	Abergwili School	Carmarthenshire
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6693013	Ferryside School	Carmarthenshire
6693026	Ysgol Llanllwni	Carmarthenshire
6693307	Penboyr School	Carmarthenshire
6702133	Ysgol Gynradd Felindre	Swansea
6702167	Penclawdd C.P. School	Swansea
6702217	Knelston C.P. School	Swansea
6722275	Tynyrheol C.P. School	Bridgend
6732126	Llancarfan C.P. School	The Vale of Glamorgan
6762108	Fochriw C.P.School	Caerphilly
6792305	Cross Ash C. P. School	Monmouthshire



School Reorganisation Handbook

Date: 15 June 2021

SCENARIO 1: School Review (i.e. closure with alternative provision being existing schools or closure and opening new area school)



SCENARIO 1 – School review (i.e. Closure with alternative provision being existing schools or closure and opening new area school)

Step 1 - Scrutiny School Re-organisation Workstream – this includes a selection of Councillors from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They will consider the proposal in depth prior to being presented to the Scrutiny Committee.

Step 2 – Proposal Paper – The Local Authority is required to prepare a Proposal Paper for all schools on the Presumption against closure list i.e. 28 Ceredigion schools have been defined by WG as rural schools (see Appendix F of WG School Organisation Code*)

The proposal paper must include:

- Quality and standards in education
- Need for places and impact of accessibility of schools (i.e. pupil no.'s and projections)
- Resourcing of education (i.e. surplus places) and financial implications
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Additional Learning Needs
- Ability of the schools to deliver the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and each Key Stage of education
- Community questionnaire
- The reason for closure proposal
- A list of the alternatives to closure that have been identified; and
- An assessment of the following for each of the reasonable alternatives that has been identified:
 - The likely impact on the quality and standards in education
 - The likely impact on the community
 - The likely effect of different travelling arrangements

The proposal paper should be presented to Cabinet and a decision made on whether to proceed to statutory consultation. Cabinet should not make the decision as to whether to proceed to consultation until these preliminary requirements have been carried out and unless they are satisfied that implementation is the most appropriate response to address the key challenges identified as the reason for proposing discontinuance of the school. If Cabinet decide on an alternative option, the Local Authority will need to go back to step 1 and present this 'new' option to the Scrutiny Workstream.

Step 3 - Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – this includes 17 Councillors who will scrutinise the proposal and offer any other options.

Step 4 - Statutory Consultation – this involves the Local Authority publishing a consultation document detailing the proposal. The Consultation document must be published on a school day. Consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with 20 of these being school days. Section 3.4 of the WG's School organisation code* includes a list of all consultees – these must receive a copy of the

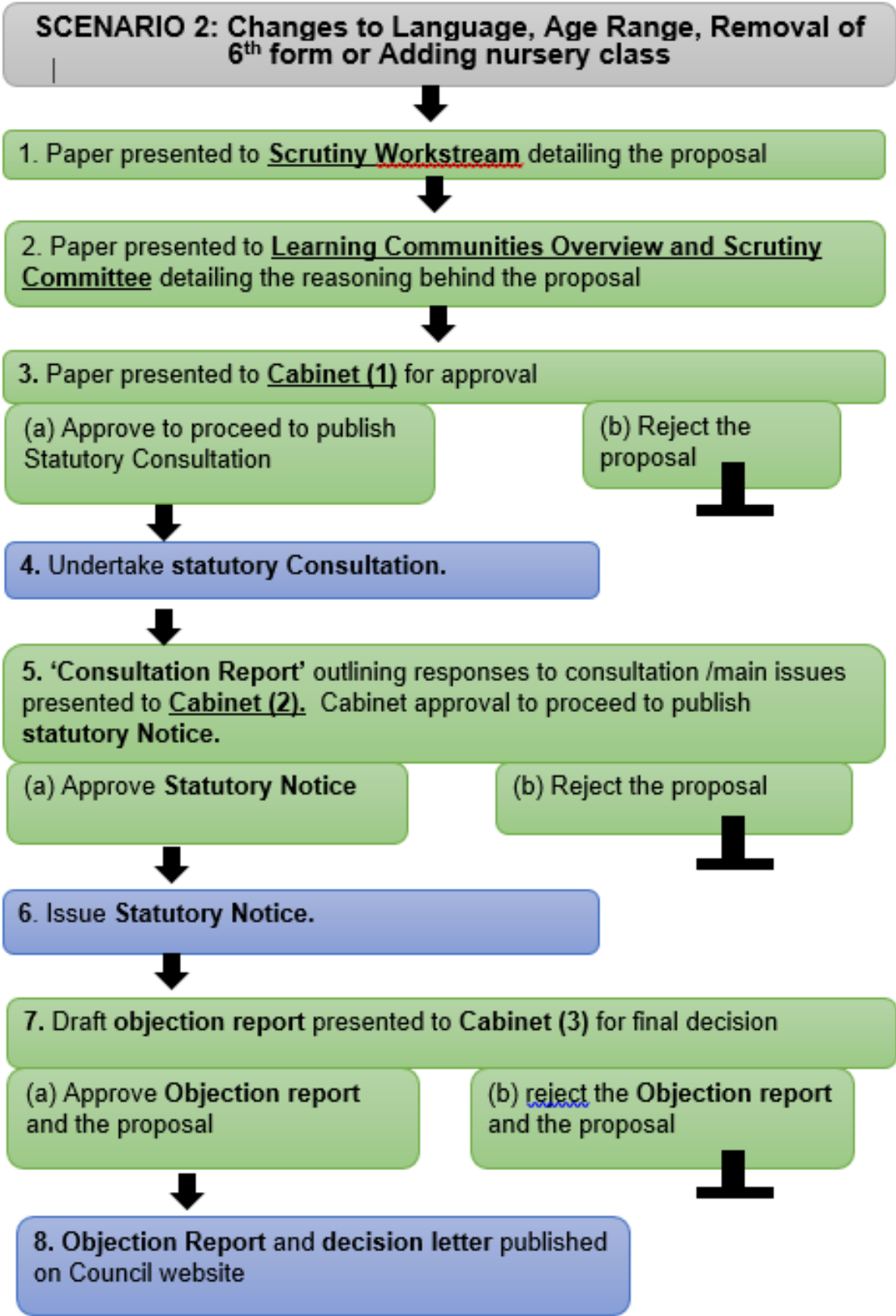
consultation document. This stage must include (as a minimum), consultation with the school Council's of affected schools.

Step 5 - Consultation Report – The Consultation Report must include the main issues raised by consultees and the Local Authority's response to these. This document should be presented to Cabinet and a decision made on whether to proceed with the proposal and issue the statutory notice. If Cabinet decide to offer an alternative option, the Local Authority will need to go back to step 1 and present this 'new' option to the Scrutiny Workstream.

Step 6 - Statutory Notice – If Cabinet makes the decision to proceed with the proposal, the Statutory Notice must be published on a school day. The Objection period must last 28 days, to include 15 school days (in addition to the day on which it was published). Section 4.1 of the WG's School Organisation Code* includes a list of all consultees – these must receive a copy of the Statutory Notice. To be considered as a Statutory Objection, objections must be made in writing or by email and sent to the proposer before the end of the 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published. Content of published statutory Notice is listed in section 4.3 of the WG's School Organisation Code*.

Step 7 - Objection Report to Cabinet – The draft Objection Report must be presented to Cabinet for information only.

Step 8 – Objection Report to Council – The draft Objection Report must be presented to Council for decision (i.e. all 42 Councillors). The Objection Report and decision letter must be published on the Local Authority's website within 7 days of the decision. Section 5.1 of the WG's School Organisation Code* includes a list of those who must be advised of the availability of the Objection Report.



SCENARIO 2 – Changes to Language, Age Range, Removal of 6th form or Adding Nursery class

Step 1 - Scrutiny School Re-organisation Workstream – this includes a selection of Councillors from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They will consider the proposal in depth prior to being presented to the Scrutiny Committee.

Step 2 - Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – this includes 17 Councillors who will scrutinise the proposal prior to making a recommendation to Cabinet.

Step 3 - Cabinet – Cabinet includes 8 Councillors who have the decision making power (the executive). They will need to consider the proposal and Scrutiny's recommendation and will need to decide whether to proceed to statutory consultation.

Step 4 - Statutory Consultation – this involves the Local Authority publishing a consultation document detailing the proposal. The Consultation document must be published on a school day. Consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with 20 of these being school days. Section 3.4 of the WG's School organisation code* includes a list of all consultees – these must receive a copy of the consultation document. This stage must include (as a minimum), consultation with the school Councils of affected schools.

Step 5 - Consultation Report – The Consultation Report must include the main issues raised by consultees and the Local Authority's response to these. This document should be presented to Cabinet and a decision made on whether to proceed with the proposal and issue the statutory notice.

Step 6 - Statutory Notice – If Cabinet makes the decision to proceed with the proposal, the Statutory Notice must be published on a school day. The Objection period must last 28 days, to include 15 school days (in addition to the day on which it was published). Section 4.1 of the WG's School Organisation Code* includes a list of all consultees – these must receive a copy of the Statutory Notice. To be considered as a Statutory Objection, objections must be made in writing or by email and sent to the proposer before the end of the 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published. Content of published statutory Notice is listed in section 4.3 of the WG's School Organisation Code*.

Step 7 & 8 - Objection Report – The draft Objection Report must be presented to Cabinet for approval. The Objection Report and decision letter must be published on the Local Authority's website within 7 days of the decision. Section 5.1 of the WG's School Organisation Code* includes a list of those who must be advised of the availability of the Objection Report.

* Link to Welsh Government School Organisation Code 011/2018:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

DEVELOPING EDUCATION IN CEREDIGION

PLANNING EDUCATION PROVISION TO 2020



January 2009

2005/06

Excellence Wales
Rhagoriaeth Cymru

Tra Chymeradwy - Dysgu Gydd Oes i Bawb
Highly Commended - Lifelong Learning for All



...committed to learning

Mr J E Evans,
*Director of Education
and
Community Services*

Cllr C W Davies
*Cabinet Member with
responsibility for
Education, Culture
and Leisure*

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Developing Education in Ceredigion Plan.

Mission Statement

'To provide and promote knowledge, skills, competencies, experiences, qualifications and attitudes to ensure that the children, young people and adults in Ceredigion fulfill their potential as bilingual individuals and as members of their local and global communities throughout their lives'.

Education Plan 2009-11

In an environment of rapid change and increasing pressures to improve learning standards and opportunities the sustainability of the current provision of education in Ceredigion is being challenged. Given the demands upon headteachers and teachers, rapidly falling rolls in schools and the nature and quality of buildings to meet the requirements of the learning environment in the 21st Century the Ceredigion Education Authority has considered the future provision of education in the county.

The principal purpose of the document is:

- *To identify ways in which the provision of education across Ceredigion will be developed*
- *To establish and implement the programme that will develop education in Ceredigion.*
- *To implement options for the organisation of schools, particularly in the primary sector, in the context of falling pupil rolls and its consequence*
- *To provide a foundation for effective future planning in order to maximize funding which may be available from a variety of sources for capital investment in schools.*

The document provides clarity on the shape of education delivery to the future within Ceredigion. It is also created in conjunction with the policy to review schools in accordance with established criteria. All relevant data on pupil numbers included in this document is based on the January 2008 figures.

The additional document 'Possible Future Options', which remains a discussion document, presents options for provision of education in various localities and offers, where appropriate, progressive stages to reach what is deemed to be the ultimate type of provision by 2020.

It is imperative that it is clearly understood by all stakeholders that **retaining the status quo is no longer sustainable**. There exists an opportunity to build a strong basis not only for current learners but for future generations to come. It calls for vision, boldness and co-operation. The document also recognises the fact that there is no single answer for Ceredigion.

It should be noted that the document primarily focuses upon the primary phase but that is not to preclude the inclusion where appropriate of approaches involving secondary schools. A similar and more detailed consultative document upon secondary education provision - embracing provision for 14 -19 and post 16 education – will also be prepared. However, we are committed to providing education for secondary age pupils in all the six major towns of Ceredigion.

Director of Education and Community Services
Swyddfa'r Sir
Glan y Mor
Aberystwyth
Ceredigion

1: Background and Context

1.1 The future provision of education in Ceredigion supports the principle of providing educational opportunities of the highest quality in order to ensure improvement in learners' achievements, which in Ceredigion are of a high standard.

1.2 Both the Wales Assembly Government and Estyn in recent policies and reviews emphasise the need

- to improve service provision through multi-agency approaches
- to ensure that schools are not only fit for purpose but cater for wider range of community purposes
- to make more effective use of scarce resources by removing surpluses in school
- to consider less rigid learning approaches and restricted curricular demands

Indeed Estyn In "*Transforming schools*" (2004) suggests

"...The narrow institutional interests of all concerned will have to be set aside if a genuinely collaborative and strategic approach to flexible learning pathways is to be built and thrive. Leaders and managers will need to have the vision, energy, skills and capacity to anticipate and respond to rapidly changing needs and be less protective of their current roles and status. ..."

1.3 It is fitting to consider whether the provision of education in Ceredigion at the beginning of the third millennium is sustainable in the context of the needs of the learner in a rapidly changing environment – social, cultural, economic and technological Education has long been cherished within the county and the priority given by the County Council since reorganisation in 1996 re-emphasises the perceived and real importance of education for all learners in Ceredigion.

1.4 It is important to set the background and context against and within which this document is presented.

(i) The nature of the County

1.5 Ceredigion is a rural, agricultural and thinly populated county with some 75,500 people living in an area of 1,800 square kilometres. Only three towns within the County have populations of 2,000 or more – Aberystwyth (13,000), Cardigan (4,000) and Lampeter (2,000). University Colleges are situated in Aberystwyth and Lampeter which attract 9,000 students to the County during the year

1.6. Following a long period of depopulation, over the past few years, there has been a substantial increase in the population Resident population between 1990 and 2000, for example, rose from 66,400 in 1990 to 75,500 in 2000, a rise of 13.7%. This rise has been achieved through net in-migration in the order of 800 persons annually. This has had a considerable impact on a number of rural communities. According to the 1991 census, 60.4% of the population could speak Welsh.

1.7 Agriculture has been the backbone of the County's economy but quite a high proportion of the population is also employed in areas such as public administration. Although the County's unemployment rate is lower than the Welsh average, there are pockets of high unemployment. The County is included within the European Commission's Convergence Grant Category one of the most underprivileged areas of Europe. A segment of the County is designated as an area of deprivation and may attract additional financial support. Over 11% of school children receive free school meals. In some individual schools the percentage exceeds 30% - even in some rural village schools.

(ii) The Education Service

1.8 Ceredigion County Council gives a high priority to the Education Service within the County and that priority is reflected in the budget delegated to schools. For 2007/08 45% of the County Council (Net) Budget was allocated to the Education Service of which 72% was delegated to schools. Approximately 10,003 children aged 4-18 are educated within the County's Schools: 4871 in the primary sector and 5,132 in the secondary sector. (January 2008)

1.9 In the primary sector, even though the County contains some large schools mainly in the more populous areas of Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, Lampeter, Llandysul and Cardigan - the main characteristic of the County's primary education is the large number of small schools.

- There are currently (January 2008) 70 primary schools in the Authority, four of which are voluntary aided denominational foundations – one Catholic located in Aberystwyth and the other Church in Wales in the South of the County.
- Between September 2006 and August 2007 6 primary schools have been closed.
- The LEA supports 8 schools which have nursery units/classes admitting pupils on a part time basis at the beginning of the term following the pupil's 3rd birthday.
- All the remaining 55 schools admit pupils at the beginning of the term following the pupils' 4th birthday.
- The smaller schools are frequently clustered for the purposes of curriculum planning and in-service training. Until September 1999, many primary schools were grouped under one Governing Body. The Education Act 2002 reintroduces the possibility of a number of schools being grouped under one Governing Body.
- They range in size from 10 to 347 pupils. (Jan.2008)
- There are no classes over 30 pupils at KS1 and 1 class only at KS2
- The main characteristic of the County's primary education is the large number of small schools.
- 54 [77%] of Ceredigion's primary schools have fewer than 90 pupils with 48 schools containing fewer than 65 pupils. (Jan. 2008). Ceredigion has a higher percentage of small primary schools than any other county in Wales.
- The level of financial support per pupil provided to very small schools is comparatively high in comparison with other LEAs in Wales.

➤ 1.10 In the Secondary Sector education is provided in 7 comprehensive schools which cater for pupils aged 11-18 years old.

- School sizes range from 359 to 1,354 pupils.
- Two are designated Welsh medium schools.
- The seven secondary schools within the County have sixth forms which provide for pupils aged 16+. 1052 pupils in the County are educated in these sixth forms. The size of these sixth forms varies among schools, from 98 pupils to 215 pupils.
- Each school provides a range of GCSE, A and AS, as well as GNVQ courses but, by and large, this is done independently of each other.

(iii) Pupil Places in the Primary Phase

1.11 The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has emphasised the need to ensure that schools are fit for purpose and set out the target of school premises being made appropriate and adequate by 2010. WAG also requires LEAs to address surplus places – due to falling roles in the primary sector which will gradually impact upon secondary schools.

1.12 Based on the PLASC Return in January 2008 and the revised accommodation formula...there were 4,871 pupils and 6,699 places. Thus there was 27.3% unfilled or "spare" places.

1.13 The conclusions of the District Auditor's report on *Planning School Places in Ceredigion* published in February 1998, highlighted:

- that Ceredigion has the highest percentage of small schools in Wales,
- that the money spent per pupil is much higher in small schools;
- That there is a high number of 'spare places' in Ceredigion schools.

1.14 This has been reinforced in subsequent Audit Commission Reports and the ESTYN Report following the inspection of the Authority's "Access to Education" services in 2005.

"The Council maintains a large number of primary schools in relation to its primary school population....Small schools are necessarily costly to run from day-to-day and to maintain in a condition that supports education of the required quality in the 21st Century." [ACiW]

1.15 In the Annual Letter to the Authority in 2004, the Relationship Manager [From the Wales Audit Office] stresses as one of four recommendations to Members the need:

“Review whether the current level of educational provision in Small schools is sustainable in the long term”. [p4]

It is also stated:

“We consider that the growing spare capacity in primary schools is an increasing risk for the Council as the high cost of running the schools inevitably means that the Council faces difficult choices with regard to the funding of other aspects of its services.” [pp16 and 17]¹

(iv) Strategic Dimensions

1.16 The County Council approaches the establishment and delivery of its policies through a structure of tiered strategic and business plans.

1.17. Ceredigion 2020 is Ceredigion’s main community strategic plan. In addition there are a suite of county strategies which underscore the 2020 vision. They include the County Strategic Plan, the Ceredigion Improvement Plan, the Single Education Plan 2006-2008, the Children and Young People’s Plan 2008 – 2011 and a range of other multi-agency and departmental planning documents.

1.18 Moreover Ceredigion 2020 accords with the Welsh Assembly Government’s main priorities and involves working in harmony with a number of different agencies and partnerships.

1.19 Lifelong Learning is one of the themes within the Community Strategy. Its aim is to ensure that lifelong learning opportunities are available to all in Ceredigion. The Lifelong Learning theme divides into several priorities as follows:

- ‘The Best Start’ – ensuring that every child gets the best possible start in education
- Early Years Education
- Formal Education 5 – 16
- Post-16 provision
- Community Learning provision
- Resources for Learning.

1.20 Investing in our young people is seen as the foundation for aspiring to educational excellence and lifelong learning. At a corporate level lifelong learning is seen as essential for both business excellence and full employment. As well as a long tradition of promoting education in the Council’s work there are two Higher Education Institutions and a College of Further Education, Coleg Ceredigion, in the County which enrich further the many opportunities for learning.

1.21 The Directorate of Education and Community Services emphasises every learner’s achievement and personal fulfillment. However these cannot be taken in isolation from the corporate priority to achieve the following, which are both associated directly or indirectly with access to schools:

- providing learning opportunities of high quality for children, young people and adults within their communities
- safeguarding the future of rural and community schools.

1.22 Ceredigion County Council’s Improvement Plan sets out the way forward for delivering these priorities alongside clear, measurable targets which focus on:

- access to pre-school age education for every 3 year old
- offering learning-based activity clubs in after-school hours
- ensuring that children excluded from schools are educated appropriately.

1.23 The five priorities embodied in the Education Strategic Plan 2002 – 2005 have been further consolidated in the Single Education Plan 2006-08 and the new Children and Young People’s Plan 2008 - 2011 under the following headings:

- Raising standards and improving the performance of schools (Focus on learning/Giving a voice to the learner/Developing Leadership)
- Planning school places (Restructuring to improve learning)
- Community focused schools (Integrating school and community).

(v) Primary Phase Initiatives

1.24 The situation regarding the nature of primary schools within Ceredigion was well recognised. In February 1998, the Education Authority published a consultative document entitled "*The Future of Primary Education in Ceredigion*". The document sought:

1. *To identify the best means of obtaining the highest possible standards of education and the richest possible learning experiences for primary pupils within the resources available.*
2. *To identify the best means of fostering school improvement.*
3. *To ensure quality of opportunity for each pupil within the County.*
4. *To ensure that primary education is provided in the most efficient and cost-effective manner, i.e. that it complies with the principles of "best value".*
5. *To recommend an overall strategy for primary education that will lead us successfully into the next millennium and ensure that Ceredigion has the finest educational achievements in Wales. ..."*

1.25 As a result the Governing Bodies of a number of schools to the south of Aberaeron expressed a wish to discuss the possibility of establishing an area school.

(vi) Review of Schools

1.26 The School Review Policy which was approved by Council in September 2006 and amended in January 2009, will become an integral part of the 'Developing Education in Ceredigion' strategy and will continue to be an ongoing annual process.

1.27 In considering the future of schools the authority has to balance a number of seemingly incompatible objectives:

- Demands for increasing financial support for schools to meet the added pressures on their budgets, while facing tight settlements from Welsh Assembly Government forecasted for the next four years.
- Retaining schools within their communities while facing outside pressures to tackle spare capacity issues.
- Meeting its duty to secure best value while recognising the role and importance that small schools can play in rural communities.
- Ensuring fairness in distribution of resources while accepting that it costs far more on a per pupil basis to operate small schools.
- Make decisions in the context of the overall picture for all children in the County, while respecting the passionate commitment of some communities to maintain the status quo in the face of population decline.
- Initiating change in the best interest of the service, while dealing with the fear of change itself within school communities.

1.28 The fundamental principles of the policy seek to meet these objectives by:

- putting the interests of children first but accepting that change in the way education is provided is inevitable
- supporting small schools to deliver an education that will prepare our children for an ever more complex and competitive world.
- establishing a clear and fair review framework

1.29 A number of trigger points for review have been developed in common with other authorities. If schools meet **two or more** of the trigger points, an early exploration of roll forecasts, changing catchment areas or non-traditional methods of operation will follow - a proactive approach intended to help sustain the school.

Each school will be reviewed if:

- Its school roll has fallen or is forecast to fall below 30 pupils in the next three years.

Schools that fall below 30 pupils will not automatically be considered for closure. The review process offers a proactive approach to support and retain schools wherever possible, and in the discussions a variety of options will be considered in order to endeavour to secure the school's future. The Authority has decided that, if there is a change of leadership in a school with less than 30 pupils, the school should not appoint a new headteacher but establish a federation with neighbouring schools.

However, when pupil numbers fall below 20, closure will be unavoidable except, in certain circumstances, where a school of 16 or more pupils joins a federation with other schools on a formal or informal basis.

If the number of pupils in a school, which is part of a federal arrangement, falls below 20, the review process is deferred for a period of 3 years in order to give the school a chance to recover the required number.

- There are serious deficiencies in the facilities and fabric of the building and site.
These deficiencies are considered serious if they have a detrimental effect on the pupils' education.
- If the school is operating with more than 25% surplus capacity.
- The Governing Body of an individual school or the Governing Bodies of a cluster of school requests a review.

1.30 The School Review Panel met with Governors of 8 primary schools in March and April 2007 and annual reviews continue when schools meet the trigger points.

2: Why develop education provision in Ceredigion?

2.0 A number of issues are critical to appreciate in the considering the development of education in Ceredigion.

(i) Learning

2.1 Focus on improving learning for all, irrespective of background, circumstances, abilities and other differentiating factors is the fundamental priority. Investing in our young people is seen as the foundation for aspiring to educational excellence and lifelong learning.

2.2 Every opportunity should be made to enable learning to take place, using teaching best practice and the most modern and effective resources. Learning should be promoted, facilitated and demonstrated as a continuous formative experience throughout life.

2.3 The development of provision, however, will be a huge undertaking for Ceredigion during the next few years. It is essential given the high percentage of spare places, the number of small primary schools, the decrease in pupil numbers and inadequate buildings. These issues are implicit in the Welsh Assembly's drive towards raising standards, not only of learning and achievement, but also in seeking to provide suitable resources and environments.

(ii) National perspective

2.4 In the seminal document "The Learning Country" the Minister for Lifelong learning at the Welsh Assembly Government indicated that

"... Policies for Life long Learning must reflect prudent use of funding"

One of the priorities would be "...to enable small primary schools – including those which serve rural communities –to form groups under one leadership team and one governing body."

Local Authorities will be expected "...to make significant investments in order to repair, renovate and replace school buildings and all local authorities to have established Asset Management Plans and Capital Investment Programmes in schools ... in order that by 2010 they be in good condition and that they are maintained appropriately".

".. when formulating plans for building new schools or remodelling school buildings and when establishing budgets there will be a need for local authorities ... to ensure that such plans incorporate the future needs of schools..."

"... Local Education Authorities should undertake the leadership role in order to achieve national aims by formulating and implementing local supplementary policies in partnership with their schools"

This and subsequent documents emphasis the need for co-operation between schools including the important transition between primary and secondary schools.

2.5 In the recently published document The Learning Country: Vision into Action, the minister for Lifelong Learning emphasises that Local Authorities must establish strategies and implement plans to reduce significantly spare places and provide evidence that Council resources are being invested in costed asset management plans which support an effective capital programme to improve provision. Authorities not able display strategic approaches and a commitment to achieve the Welsh Assembly Government aims will not attract funding.

(iii) Challenges

2.6 In the Relationship Manager's Annual Letter to the Members of the County Council in 2004 amongst the four recommendations appears the following:

“Review whether the current level of educational provision in small schools is sustainable in the long term”.¹

It is also stated that:

“We consider that the growing spare capacity in primary schools is an increasing risk for the Council as the high cost of running the schools inevitably means that the Council faces difficult choices with regard to the funding of other aspects of its services.”

2.7 The theme reflects the statement in the Audit Commission’s Report on Planning School Places which reiterated in subsequent reports on the issue

“The Council maintains a large number of primary schools in relation to its primary school population....Small schools are necessarily costly to run from day-to-day and to maintain in a condition that supports education of the required quality in the 21st Century”

2.8 The Minister for Lifelong Learning in The Learning Country further exhorts Local Authorities to address the issue of small primary schools and proposed

*“to support innovatory approaches in small school and in rural schools
In response to the falling numbers of school aged children”*

and

“to formulate legislation which will enable Governing Bodies to co-operate or amalgamate from September 2004 onwards.”

(iv) Initiatives and influences

2.9 Any discussion regarding the provision of education premises must be informed by a number of issues:-

- the remodelling of the school workforce as a result of the implementation of the **Teachers’ Workload Agreement** which will impact on the management and organisation of schools. This must also be considered in the context of the delivery of the National Curriculum.
- Headteachers fulfil a significant **management function** whilst, in small schools in particular, accomplishing a considerable teaching commitment. Such demands militate against effective teaching and effective management.
- The implementation of the **“Foundation Phase”** with the greater emphasis upon learning by doing and structured play for 3 to 7 year old pupils requires not only the adoption of a new curricular approach but also will have an impact upon the need to provide adequate facilities in terms of school buildings and premises. The vast majority of our primary schools do not have adequate facilities.
- The increasing demand for **educational facilities** appropriate for current learning practices. Many schools face increasing cost of maintenance and a significant number are no longer adequate to provide for the demands of the National Curriculum.
- In addition the LEA and schools must adopt and implement **Accessibility Policies** in order to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act such that learners with disabilities have access to facilities. The vast majority of schools currently would not comply with the requirements legislation.

(v) An evaluation of key issues

2.10 A number of key matters have informed the process of preparing the School Organisation Plan 2004-09 and Single Education Plan 2006-08 (now superseded by the Children and Young People’s Plan 2008 – 2011).

These included:

- increasing demands on staff.
- despite the importance and financial priority given to education, sustaining school buildings and other educational resources is a substantial challenge
- the need to narrow the curricular and attainment gap between Key Stages 2 and 3.
- the importance of leadership at every level – Council and school (including school governors) to create a clear vision for Ceredigion. Sound leadership is a key to further developments
- the use of resources by the community.
- changes in education provision at 16+.

(vi) Approaches adopted by Ceredigion County Council

2.11 The Council has already responded to the challenges and influences. Among the approaches adopted are:

- The establishment of the Working Group on the Development of Education Provision in Ceredigion charged with establishing a strategy for structuring the education service to 2020.
- The adoption of the Policy for reviewing Schools and the establishment of the School Review Panel.
- The closure of a number of small primary schools due to a reduction in pupil numbers
- The leadership of a number of schools by headteachers of neighbouring schools (Informal federations).
- The approval of the establishment of two area schools and the replacement of another primary school
- Promoting effective transition programmes between Key Stages 2 / 3
- The establishment of Integrated Children's Centres.

2.12 The broad framework for a strategy has emerged and accepted as a result of consultation. Broad actions to implement the strategies within the time-span of the Single Education Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan can be summarised as follows:

- implementing the School Review procedure which was amended January 2009.
- open discussions with Governing Bodies and other interested parties on the options included in the discussion document 'Possible Future Options' (May 2008)
- planning of strategies for six strategic towns/secondary school catchment areas

(vii) Influences for change

Falling pupil rolls and surplus places

2.13 One of the fundamental issues which necessitate change in order to sustain education provision of quality is the fact that the number of children in primary schools has fallen steadily over the past few years and in many areas the downward trend is likely to continue for some years to come. The reality is that declining pupil numbers can threaten the quality of educational, organisational and resource provision. It is likely that the increased emphasis upon pupil-led funding could mean that schools with falling rolls inevitably lose resources.

Integrated Multi-agency approaches

2.14 A period of reform of education and children's services is being embarked upon, moving towards a phase of increased integration of service providers for children and families, offering, learning for all alongside integrated child, youth and family services, whilst at the same time developing partnerships with wider community services.

Capital Investment

2.15 Local Authorities will also need to respond to the challenge set by WAG by preparing and displaying intent and commitment to plan and invest in a programmed approach to reduce surplus places and ensure that school in a reorganized climate are fit for purpose.

3: Vision – The School of the Future

3.1 As stated in *Excellent Schools: A Vision for schools in the 21st Century* (Estyn, 2002),

‘Schools exist for learners and for learning’,

and this must be foremost in the thinking when juggling with the realities of geography, demography and financial resources in order to advance educational provision in Ceredigion.

3.2 It is fundamental that in any consideration of developing education in Ceredigion, that there exists a clear view of:

- (i) **securing an effective foundation for raising standards through:**
 - provision of high quality education
 - provision of high quality leadership and management
 - provision and analysis of relevant data to support self evaluation
 - facilitation of cross-phase co-operation, information transfer and partnership
- (ii) **ensuring best value in terms of providing and deploying appropriate resources through:**
 - provision of highly trained teaching staff
 - engaging parents and families in the support of their children’s learning.
 - development and utilisation of IT as a learning and communication vehicle within and across the community
- (iii) **consolidating and improving provision and enhancing the opportunity to remove school places where it is practicable to do so**

3.3 The *Single Education Plan 2006-08. (SEP) and the Children and Young People’s Plan 2008 – 2011* outlines the various possibilities for greater collaboration between schools. Over a period of time this collaboration could lead the schools / families of schools to become community learning centres. These would offer appropriate learning opportunities for adults and the local community and enable multi-agency integrated provision of services, including child care facilities.

3.4 Below are listed the numerous factors that need to be taken into account in providing opportunities of the highest quality for all learners in the primary schools of the future. These factors include consideration of pupils, staff, management / leadership, parents, language, lifelong learning, site and community.

Pupils

- Provision for pupils from 3 – 11 years
- Junior pupils in classes of not more than 25 pupils with a maximum two year age range.
- Statutory right for access to all areas of the curriculum
- Pupils who are bilingually proficient
- Full members of the bilingual society to which they belong and have pride in the languages, heritage and culture of Ceredigion and Wales.
- Inclusive provision
- Equal opportunities
- Pupils given a greater say in their own education.
- Opportunities for developing independent learning skills / understanding of how to learn.
- Pleasure, success and a commitment to learning
- Safe and supportive environment
- Active learning in the Foundation Phase
- Breakfast clubs and after school clubs
- Opportunities for pupils to express their views on aspects of the life and work of the school. (School Council)
- Opportunities to achieve high levels of health and fitness.

Staff

- All staff have a good understanding of how pupils learn
- Sustain and promote bilingualism
- Commitment to their own professional development opportunities
- Staff are motivated and enjoy a good work / life balance
- Aware of recent research on learning e.g. 'Closing the Gap' and act on findings
- Take part in active research
- Effective use of a range of resources

Management / Leadership (Governors / Head)

- High standard of leadership - commitment to learning, clear vision, monitoring and developing the progress of pupils and staff, contribute to community education..
- Systems which allow adequate non-teaching time for the head-teacher to lead and manage.
- Member of the senior management team with responsibility for developing community links and collaborative working with the external Community Co-ordinator.
- All stakeholders involved in school self evaluation – governors, staff, pupils, parents, authority advisers
- Use and development of ICT for example communication, registration, planning, teaching and learning, pupil tracking
- Provide methods for analysing and interpreting data within a culture of self evaluation.
- Promote effective co-operation and transfer of information between stages.
- Respond effectively to new developments e.g. ICT, sustainability.

Parents

- Understanding of the opportunities for parents in the life and work of the school.
- Opportunities for parents to develop knowledge about the curriculum and the learning process through workshops, meetings and guidelines.
- Opportunities for parents to assist in school activities e.g. reading, preparing displays, use of special skills.
- Close partnership between the pupils, school and parents.
- Parents provided with opportunities for life long learning.

Language

- Promote the Welsh language and culture
- Sustain and promote bilingualism
- Provision of Welsh language classes for adults

Lifelong Learning

- Provision of a variety of day and evening classes
- Provision of a range of activities for pupils and adults
- Establishing clubs e.g. IT Club, photography.

Site

- Site and buildings – child centred
- Site, buildings and resources suitable for education in the 21st century:
 - Staffroom and work room
 - Head-teacher's office
 - Medical room
 - Hall
 - Hard play area
 - Green play area
 - Community facilities during the day
 - Family / Child care facilities
- Adequate internal and external facilities for the Foundation Stage
- Adequate facilities for achieving all areas of the curriculum e.g. music, drama, design and technology, physical education
- Facilities for the uses of IT across all areas of learning
- Environmentally friendly school
- Inclusive school

Community.

- School as a community centre – ‘The school in the community and the community in the school’.
- School developing partnerships in the community
- School resources and facilities available for community use
- Leisure activities available at the local Leisure Centre
- Incorporation of Health Centre to include medical and social services
- Library, Museum, exhibitions
- Older persons’ activities – meals on wheels, visits, meetings.
- Provision of child care facilities
- Promoting safety in the community – in cooperation with police, first aid, road safety
- Sustainable education through Eco School projects
- Promoting healthy lifestyle
- Establishing links with local and national businesses
- International links

3.5 The document **“The Learning Country” (2001)** sets out the Welsh Assembly Government’s commitment to schools being at the heart of their communities:

“We want to see a much closer relationship between schools and the communities they serve. We want schools to act as a community resource – not just in school hours but out of hours and in vacations as well. We see them as being integral to community capacity building – providing a basis for delivering, not just education and training ... but also a range of other services like family support, health and enterprise promotion ...”

3.6 The concept of Community Focused Schools is closely linked with the future development of schools in the county. Whatever organisational model is adopted, informal or formal federations or area schools, the concept of CFS will need to be developed fully in each school unit.

3.7 The development of community focused schools links in with Ceredigion County Council’s strategies and plans as outlined in its Strategy Document ‘Ceredigion 2020’. We believe that the development of community focused schools is important in its own right and are also committed to development that complements and supports other priorities.

3.8 The Ceredigion Community Focused Schools’ Strategy document and WAG Circular No 34/2003: ‘Community Focused Schools’ provide schools with guidance on how to begin and develop existing provision and also consider what additional services or activities they might want to offer their communities.

3.9 Community focused schools will help us to deliver the seven core aims of ‘Rights To Action’:

- *A flying start in life*
- *A comprehensive range of education, training and learning opportunities*
- *The best possible health, free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation*
- *Play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities*
- *Treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised*
- *A safe home and community*
- *Children and young people not disadvantaged by poverty*

Children and Young People: Rights to Action, 2004

3.10 Research has shown that both school and community can be enriched when schools extend their boundaries and, in particular, when school and community engage with each other more fully. The report on the first phase of ‘Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools’ (October 2005) identified key factors that contributed to the success of schools working in challenging circumstances.

The study found that where schools engage with their local community this has a direct impact on pupils’ attainment and raises their aspirations to progress from school to further education, training and employment.

The benefits of community focused schools have been identified as follows:

For pupils and schools:

- higher levels of pupil achievement
- increased pupil motivation and self-esteem
- specialist support to meet pupils' wider needs
- additional facilities and equipment
- enhanced partnership working with the community
- enhanced status for learning in the local community
- reduced pupil disaffection

For families:

- improvements in child behaviour and social skills
- greater availability of specialist support for families
- greater parental involvement in children's learning
- more opportunities for local adult education and family learning.

For communities:

- better access to essential services
- improved local availability of sports, arts and other facilities
- local career development opportunities
- better supervision of children outside school hours
- promotes community cohesion by re-engaging adults (and in particular parents) in learning – reinforcing relationships between school and home helps regenerate and strengthen communities

3.11 The county's strategy will aim to work in a multi-agency context to:

- *support individual or clusters of schools in delivering their core mission – to improve pupils' ability to learn and to support families*
- *provide a range of activities/learning opportunities outside the school day for children, young people, families and adults*
- *provide a range of additional services, opportunities and information for children, young people, families and the wider community*
- *be sustainable schools that consult with their communities, engage in community life, work in partnership with others contributing to community regeneration*
- *ensure equality of opportunity by improving access to learning and other services in local areas based on the Integrated Learning Community model*

3.12 Community Focused Schools in Ceredigion are being developed in the context of:

- the development of the educational provision in the county and
- the development of Integrated Learning Communities in the six areas

3.13 An **Integrated Learning Community** is defined as an area in which:

- schools work in collaboration either in clusters or as an area group
- there is multi agency provision of services, including child care facilities
- there is a range of life long learning activities and opportunities for people in the community.

3.14 This developing structure will help to ensure that family-friendly community learning facilities are accessible locally, in each area, and are available beyond the normal school day. It also supports the concept of a wide range of other support services accessible in each area, particularly for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

3.15 The focus on clusters or areas, as opposed to individual school provision, will ensure that resources are spread equitably across the county and that duplication of provision is avoided. There is an expectation that all schools / clusters will provide a range of community focussed opportunities appropriate to the needs and capacity of the school and the wider community. Throughout the county many schools are already providing

some community services to their pupils, parents and communities including adult education, family learning, out of school hours learning, ICT facilities and sports programmes.

3.16 Schools / Clusters should have a designated individual with responsibility for community focused schools development. Community Focused Schools should feature within the School Development Plan, either as a specific section or within all key areas.

3.17 Community Focused Schools' development should be built in and not bolted on to school priorities. Governing Bodies should take an active role in the development of community focused schools. The LEA will provide support and awareness raising to governing bodies through the governor training programme.

3.18 It is firmly believed that the development of community focused schools is not just a short-lived project or initiative, but a real opportunity for schools and communities to work together in new ways for the future benefit of children, young people and adults.

3.19 It provides schools and their communities with opportunities to:

- develop local quality services responsive to local need
- become Increasingly involved in the decision making process on the provision of those services and the life of neighbourhoods
- to work together to deliver the outcomes for the locality

4: Current position, policies and issues

4.1 Demographic features

4.1.1 There is evidence from national and local sources, (*Population Growth in Ceredigion: Implications for Education Authority Planning* 1997) that the trend to population growth through moderate levels of in-migration will continue in the medium term:

- Ceredigion is included in the Convergence Funding Programme, which has the objective of increasing local prosperity and securing employment.
- Population mobility is continuing to increase and there is a continuing trend of population growth in 'remote and rural' areas which, it has been suggested, is caused by quality of life considerations and helped by changes in patterns of work.
- Ceredigion with the lowest UK crime rates, good public education and low unemployment is an attractive destination for migration for both economic and lifestyle reasons.

Population Projections

4.1.2 Two recent series of population projections cover the period of the School Organisation Plan (2004 – 2009):

National Assembly for Wales Projections.

NAfW has published a series of population projections. However, these are not particularly useful for detailed planning as Authorities have been aggregated into regional groupings, Ceredigion with Powys forming a mid-Wales group. This mid-Wales group is forecast to see the highest population growth in percentage terms.

Local Authority Projections.

The Research and Information Section have updated their population projections for Ceredigion county using 2001 Census data as the starting base population together with new sources of migration data and more recent Government Actuary projections of birth and mortality rates. The scenario modelled assumed net in-migration of +1,000 p.a. (slightly higher than that seen in recent years.) The falling birth rates in the population are mitigated by the net in-migration of children aged under 18 (especially of children of in non-examination ages).

TABLE 2: School age groups- Higher Net In-Migration (ca 1000 persons p.a)
[projected figs rounded to 50]

AGE GROUPS	2001 (Census)	2006	2011	2016
0-4	3485	3200	3300	3550
5-10	5019	4500	4200	4200
11-15	4213	4500	4050	3850
16-17	1725	1800	1850	1600
Total under 18	14442	14,000	13400	13200

Location of Population Growth

4.1.3 Long-term changes in household structure as well as population growth will lead to increased demand for housing in Ceredigion. The housing market is a complex mix of factors, however, it can be assumed that families with school-age children will be more likely to demand single unit dwellings, rather than, for example, older stock converted to flats. In general new, estate developments contain a higher proportion of school age population than other types of housing.

4.1.4 The main towns, Cardigan, Lampeter, Aberaeron, Llandysul, Tregaron but particularly Aberystwyth, will continue to be the main focus of employment and social opportunity, and, therefore, housing demand. Over

the medium term there will be an increased demand in the lower Teifi valley area due to improved road connections to the south.

4.1.5 The main locations of new housing, particularly new estates, will be on sites on the edge of existing towns. However, the strong demand for existing housing and a limited number of suitable sites for new-build, means that Aberystwyth will continue to exert a strong influence on the housing market over a wide area of north Ceredigion.

4.2 Pupil Numbers and Places

4.2.0 Pupil numbers, particularly in primary schools have fallen steadily over the past few years and in many areas the downward trend is likely to continue for some years to come. In a number of Authorities schools below 100 pupils are deemed to be small and unsustainable given the implications for resourcing both financial and in terms of staffing and accommodation.

In its recent document on school transformation Estyn states:

“..Many schools in Wales are in rural areas and many of these are small schools. There is no direct link between how well pupils do and the size of the school they attend. However, the responsibilities and workload demands on teachers in very small schools are considerable and the financial resourcing of these schools is substantial and demanding on limited budgets. [para 60]

Demographic Profile

4.2.1 The Authority has a well defined and continually refined process for anticipating pupil numbers. It is anticipated that by 2012 pupil numbers in the primary phase will decrease by about 8.1% to a total of 4584 whilst in the secondary sector a decrease of almost 13.7%, to 4429, is anticipated. The anticipated total fall of over 1129 pupils (426 primary and 703 secondary) reflects the national trend of substantial reduction in pupil numbers to 2013.

Forecasting pupil Numbers

4.2.2 Forecasting pupil numbers is not an exact science. Further co-operation between County Council Planning Department and Education and Community Services Directorate has assisted in developing forecasting procedures to compile appropriate details with greater accuracy

4.2.3 The process of confirming anticipated pupil numbers has been refined with the collaboration of the Headteachers of Schools.

Spare places

Primary schools

4.2.4 Ceredigion has a high level of spare places in its primary schools as compared with other unitary authorities in Wales In January 2008 58.5% of primary schools have more than 25% of their places unfilled.

4.2.5 The Authority also has the highest percentage of small schools in Wales ('small' being defined as fewer than 90 pupils). The level of financial support per pupil provided to very small schools is high. The Authority needs to question its arrangements for primary school provision, particularly in view of the high level of spare places. Overcrowding in the primary sector is generally not an issue.

4.2.6 The position is likely to be significantly affected by the implementation of the "Foundation Phase" [in respect of pupils aged 3-7 years] curriculum proposed by WAG which will impact on staffing and accommodation requirements. Furthermore WAG is giving consideration to an alternative approach to accounting for school places which again may affect the definition of school capacities.

Secondary Schools

4.2.7 The level of spare places in the secondary sector is not as significant an issue for the Authority as in the primary sector. Compared with other unitary authorities in Wales, levels are not excessive, being in the

median to lower quartile. There is however a high percentage of small secondary schools and also a high percentage of small sixth forms. The Report suggested that the Authority should consider whether it wishes to better target its LMS formula to ensure cost effectiveness in this area. There were no schools with problems of overcrowding in the secondary sector at the time of the audit.

4.2.8 As with the primary phase, the capacity of secondary schools will be affected by the anticipated change in accounting accommodation. In addition the current deliberations relating to 16+ provision and the 14 –19 curriculum are likely to have considerable impact on school places.

Audit Reports

4.2.9 An Auditor’s report concluded that “in view of the high levels of spare places in close proximity, the Authority should consider whether:

- amalgamations of primary schools would be appropriate
- some parts of schools could be put to alternative use.

School capacities and unfilled places

4.2.10 WAG has provided a new approach to calculating capacities. It is important to stress however that the overall picture concerning an above average level of ‘spare places’ masks the fact that a small number of urban schools are oversubscribed.

4.2.11 A review of school capacities, following upon the School Condition Survey, indicates that in a large number of settings it is not practicable to reduce the number of spare places

4.2.12 Below is an outline analysis of spare places in the primary sector. The number of pupils set against the capacity of the school – some well above the proportional threshold of 25% considered by WAG. 9 schools have pupils in excess of capacity.

School capacity	<20	21 - 40	41 - 65	66 - 90	91 - 105	106 - 150	151 - 200	201 - 250	251 - 300	301 - 350	351 - 400	401 - 450	451+	TOTAL	No schools <90 pupils	* schools over subscribed
Number pupils																
< 20		5	2	1										8	54 [77.1%]	
21 – 40		9	14	4										27		7
41 - 65			8	4										12		1
66 – 90				1	2	4								7		
91 – 105				1		2								3		1
106 – 150						2	3							5		
151 – 200							1	2	1	1				5		
201 – 250																
250 – 300																
301 – 350																
351 - 400											3			3		
401 +																
TOTAL		14	24	11	2	8	4	2	1	1	3			70		9
No school capacity <90		49 [70%]														

School size

Primary Phase

4.2.13 Certain Authorities suggest that schools with falling rolls will lose resources and need to take difficult educational decisions. A school’s size is a major factor in determining its cost-effectiveness. It also has a big influence on internal school organisation, particularly whether mixed age classes are necessary. It is further suggested that primary schools of around either 420 pupils (two form entry) or 210 pupils (one form entry) are likely to have sufficient resources to enable them to deliver the primary strategy effectively and fund:

- a broader curriculum and the spread of good practice among teachers
- support staff such as teaching assistants, administrative and SEN support staff to help with workforce remodelling
- enrichment activities for pupils
- ICT and other teaching resources
- SEN provision and counter-measures to deprivation.

4.2.14 As pupil numbers fall decisions have to be taken to attempt to provide adequate resourcing to sustain staff and teaching groups often without resolving the fundamental issues. Indeed WAG and Estyn suggest that schools of below 90 pupils are deemed small and as such present particular problems among which include

- the head teacher having to carry a major teaching load
- limited expertise to cover the full curriculum
- potential volatility because staff changes can have disproportionate and sudden effects

4.2.15 Ceredigion LEA has no defined policy on the appropriate size of primary schools, but deals with each school individually according to the local needs and situation. However it may be appropriate for the Authority to determine a policy when creating a strategy for the future educational provision within the County. Accordingly, approximately 71% of Ceredigion's primary schools are small. This is the highest percentage in Wales.

4.2.16 In considering what may be appropriate models for school organisation within Ceredigion different sizes of schools become apparent:-

- A 3-11 primary school of 90 -100 pupils would provide for with four classes for two age groups in the same class : Nursery/Reception; Years 1 and 2 [the two classes conforming to the Foundation Phase]; Years 3 and 4; Years 5 and 6 [combining as Key Stage 2 or the Junior Phase]. The average class size would be 22.5 to 30 pupils.
- A 3-11 school based on a class for each year group, including nursery provision, would cater for between 180 and 240 pupils
- Another possible model would allow 3 classes across two age groups. This can be organised but certain classes would be of mixed ages. The school could cater for about 260 to 360 pupils.
- The next effective level would be based on a two class entry [*i.e.* two classes in each year] for about 350 to 480 pupils.

4.2.17 This table provides an analysis of school sizes in Ceredigion (January 2008).

<i>Size of Schools</i>	<i>SCHOOLS</i>			<i>PUPILS</i>		
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
<16	4	5.7%	5.7%	52	1.1%	1.1%
16 – 30	18	25.7%	31.4%	440	9.0%	10.1%
31 – 40	13	18.6%	50.0%	466	9.6%	19.7%
41 – 60	11	15.7%	65.7%	546	11.2%	30.9%
61 – 75	5	7.1%	72.9%	340	7.0%	37.9%
76 – 100	5	7.1%	80.0%	449	9.2%	47.1%
101 – 150	6	8.6%	88.6%	773	15.9%	62.9%
151 – 200	5	7.1%	95.7%	842	17.3%	80.2%
200+	3	4.3%	100.0%	963	19.8%	100.0%
TOTAL	70	100	-	4871	100	-

PRIMARY SCHOOL ANALYSIS Jan 2008 : Pupils by area										
Area	No Pupils									Total
	<10	11 ~ 25	26 ~ 40	41 ~ 75	75 ~ 100	101 ~ 150	151 ~ 200	201 ~ 300	301+	
ABERAERON	1	3	6	4	1	~	1	~	~	16
ABERYSTWYTH	-	2	5	4	4	2	2	~	2	21
ABERTEIFI		1	3	2	~	3	1	~	~	10
LLAMBED	~	1	3	~	~	1	~	~	1	6
LLANDYSUL	~	~	6	2	~	~	1	~	~	9
TREGARON		3	1	4	~	~	~	~	~	8
TOTAL	1	10	24	16	5	6	5	0	3	70

- 33 (47%) schools are below 40 pupils the threshold for a minimum of two teachers based on the current Funding Formula
- These provide for 878 (18%) pupils
- A further 2578 (53%%) pupils are educated in 14 (20 %) schools which have over 100 pupils.

Secondary phase

4.2.18 Secondary schools of fewer than 700 pupils are deemed by Estyn and other agencies to be small. Four of Ceredigion's schools fall into this category and a further three are about or marginally greater than the threshold. Sixth forms of 160 or fewer pupils are considered small, only one school has more pupils in the sixth form than the threshold.

4,2,19 Post 16 and 14-16 provision is the focus of attention at the present time. It is anticipated that the 16+ provision is likely to have a significant effect on the nature and size of buildings within Ceredigion schools. Also, the discussions regarding the curriculum and accreditation for the 14-19 age group could lead to many requirements that will need to be considered in the foreseeable future.

Class Size

4.2.20 The LEA has no specific policies defining class sizes in the Primary or Secondary Sectors – other than the compliance with the statutory requirement to maintain class sizes below 30 pupils in the Foundation Phase and the desirability to maintain such thresholds at Key Stage 2/Junior phase. The internal school organisation is deemed to be the responsibility of the governors and headteachers within the resources available. The complexity of managing the inevitable mixed age/ability class at primary level is recognised by the Authority

4.2.21 At the January 2008 Pupil Census no primary school had classes exceeding thirty pupils.

4,2,22 Appropriate guidance is followed in respect class sizes for certain subject areas at secondary level.

Faith Schools

4.2.23 The Welsh Assembly Government requires Education Authorities to review faith school provision. There are two Voluntary Aided Primary Schools [one Church in Wales and one Roman Catholic Church] within the Authority in addition to two Voluntary Controlled Church in Wales Schools. Such provision meets current needs. Should any significant demands become apparent the respective Diocesan Authority will be consulted.

4.2.24 Although there are a number of pupils from a variety of different ethnic and religious backgrounds in Ceredigion they are mainly concentrated in the Aberystwyth and Lampeter areas where the University institutions attract students from all over the world. Research students in the main may bring their families with them but their residence is of a transitory nature. Consequently there has not been demand for school for specific faith traditions other than Christian.

Language Provision

4.2.25 The Welsh Assembly Government requires Education Authorities to review its Welsh Language provision. Ceredigion Education Authority asserts its belief in the educational value of acquiring two languages and considers that the policy provides adequate provision.

4.2.26 The aim of this bilingual policy is to educate pupils so that they are thoroughly bilingual in the use of both Welsh and English on leaving the primary school so that they may participate fully in the bilingual community of which they are part. The provision made should ensure that every pupil shall be able to communicate with confidence in both languages and that they have an appreciation of the cultural heritage of Wales.

4.2.27 In the primary sector, the majority of schools (62) follow a policy where Welsh is the main medium of the life and work of the school [over 70% of the curriculum in KS2 is through the medium of Welsh]. These schools, in accordance to Welsh Assembly Government directive ('Defining schools according to the Welsh medium provision', 2007) are deemed 'Welsh medium schools'. A further 6 schools follow a policy where Welsh is a medium in the life and work of the school and bilingualism is developed in all aspects of school life. In addition 3 schools are organised such that there are streams which follow one or other of these policies. Individual school prospectus include detail regarding the schools linguistic nature.

4.2.28 Six Language Centres have been established to support pupils of junior school age who are latecomers to the area. Latecomers to secondary school are also offered relevant support in addition to their Welsh lessons.

4.2.29 The Education Authority is aware of the need to secure continuity between primary and secondary schools if the Language Policy is to be effective.

4.2.30 Secondary School Governing Bodies have established policies for Language provision in accordance with the Ceredigion Language Strategy. All schools meet the demand for a range of subjects to be taught through the medium of Welsh. Two of the 7 Secondary Schools are designated Welsh medium schools.

4.3 Admission of Pupils to Schools

Applications for Places

4.3.1 The Authority has a well established admissions procedure for the admission of pupils both to primary and secondary phases which is currently reviewed.

4.3.2 For the first time since its inception in 1996 Ceredigion experienced over-subscription in one of its Secondary Schools for the Academic Year 2005-06. Existing procedures were implemented to resolve the issue

Admissions Policy

4.3.3 The LEA is currently reviewing its Admissions Policy. The main proposal is to allow pupils to start school at the beginning of the term in which they attain four years of age. If there is a nursery class at the school, children may start at the beginning of the term following their third birthday - usually on a part-time basis. However, legally children do not have to start school until they have attained their fifth birthday.

4.3.4 There is no automatic transfer from a nursery unit/class to the reception class of the associated mainstream school.

4.3.5 Pupils will have attained the age of 7 years by 31st August prior to being admitted or transferred to a junior school at the beginning of the school year

4.3.6 Children commence their secondary education in the September following their 11th birthday.

4.3.7 Pupils will have attained the age of 16 years by 31 August prior to being admitted to Year 12 (sixth form) of a secondary school at the beginning of a school year.

4.3.8 Parents have to make a written application for a place at whatever school(s) they would like their child to receive his/her education. Within Ceredigion most parents send their child to the school which serves their local area. Traditionally each school has an area which it serves and pupils within that area attend the local school. However, parents may express a preference for a different school.

4.3.9 All schools must admit pupils up to their published admission level. The admission level will reflect the capacity of the school and a child will be allocated a place at a school unless it is full. Once the admission level has been reached, requests for a place at the school have to be refused.

4.3.10 The admission of children to school is controlled by an "Admission Authority". In the case of community schools in Ceredigion the Admissions Authority is Ceredigion County Council (the Local Education Authority or LEA). In the case of a Voluntary Aided School the Admissions Authority is the Governing Body of the school.

4.3.11 Where there are more children wishing to enter a particular school than there are places, the following factors will be taken into consideration - in order of priority:-

1. written expressed preference and reasons of parents;
2. the number of pupils that can be admitted to the school;
3. the geographical area which the school normally serves;
4. looked after pupils;
5. specific and exceptional medical and social reasons;
6. sibling links.

Where more than one child meets these criteria and applicants still remain then the child living nearest to the school will be admitted.

4.3.12 Where possible the Admission Authority must meet the preference, but certain factors will be taken into account. These include:

- the efficient use of resources and accommodation
- the character of a school (generally religious)

4.3.13 Parents have the right of appeal. Where it has not been possible for a child to be admitted to the school of stated preference.

4.3.14 The Authority does not permit selection, waiting lists or the interviewing of prospective parents.

4.4 Home to School Transport

4.4.1 The obligation on the LEA to provide free transport to facilitate attendance of pupils at school is provided for in Section 509 of the Education Act 1996.

4.4.2 Pupils will qualify for statutory assistance if they are of compulsory school age and attend the nearest school or the school which normally serves the locality in which the pupils live, and also where they live over the statutory walking distances. The distance is defined as being 2 miles in the case of children under 8 years of age and 3 miles in the case of children aged 8 and over.

4.4.3 Assistance may be provided for pupils in certain circumstances on the grounds of:-

- Safety;
- Medical Condition;
- Statement of Educational needs;
- A change of residence in a final examination year;
- Continuation of an advanced course of study not being available at the designated school;

- Religious beliefs: In the light of the requirements of the Education Act 1993, parents are advised to contact the Director of Education and Community Services to obtain further information prior to expressing their preferred school based on the nature of the religious education provided at that institution being the same as that of the religion or denomination to which the parent adheres.

4.4.4 Pupils who do not qualify for 'free transport' as defined above may be allowed following a written application to the Director of Education and Community Services, to travel on LEA contracted vehicles if there are spare places available. The concession may be withdrawn at any time

4.4.5 Conveyance is arranged also for those attending College of Further Education.

4.4.6. The rural nature of the County implies high transport costs in order to ensure access to Education. The total net expenditure is £2,636,100

Number of Pupils Conveyed				
	ELIGIBLE	INELIGIBLE (Spare Seat)	TOTAL	COST £
Primary - under 5	0	14	14	338100
- 5-11 years	208	97	305	
Secondary - Yr 7-11	2721	251 [102 paying]	3074	1741900
VI form [estimate]	256	11 [11 paying]	278	
Special Education	103	0	103	396300
- Exclusions	6	0	6	
- PR Unit	19	0	19	
F.E. Students	215	104	379	159800
TOTAL	3585	477 [113 paying]	4178	2636100

4.5 Staffing

4.5.1 The introduction of the Teachers Workload Agreement and School remodelling has considerable impact on schools. Remodelling the workforce has brought an increase in the number and range of adults in school and has meant that leaders manage more people. For many schools, this has meant focusing teachers' time on teaching and learning and using suitably qualified professionals from outside to take on other roles.

4.5.2 The seven elements of the Workload Agreement seek to enable leaders to lead, provide teachers with time for preparation and assessment, to focus teachers' energies and expertise on teaching and learning by directing a number of tasks to support staff. The last therefore provides opportunities to develop a structure for support staff within school undertaking learning and classroom support, administration and clerical duties.

4.5.3. Within Ceredigion there is evidence that the initiatives are of benefit for teachers but has created more pressures for headteachers given that funding for implementation has been inadequate. In addition whilst WAG seek to encourage the creation of support through the development and employment of Teaching Assistants, schools have sought to engage additional qualified teachers to fulfil the duties of teachers. Not only is there a dearth of available staff but such provision is unsustainable given budgetary constraints.

4.5.4 In a number of situations constraints have led to considerable ingenuity whereby schools are collaborating to share staff or coming together as staff and pupils in order to provide teacher preparation and assessment time. Such arrangements afford additional benefit to pupils learning opportunities given the range of teacher specialisms and expertise available and the enhancement of social interaction in larger peer groups not evident in smaller, more isolated school units.

4.5.5 The constraints of small school units create difficulties in implementing the Workforce Remodelling agenda. Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments are to supersede management allowances. Such payments are to reflect the focus upon teaching and learning responsibilities. Schools are required to have established structures by December 2008 which reflect such requirements. However funding is not available to establish structures which replicate the extant systems. Opportunities lie by school collaboration through formal agreements involving shared expertise and responsibilities. Given the size of schools in Ceredigion the implementation of appropriate collaborative and federated models may afford the only realistic options to implement the Workforce and Remodelling requirements.

4.5.6 The agenda encouraging greater integration between education and children's services will require increased and beneficial multi-service specialist provision. Pupils and staff can benefit from working with staff in other sectors, such as the health, Social Services, police and youth support services.

4.5.7 Inevitable, as Estyn perceives,

"the involvement of a wider range of specialists contributing to learning will bring with it the opportunity for more flexible staffing models and working arrangements. This should make better use of many more people's skills and help them achieve a better work-life balance. There is not a one model-fits-all for schools but thinking imaginatively and flexibly is key to making successful changes in how the workforce can be used. As a result, staff in schools could benefit more from a flexible work-pattern, which could include negotiating their hours of work and holidays to suit learners' needs and their own circumstances. [para 80]

4.5.8 Estyn also indicates that the statistical profile of teachers in Wales also seems to suggest that greater flexibility in staffing models is required if schools are to retain, develop and sustain the almost 40% of all registered staff in Wales, and the over 65% of headteachers, who are in the 50+ age group. This is reflected in Ceredigion with some 47% of the current primary headteachers reaching retirement age by 2015. In the future all headteachers need to be suitably qualified which could lead to a shortage of applicants for such posts. It appears that there is also a reluctance to apply for headship posts. The solution may lie in formal federated structures.

4.5.9 In its recent publication Estyn suggests the ways forward for schools of the future to include the need to:

- re-think staffing structures in terms of fitness for purpose;
- manage diverse staff roles to support pupil achievement;
- develop staff networking and negotiating skills to support partnership working;
- develop and nurture staff through effective performance management and professional development systems; and
- support new and student entrants in their pre- and post-qualification programmes.

4.5.10 Fundamental therefore will be the adoption of structures across schools in the primary sector in order to establish effective leadership and management which are not sustainable as individual units. Issues relating to leadership include Governing Bodies

4.5.11 Estyn emphasises that:

**... For schools to promote lifelong learning and community development, leaders at all levels will require vision and the ability to raise expectations and inspire and motivate others. Leaders will need to work more flexibly in different kinds of management roles. Planning will always require co-operation with outside agencies, including health and social services as well as other education providers such as adult learning. [para 92]*

and the ways forward in relation to leadership and management include the need to:

- *transcend organisational boundaries to understand and work effectively with a wide range of partners who contribute to all aspects of pupils' learning, health and well-being;*
- *improve teaching and learning through motivating and influencing pupils and staff in a changing situation;*
- *use people's time, resources and accommodation in more ambitious and creative ways;*
- *provide greater flexibility in distributing responsibility amongst staff;*
- *give priority to performance management and to developing all the people who work in schools in accordance with organisational priorities; and*
- *develop and nurture management teams that work effectively across sectors.*

4.5.12. A vital part of the restructuring strategy to reorganise the provision of education within the county could lead to the possible closure or reorganisation of certain schools. Such measures could result in a variation in the staffing needs within the County and changes to the workforce.

A 'Code of Practice for dealing with Staffing Issues in Schools affected by Amalgamations or Closures' has been produced by the Education Department to inform and address these issues. The purpose of the guidance is to safeguard staff to the greatest possible extent by ensuring a consistency of approach in dealing with staffing issues where restructuring of schools takes place. It is intended that the guidance will cover both the appointment procedures and redeployment opportunities and also outline the levels of benefits payable in the event of retirement or redundancy.

It is recognised that staffing decisions are the responsibility of Governing Bodies but Ceredigion County Council remains the legal employer of all staff. It is therefore expected that everyone will work in partnership in order to ensure effective appointments in schools and the protection of existing employees.

Consultation on the contents of The Code of Practice has been undertaken with Trade Unions and Teaching Associations and the Local Social Partnership Group who welcomed the introduction of such guidance. A vital part of the restructuring strategy to reorganise the provision of education within the county could lead to the possible closure or reorganisation of certain schools. Such measures could result in a variation in the staffing needs within the County and changes to the workforce.

4.6 Building Assets

4.6.1 The provision of school facilities which are fit for propose is a target for the WAG. Local Authorities are required to establish robust plans to reduce surplus places and to improve standards of accommodation. In so doing WAG further requires Authorities to exhibit commitment both in terms of principle and also in directing capital resources to the task. The lack of such robust asset management plans and commitment may render Authorities ineligible for capital grant funding.

.4.6.2 Estyn in the document "*Transforming Schools*" suggests that the schools of the future should have:

- *attractive accommodation and modern buildings*
- *sufficient, well-designed, high-quality*
- *first-class facilities in which pupils can enjoy healthy meals;*
- *suitable clean modern provision for toilets and personal hygiene;*
- *buildings that are accessible to the whole community and have suitable facilities for disabled learners;*
- *up-to-date facilities, such as IT centres, laboratories, workshops and libraries, for use by pupils, staff, parents and members of the community;*
- *safe, well-lit and sheltered communal areas and grounds for play and relaxation, encouraging wide-spread community use so that users can take pride in caring for their locality;*
- *indoor and outdoor sports and play facilities that are available both to pupils and the community; and community services, where pupils and their families have access to a wide range of support, including health and social services.*

Asset Management

4.6.3 In collaboration with the Highways, Property and Works Department and schools, the Directorate for Education and Community Services undertake a significant Capital Programme Annually, largely financed through Welsh Assembly Government funding in particular the School Building Improvement Grant.

4.6.4 A survey of all school property in 2000-01 concluded that there existed some £10m of work in order to bring schools to a reasonable standard of repair. A new survey is currently being undertaken. Significant other resources are required to improve and provide new facilities. Whilst the Authority has achieved a considerable amount in providing new facilities such as the provision of a new school for Penweddig, extensive work at Aberaeron Secondary School, extensions at Ysgol y Dderi and Penrhyn-coch and new school for Ffynnonbedr Primary School as well as a proposed area school, it is unlikely that the Authority will meet the challenge set by the Welsh Assembly Government to have all schools fit for purpose by 2010 without a considerable amount of investment.

4.6.5 Indeed a challenge has set each Authority by the Welsh Assembly Government to prepare plans to significantly reduce unfilled places, to have in place robust Asset Management Plans and to make a significant contributions form Council

4.6.6 Responsibility for school premises are divided between the LEA and schools and guidance clearly defines the respective areas of responsibility for elements of capital and repairs and maintenance. School may enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Highways, Property and Works Department in order to access technical advice and support.

4.6.7 The Authority has provided schools with guidance on the respective responsibilities under the disability legislation.

Conditions of Buildings

4.6.8 Currently the primary pupils of Ceredigion are educated in 70 separate schools. About 48 of these schools (65%) were built before 1900. Many of these buildings have been refurbished and in some cases extended and often provide a pleasant environment for teaching and learning. Others are cramped and do not provide facilities which are ideal for the provision of modern day education. The facilities are often inadequate for the provision of physical education, do not provide enough space for early years education and do not lend themselves easily to the effective teaching of science and technology. They can also be expensive to heat and maintain and have insufficient parking facilities. Security is becoming an issue of increasing significance. 11 schools still have external toilets.

4.6.9 Over the last quarter century only two new primary schools have been built within the County but two new Area Schools and a replacement primary school are being planned

4.6.10 Over the last 15 to 20 years it has not been possible to invest to the required level in building repairs and consequently a substantial work remains outstanding. There are ever increasing demands on the limited capital resources of the Authority, which may only add to the current backlog.

4.6.11 The Conditions Survey (April 2008) indicated a repairs backlog of some £7m. The survey finding are summarised below

SCHOOLS as at 1st April 2008			
DETR PPI 1A - % Gross Internal Floor Space in Condition Categories A - D			
DfEE Condition Codes			
Good - Performing as intended and operating efficiently	A		
Satisfactory - Performing as intended but minor repairs required	B		
Poor - Exhibits major defects	C		
Life Expired - Serious risk	D		

Property Category	Total Sites	Category A		Category B		Category C		Category D	
		Total Sites	%	Total Sites	%	Total Sites	%	Total Sites	%
Primary Schools	70	33	47.88	36	51.5	1	0.59	0	0
Secondary Schools	6	1	25.55	5	74.4	0	0.00	0	0
Total	76	34	35.73	41	63.9	1	0.27	0	0

DETR PPI 1B - Outstanding Maintenance by Cost Expressed as % in Priority Levels 1-3	
DfEE Priority Codes	
Urgent work to prevent closure of premises	Priority 1
Essential work required within 2 years	Priority 2
Desirable Work required within 3 - 5 years	Priority 3

Property Category	Total Sites	Outstanding Maintenance Total	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3	
			Total Cost	%	Total Cost	%	Total Cost	%
Primary Schools	70	£3,364,786	£2,872	0.09	£2,024,528	60.17	£1,337,386	39.75
Secondary Schools	6	£3,536,749	£0	0	£1,932,884	54.65	£1,603,865	45.35
Total	76	£6,901,535	£2,872	0.04	£3,967,412	57.34	£2,941,251	42.62

4.6.12 The outstanding maintenance as then defined has been gradually reduced to about £7m, but the natural course of fabric deterioration may mean that other elements are added to the list. A new survey is being undertaken which should inform schools and the Authority of the need. Schools are encouraged to develop planned maintenance programmes which can be integrated with the Authority's proposed programmes. Thus a joint approach to establishing a joint repair and maintenance programme within the resources available.

4.6.13 Despite additional resources being delegated to Governing Bodies to meet responsibilities for repair and maintenance, considerable concern is being expressed about the level of accountability now vested in Governing Bodies as a result of the statutory requirements of Fair Funding, given the perceived insufficiency of available funding. However the LEA no longer has the flexibility once available to undertake certain elements of school building repair and maintenance since resources have been delegated to accompany the increased areas of accountability. In addition concern is expressed by technical officers that School Governing Bodies are embarking upon remedial or extended work to buildings without consultation and in certain instances may not be fulfilling regulatory requirements

ESTYN Reports

4.6.14 Since the inception of the regular Estyn Inspection regime all schools in Ceredigion have been inspected 2 or 3 times since 1994. Comments are included within the reports on the conditions of school buildings. This can support the development of the Capital Programme – for example, in two instances extensions were added to school whose accommodation was deemed to be inadequate by the Inspectors.

4.6.15 An analysis of Estyn indicates that in general the vast majority of buildings are deemed to be “good” or “satisfactory”, The table below illustrates:

Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
4.5%	47%	44%	4.5%

4.6.16 Generally there is a high degree of complimentary comments with particular attention given to cleanliness and hygiene and the maintenance systems. Favourable comments are generally made about school environments and the suitability of surrounding land.

However the principal deficiencies include:

- the lack of space for aspects of the curriculum [for pupils under 5 , no hall, indoor physical education, no library, no playing field]
- the lack of provision of facilities such as indoor toilets, staff room, headteacher’s room, storage
- many of the remarks are linked with health and safety issues
- attention is drawn to the inadequacies of demountable classrooms frequently located at a distance from the main school building and toilets

Temporary Buildings

4.6.17 The Welsh Assembly Government is concerned about the number, standard and condition of demountable buildings which exist in schools. They have often been placed as a quick temporary response to accommodation problems at schools. However the older types do dilapidate and require constant maintenance.

4.6.18 In Ceredigion a large number of temporary buildings exist, many of which require maintenance and repair. In addition their removal could reduce significantly the number of surplus places if logistically possible. However their continuation at a school allow additional space to imaginatively meet the demands of the curriculum

4.6.19 The District Audit Report highlighted that:

“... The Authority has high levels of temporary accommodation in both the primary and secondary sectors. As this is included in the capacity measures this can result in future problems of a shortage of adequate accommodation. The capital charges, which result from temporary accommodation, comes to approximately £200,000. “

Under the new Accounting Code of Practice all accommodation incurs capital charges (depreciation....). This includes temporary accommodation.

...Based on actual figures for a number of classrooms in Ceredigion, the average cost per mobile in 1996/97 was £3,600. When mobiles are over 10 years old these charges no longer apply.

We were therefore unable to calculate the total cost of temporary classrooms.

4.6.20 Temporary accommodation in primary schools accounts for about 1100 places in some 38 units. This is about 20% of the available pupil capacity. It therefore appears that the temporary accommodation masks a possible shortage of adequate provision. A proportion of such units could be removed when proposed building projects are undertaken.

4.6.21 The complimentary numbers in Secondary schools are similar. Of the 32 units a number will be removed when proposed building projects are realised

4.6.22 However it has to be recognised the despite having made considerable impact on the reduction of temporary buildings with the extension and refurbishment of Aberaeron Comprehensive School and Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig, numbers are difficult to control particularly when there is a local need to accommodate more pupils.

4.6.23 It is necessary to analyse in detail the location and appropriateness of all temporary accommodation in order to:

- ensure that temporary accommodation is not masking possible future problems of overcrowding
- ensure that unfilled places are kept to a minimum
- ensure that capital charges are not being unnecessarily incurred.

Schools: General Statistical Information Based on January 2008 Data

	Primary	Secondary	Total
No. Schools	70	7	77
No. of pupils as at Jan 08	4871	5004	9875
Total Capacity	6699	6484	13183
No. Surplus Places	1,878	1480	3358
No. of Schools with Surplus Places	61	7	68
%Surplus Places	28.03%	22.83%	25.47%
No. of Places Overcapacity	50	0	50
No of schools with overcapacity	9	0	9
%Overcapacity	0.74%	0	0.3.8%

Suitability and Sufficiency

4.6.24 There is increasing need to evaluate schools suitability in terms of facilities and capacity to deliver for example the Foundation Phase and Accessibility particularly for the disabled. The Authority completed a Survey of the condition of school buildings and has progressed a survey of suitability and sufficiency of buildings for the purpose of education Below is an attempt to evaluate and rate the suitability of primary buildings for early years provision, disabled access and number of mobile classrooms in schools.

PRIMARY SCHOOL ANALYSIS 2005																						
Suitability ~ 1: Good; 2: Adequate; 3: Inadequate; 4: Not suitable																						
Early Years provision ~ 1: Good; 2: Adequate; 3: Inadequate; 4: Not suitable																						
Disabled access ~ Yes; No																						
Disabled provision internal : Difficulties; No Difficulties																						
Area	Disabled Access: Yes									Disabled access: No								Mobiles [dismountables]				
Rating	1	1~2	1~3	2	2~3	3	3~4	4	Sub-total	1	1~2	1~3	2	2~3	3	3~4	4	Sub-total	Total	No Schools	No Mobiles	
ABERAERON																						
No difficulties	1	~	~	1	~	1	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	1	1	~	~	2	5	5	7	
Difficulties	~	1	~	1	~	2	~	~	4	~	1	~	~	1	3	~	3	8	12			
ABERYSTWYTH																						
No difficulties	6	~	2	~	~	~	~	~	8	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	8	10	19	
Difficulties	3	1	1	1	2	2	~	~	10	~	1	~	2	~	2	~	~	5	15			
ABERTEIFI																						
No difficulties	3	~	~	2	~	1	~	~	6	1	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	1	7	5	6	
Difficulties	2	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	3	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	1	4			
LLAMBED																						
No difficulties	~	~	~	3	~	1	~	~	4	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	4	2	5	
Difficulties	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	1	2			
LLANDYSUL																						
No difficulties	2	~	~	1	~	~	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	0	3	1	1	
Difficulties	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	1	~	5	~	~	7	7			
TREGARON																						
No difficulties	1	~	~	~	2	~	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	~	1	~	~	1	4	2	2	
Difficulties	~	~	~	1	1	1	~	~	3	~	~	~	~	~	1	1	~	~	2	5		
SUB-TOTAL																						
No difficulties	13	~	~	9	2	3	~	~	27	1	~	~	~	1	2	~	~	4	31			
Difficulties	5	2	1	3	4	5	~	~	20	1	2	~	4	2	12	~	3	24	44			
TOTAL									47									28	75	25	40	

The number of schools deemed to be less than adequate [rating 3 or 4] on both criteria is about 25 [30%]. A significant proportion of these display difficulties in terms of internal provision for the disabled.

4.7 Finance/Funding

4.7.0 The Authority is required to fund schools according to agreed, published formulae which comply with school funding regulations. In so doing the Authority sets certain parameters in the primary phase such as ensuring that schools of around 40 pupils are resourced at a level which allows the schools to be staffed by a headteacher and an assistant teacher. At the present time, each legally constituted school, receives a budget on the basis of the Authority's funding formula. When an informal federation is established, it will have more than one legally constituted school so each school will receive its own budget. In a formal federation, there is one legally constituted school even though it may be on more than one site. The one school will receive one delegated budget, although the formula may reflect the multi-site nature of the school.

These, together with elements relating to buildings, may be regarded as fixed costs which inevitably are proportionally greater in smaller schools. Ceredigion currently allocates the highest funding the highest per pupil in Wales, in both the primary and secondary sectors. However, WAG and Estyn have each raised the question of the sustainability of small schools in the current financial climate and in terms of educational viability.

Capital and other funding

4.7.1 The adequacy and condition of the school building and attendant facilities – such as games fields; availability of water in classrooms – is of importance in planning for future provision. The maintenance costs of current assets are high, and a greater responsibility for these has rested with Governing Bodies from 1 April 2000 in accordance with Fair Funding requirements. Governing Bodies are able through Service Level Agreements to acquire the services of the County Council to advise, plan and undertake repair and maintenance work should they so wish. The LEA retains responsibility for the Capital Programme. For 2005-06 £218k has been delegated to secondary schools [*cf £245k in 2004/05*] and £172k [*£ 236k in 2004-05*].

4.7.2 The issue of the suitability and adequacy of school buildings in the context of the demands of the National Curriculum and new initiatives, such as provision of Early Years Education and ICT, will need serious consideration when determining the strategy for the delivery of education in the County

4.7.3 The Authority continues to manage an effective Capital Programme augmented by National Assembly initiatives such as Additional Capital Funding for Schools; Class Size Reduction Grants, New Deal Funding and School Building Improvement Grant. Emphasis has been placed upon upgrade facilities such as laboratories and technology workrooms in the secondary phase – an example being the resources through the Additional Capital Funding Initiative being directed to provide new Design and Technology facilities at Tregaron Comprehensive School and a specifically designed Unit for pupils with Special Education needs at Lampeter Comprehensive School. Issues of continual concern are the provision of indoor toilets in all schools; the standard of school Kitchens and canteens and the renewal of heating systems and roofs. In addition a £5m+ project at Aberaeron Comprehensive School aimed to remove temporary accommodation and which attracted resources from Welsh Challenge Funds and Sportslot. Initial funding for a PFI initiative secured the provision of a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Penweddig by December 2000

4.7.4 Ceredigion Education Authority is conscious of the under investment in the fabric of school buildings and since its establishment in 1996 the Authority has deployed the following capital investment on schools and educational facilities since 2002

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2002-08

CATEGORY	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007/08	Budget 2008-09
Essential Schemes	£470k	£470k	£349k	£303k	£305k	£403k	£310k
School Projects	£163k	£192k	£394k	£43k	£37k	£69k	£100k
New Deal for Schools	£ 64k	£ 18k	-	-	-	-	-

SBIG – Formula	£1,141k	£1,996k	£1,168k	£924k	£493k	£900k	£1,116k
SBIG – £9m	-	-		£1,087k	£2,900k	£1,661k	£2,460k
Foundation Phase	-	-	-	-	-	£175k	£86k

*SBIG = School Building Improvement Grant

The more flexible approach provided by the Welsh Assembly Government School Building Improvement Grant has enabled an extension to Ysgol y Dderi and the provision of a new SEN unit at Ysgol Gynradd Aberporth.

4.7.5 WAG provides about £1m per annum to undertake projects which must be over £100k in cost. In addition WAG has allocated £9m per LEA to promote major projects. Ceredigion has already utilised this funding for projects such as:

- Ysgol Ffynnonbedr: replacement school
- Synod Inn: new area school
- Ysgol Gyfun Llambod: remodelling and refurbishment

4.7.6 The Capital Programme will be used to support change which involve:-

- (i) a range of approaches adopted to suit local need;
- (ii) the most effective use of resources to enhance curricular provision, ensuring continuity and progress.

4.7.7 The challenge remains to plan effectively for 2010 and consider strategies for the effective provision of facilities within the context of the concept of community learning centres

Funding Requirement

4.7.8 A programme to provide appropriate and adequate facilities might be conservatively estimated to cost in the region of £11m for repair and maintenance and a further £30m for major capital projects.

4.7.9 In addition any restructuring of the organisation of service provision will have an impact on the modeling of the workforce, an element which is difficult to quantify until strategies and proposals are planned and costed.

Possible Resources

4.7.10 During the period of the Single Education Plan 2006-08 it is anticipated that for the capital elements alone the County Council through its Capital Programme may provide some £0.7m. Two sources from the National Assembly through the School Building Improvement Grant will provide some £2-3m for major projects and £0.9m for projects of a smaller nature. Between 2008 – 2009 an additional £3m will be spent from both funding sources.

4.7.11 As will be elaborated below, if it is to plan effectively, the Authority must explore alternative funding methods and sources such as

- the authority and school formulaic allocations
- Convergence Fund
- capital for voluntary aided schools
- capital receipts
- prudential borrowing.

4.7.12 In designing a reorganisation scheme the Authority should:

- Evaluate the benefits of new school buildings against the much cheaper option of using existing buildings.
- Bring together capital from a wide range of sources.
- Discuss with the WAG options for funding individual schemes and any links to the urban regeneration agenda.
- Consider the revenue implications including what can come from future schools budgets

Analysis of possible capital funding

4.7.13 Consideration has been given to the possible capital funding to the future with an indication of possible options that may occur in the medium term.

Financial Summary

4.7.14 The financial information prepared are best indicative estimates which will need to be fine tuned in the future when further details are known. Also, the rate of inflation in the future will impact on the proposals as they are likely to take place over the long term.

4.7.15 Savings have been estimated at a prudent level and may change based on new information received on the exact detail on the proposal which goes forward.

4.7.16 The balance needs to be funded from any combination of the following subject to approval by Cabinet etc:-

- Grant funding;
- Re-allocation from within the Council's capital programme (WAG's notional education element of General Capital Funding was £1.515M for 2008-09);
- Additional prudential borrowing;
- Receipts from disposal of redundant sites.

4.7.17 The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is presently grant funding school improvements through the Schools Buildings Improvement Grant (SBIG) and this is a substantial sum each year towards achieving fit for purpose targets. However indications have been received that from 2009-10 onwards, targeting arrangements will apply for allocating SBIG funding and the expectation from WAG is that Councils will need to invest in school buildings themselves in line with capital resources allocated via the General Capital Funding Formula each year.

Estate Specific Issues

4.7.18 Market valuations of primary schools have been prepared at this stage without carrying out detailed examinations of title deeds as this can be done at a later stage when firmer proposals are in place. There may be covenants requiring land to be re-conveyed to the donor (or his heirs in title) or restrictions upon alternative uses. Therefore disposal values have been incorporated into costings at a prudent level, which do not at this stage include any potential increase in value which may be possible from alternative use subject to planning. Discussions will need to take place with the Planning Department concerning alternative use when fine tuning the financial model.

4.7.19 When assets are leased to the community they should be for full repairing leases, that is, to include all running costs including maintenance and insurance so that there will be future savings. The Authority considers a five year lease to be the maximum period available before the property is sold to existing leaseholders.

When a school is closed, and the property comes under the ownership of the Authority, the following procedures are adopted regarding the future use of the building

1. consideration is given by the Education Department for possible use by the Department, or by other departments within the Authority
2. where the building is not required by departments within the Authority, consideration is given to requests received from community groups. If short term leases or licenses are entered into with the community groups, these will be on a trial period of 1 – 3 years at no cost to the authority. The occupiers will be responsible for all maintenance, repairs and outgoings. The occupation will be reviewed at six monthly intervals, and if necessary terminated. Following any trial period occupation will be at an economic rent in accordance with the policies of the Authority.

Where 1 and 2 are not applicable, the property will be sold on the open market.

Economic and Grant Specific issues

4.7.20 It has been suggested that in respect of any schools to be retained for community use it may be possible for the community to raise funds through EU Convergence or Rural Development Plan (RDP) programmes in order to acquire the building and refurbish it where necessary. This shouldn't in theory lead to an inflation of the market value and hence return to the Council, but could help to keep the site in community use. It is important to note that Convergence project assessment is likely to be fairly competitive and will look for significant outputs in terms of higher income job creation and sustainability in order to meet the Commission's prescribed priorities.

4.7.21 The principle of additionality in ERDF (Capital) projects will prevent the use of EU Convergence money contributing to any capital building project that should normally be undertaken by Local or National Government in the course of their normal statutory duties. Therefore it seems that EU funding contributions to school capital build programmes is unlikely.

4.7.22 The European Social Fund (ESF) eligibility criteria with respect to additionality of activity have however been a little different in the past and are expected to remain so under Convergence, though again this has yet to be published or agreed by the Assembly. Under ESF, one can in theory take an existing activity and increase its provision where there is a demonstrable need, using the existing provision finance to match-fund an ESF contribution that finances the extra activity. Under the Convergence Programme this may be of particular relevance in the 14-19 Learning Pathways group, which appears to be a favoured area of investment. However, whilst this might provide a revenue mechanism for the LEA to do more, it shouldn't be a mechanism for making revenue cost savings.

Principles for the financing of the project

4.7.23 All capital receipts obtained from the sale of educational assets should be re-invested into the re-modelling programme. When assets are leased to the community, the income streams should be utilised to support prudential borrowing for Developing Education.

Prudential Borrowing

Prudential borrowing is the ability that the Council has to finance capital expenditure by taking out loans. The implications of this are that the interest costs and the capital sum borrowed require paying annually and therefore need to be budgeted for in the Councils revenue budget. Therefore all prudential borrowing undertaken by the Council is carefully controlled to ensure that it is prudently made and is affordable. Revenue budget savings are potentially available from the remodelling of schools and could therefore be usefully applied to fund prudential borrowing applicable to new schools as well as assisting with the delivery of Education services.

The financing of the proposals may be achieved by:

- utilizing prudential borrowing which may be funded either by the re-investment of revenue savings achieved from school rationalisation and/or funded by the Council's revenue budget (subject to consideration by the Budget Working Group and approval by Cabinet and Council)
- Funding will be required to finance up front costs e.g. land acquisition, extensions and this could be enabled by "ring fencing" some early savings and capital receipts identified.
- Temporary prudential borrowing may need to be taken into account when funding costs up front, e.g. land acquisition, build costs and when disposals are made at a later date.

Formulating a strategy

4.7.24 Timing issues will require careful consideration and a project management approach should be taken to each option that is to be followed through. Where required land needs to be sourced and funded and the area school built and funded before disposals take place, careful thought must be given to the order of some of the options as it may be that timing itself could be critical in the viability and deliverability of funding the

strategy. There is a need to invest more of the capital programme in school buildings in order to attract grant allocations in the future from WAG.

4.7.25 Overall, a lot could be achieved during the medium term if decisions are made at an early stage and for example, land is sourced early on in order that further planning may progress. It is feasible for four area schools, one new school and two extensions/restructuring to take place over a five year period but not if decisions are delayed, land is not identified, funded and acquired early enough, therefore a more likely timescale would be a six to eight year period.

4.7.26 In respect of federal models, at present the one put forward is estimated to cost more than the existing arrangements. Federation will not therefore contribute to the revenue savings required to finance prudential borrowing to build new schools or to extend/improve existing ones, and any extra costs will need to be funded from other savings or sources.

Revenue Cost Implications of Developing Education in Ceredigion

4.7.27 for the purposes of illustrating the potential revenue savings, (Annexe C.....Table iv...Page 72) five of the options likely to take place earlier in the timeframe, were selected for more detailed modelling. The options centre on new or extended schools in Sarnau, Cwrtnewydd, Llanon, Llanarth and Synod Inn.

4.7.28 The model forecasts savings of almost £0.75M per annum if enacted now, rising to over £0.8M per annum if enacted in 2012. There will be additional transport costs to offset against these, but the net savings figures are over £0.5M now and over £0.6M in five years' time.

4.7.29 Other costs will be incurred, e.g. redundancy, premises costs, but most of these will be incurred in the months immediately following closure. Schools would usually close at the end of the summer term, and therefore most of these costs would be incurred during that financial year, with the net savings taking effect from the following April. A small proportion of these costs may be incurred beyond that timeframe, but not sufficient to alter the overall picture.

4.7.30 This model assumes each pupil will transfer to the school nearest his home. Transport costs have been assessed based on each pupil's age and the distance between the pupil's home and the nearest school.

4.7.31 Some pupils are being fed into other small schools, thus reducing the small school supplement required by those schools. Of course, at some point, some of those schools may themselves be the subject of developing education in Ceredigion. This emphasises that individual options cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be seen as part of the bigger picture.

4.7.32 The reason why the savings would be greater in 2012 than now is that a reducing pupil population will result in larger small school supplements being payable.

4.7.33 Transport costs absorb a smaller proportion of the gross revenue savings (approx 25%), and are therefore significant. It should be borne in mind that these costings are very approximate and will be subject to the LEA's policy on transporting pupils from closing schools. The figures in the model are based on basic statutory requirements only.

4.8 Language Strategy

4.8.1 Federal schools or schools that merge, as well as any new primary or secondary schools that will be established in the future will be defined, in accordance with Welsh Assembly Government Documentation 2007, as 'Welsh Medium' schools, which are schools that provide 100% Welsh medium education at Foundation Phase and at least 70% Welsh medium education at Key Stage 2. During the formation of informal or formal federations, consideration will be given to the linguistic nature of the individual schools and their communities. The development of the pupils' language skills and the Welsh ethos within the federation, will be in accordance with the 'Ceredigion Language Strategy Document'.

4.8.2 For further information see 'Ceredigion Language Strategy Document' (December 2007)

4.9 The Foundation Phase

4.9.1 The thrust by WAG to revolutionise education and care provision for children up to the age of 7 will be fundamental not only to the learning and development of children but to the delivery and organisation of learning in schools and a variety of other settings requiring close inter-relationships between a variety of statutory, public, voluntary and commercial agencies. It will have a profound influence on planning for the development of education in Ceredigion.

4.9.2 Early experiences provide the foundation for children's future educational and social development. New approaches to the education of very young children are being introduced in the Foundation Phase for 3-7 year olds. In this phase, the emphasis is on learning through experience of structured activities that focus on the individual pupil and their stage of development both inside and outside the classroom. Estyn suggests that

"..This type of approach offers many advantages but also presents considerable challenges in terms of securing the right accommodation, planning a new curriculum and training appropriate staff to implement the programme..."

4.9.3 In addition there is need for a curriculum for 7-14 year olds that will enable pupils to build successfully on their learning during their Foundation Phase. From age 7, the primary curriculum focuses on the development of pupils' skills through the core subjects of Welsh or English, mathematics and science, while a range of other subjects are often taught in an integrated way. This approach focuses particularly on continuity and progression in thinking, communication, number, and information and communication technology for learners and includes study of the content specified in the National Curriculum subject orders.

4.9.4 The legislative initiatives to provide care provides opportunities to extend the use of facilities in schools before and beyond the school day in conjunction with other agencies and for the benefit of families and communities.

Education for 3 – 7-year-old Children in Ceredigion

The background

4.9.5 Education of 3 – 7-year-old children in Ceredigion is provided in a variety of institutions and by a variety of providers as follows:

a.Schools providing for the whole 3 – 7 age range

Eight Nursery Units were established across Ceredigion during the 1970s. Most of these units are in schools of a substantial size and in the populous areas of the County. An exception to this is Ysgol y Dderi which was established as an area School to serve a number of rural areas when their schools were closed and Cenarth School which gained nursery provision when a new School was built in the 70s of the last century.

b.Educational Provision for 4 to 7-year-old children.

All Primary Schools (except Cardigan Junior School) provide full-time education for children from the term following their 4th birthday. These classes vary according to the number of pupils:

- Reception Class – 4 – 5-year-old children;
- Year 1 Class;
- Year 2 Class – each class led by a different teacher.
- Reception Class and Year 1 (4 – 6-year-old children) – one teacher.
- Reception Class, Year 1 and Year 2 (4 – 7-year-old children.) – one teacher.

c.Educational provision for 3 – 4-year-old children other than those named in (a) above.

Each LEA is required to provide opportunities to access early years education for children 4 – 5 years old and also 3 – 4 years old.

Following the introduction of the 'Learning Country' document all Local Authorities were urged to work in partnership with institutions providing childcare / early education before a child attends a school for the provision of part-time education free of charge for children following their 3rd birthday.

There are now 33 institutions funded by the Education Authority (January 2008) to provide this service. The provision is made by Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Waes PPA, and Private Day Nurseries.

These institutions are located in various buildings as noted in the table ranging from dedicated buildings, mobiles on School campuses, village or church halls and rooms within a School.

The Learning Country – Foundation Phase 3 – 7 years old

Buildings, rooms and resources.

4.9.6 In Wales poor buildings and a lack of resources are a feature within a number of locations for the early years (3 to 7 years old). Where they are found the deficiencies will harmfully affect the children's physical and mental development and the standards they achieve. They limit the experiences available for children and therefore have a damaging effect on the development of perseverance and the willingness of the children to participate in more challenging activities. The deficiencies also limit self-directed play and discussions with peers and adults and it has the effect of lowering the children's standards of achievement.

There is a need for -

- indoor and outdoor environments which are exciting, stimulating and secure and promote children's development and their natural curiosity to explore and learn through direct and indirect experiences;
- an environment which promotes discovery and independence and the placing of more emphasis on the use of the outdoor environment as a resource for teaching children.
- the setting up of bright areas for stimulating play and activities e.g.
 - rôle play
 - small world play
 - creative / artistic space
 - sound and music space
 - small and large physical play space (e.g. climbing frame, slide, gross motor skills e.g. bikes and scooters; tunnels,)
- quiet areas and study areas and teaching areas for older and more able children e.g.
 - quiet space for a story / collective activities
 - an attractive little library
 - a focus for marking / writing
 - sensory resource e.g. dark room full of interesting lights.
 - Retreat / private space for a child needing peace and quiet
 - Tables and resources for children to concentrate on more structured tasks.
- uninterrupted access to the outside 'class' which will include the same facilities as are found inside (the ideal would be to reflect that which was created in the pilot School (Ysgol y Dderi)
- a room / retreat for the staff to meet with workload requirements as well as creating resources and holding meetings.
- An attractive, welcoming and dedicated entrance for the parents
- A suitable floor for artistic / wet activities as well as a floor which is warm and comfortable to work on.
- Indoor facilities outside the room for the material from outside throughout the year.

Current state of buildings belonging to Ceredigion schools and Pre-School Education providers.

4.9.7 When considering the educational requirements of the Foundation Phase the issues below come to the fore –

a.sufficient internal space to hold the various activities which need to be provided.

- an environment which promotes discovery and independence and the placing of greater emphasis on the use of the outdoor environment as a resource for teaching children.
- a suitable floor for artistic / wet activities as well as a floor which is warm and comfortable to work on.
- rôle play

- small world play
- creative / artistic space
- sound and music space
- small and large physical play space (e.g. climbing frame, slide, gross motor skills e.g. bikes and scooters; tunnels,)
- quiet space for a story / collective activities
- an attractive little library
- a centre for marking / writing
- sensory resource e.g. dark room full of interesting lights.
- retreat / private space for a child needing peace and quiet
- tables and resources for children to concentrate on more structured tasks.

b.sufficient / suitable space directly outside the classroom which will offer the appropriate educational opportunities and safely.

- an environment which promotes discovery and independence and the placing of greater emphasis on the use of the outdoor environment as a resource for teaching children.
- rôle play
- small world play
- creative / artistic space
- sound and music space
- small and large physical play space (e.g. climbing frame, slide, gross motor skills e.g. bikes and scooters; tunnels,)
- a space for fostering curiosity about the world around them e.g. a garden to foster the senses, sand, water
- a suitable floor for artistic / wet activities as well as a floor which is warm and comfortable to work on.

c.Ease of access between inside and outside.

- uninterrupted access to the outside 'class' which will include the same facilities as are found inside (the ideal would be to reflect that which was created in the pilot School (Ysgol y Dderi)

d.Care of the reception class.

- No more than two age groups within the same class e.g.nursery / reception

e.Educational provision at three years old and childcare conveniently to hand.

- Education for 3-year-olds which is provided by e.g. MYM on the school site.
- Wraparound care for part-time children provided by a nearby nursery

f.Working environment.

- A room / retreat for the staff to meet with workload requirements as well as creating resources and holding meetings.
- An attractive, welcoming and dedicated entrance for the parents

Issues for futher consideration

1. The creation of a Nursery Unit in the charge of a teacher in the institutions which have reception classes only.
2. The creation of a Nursery Unit in each of the main towns of Ceredigion's Spatial Plan. Llandysul, Cardigan and Tregaron in addition to the schools in the other Spatial towns which have a Nursery Unit – Aberystwyth, Aberaeron and Lampeter.
3. Accepting pupils full time, following their 4th birthday in all of Ceredigion's Primary Schools.(rather than the term following their 4th birthday)

Advantages

- a. Evaluation report on Foundation Phase pilot institutions (December 2006) notes the need for individuals with the highest possible qualification to lead Under 5 educational establishments. It is noted that the quality of provision led by a teacher is substantially higher than that of institutions led by individuals who do not have an appropriate qualification.

- b. An opportunity to give appropriate status to individuals who have made great efforts to gain a degree qualification.
- c. A number of schools with specific classes for children between 4 -5 years old. The inclusion of 3-year-old pupils in these classes would lead to a specific class for children Under 5. This would increase the number of children receiving uninterrupted Education from 3 to 5 in the charge of a qualified teacher.
- d. An opportunity to appoint sufficient ancillary teaching staff according to the 1:8 ratio from September 2008 on. This would ensure that the teaching groups were not large and that a teacher would be responsible for a specific team of individuals for the benefit of the children's education.
- e. Less pressure on pre-School Education providers who are feeling considerable pressure after coming under the education system.
- f. Great need for wraparound childcare provision in addition to education. An opportunity for voluntary organisations to provide care outside school hours for the part-time children and for the children of 2 to 3+ years old.
- g. An opportunity for parents to have (sessional) childcare to enable them to target work.
- h. Two of these schools have acquired wraparound provision - Integrated Centres – Cardigan and Llandysul – pre-School Education facilities meet the needs of the Foundation Phase and Wraparound Care.

4.10 Integrated Children's Centres

4.10.0 An approach to implementing elements of a holistic child centred provision is the establishment of Integrated Children's Centres

Integrated Centres

4.10.1 Integrated Children's Centres (ICCs) are based on the concept that providing integrated education, care, family support and health services is a key factor in determining good outcomes for children and their parents, ensuring the best start in life.

4.10.2 In our communities there can be an enormous range of activities taking place relating to families, their education, health and wellbeing. These activities are delivered in all sorts of ways by the statutory and voluntary sectors. Children's Centres are about building what's already good and aiming to make it even better by ensuring all the agencies and organisations involved in delivering services are working in a joined-up way and keeping the child's needs central at all times.

Provision at Integrated Children's Centres

4.10.3 Each ICC will have at its core:

- Early Years Education
- Childcare
- Open Access Play
- Community Education and Training
- Flying Start where appropriate

Which will enable to be accessed:

- A range of professional childcare services
- Family support type activities including parenting classes
- Play sessions
- Tailored sessions on family nutrition and health
- A toy library facility for families
- Access to a range of adult education courses
- Advice sessions on finding a job and benefits

- A learning environment
- A network of childminders working in your area

4.10.4 An ICC will act as a service hub within the community for a wide range of activities relating to child and family health and wellbeing.

4.10.5 Ceredigion County Council has established two centres, one in Cardigan and the other in Llandysul . Others are to be planned throughout the Authority.

4.11 Special Education

4.11.1 The educational needs of 99.9% of Ceredigion pupils are currently met within the LEA's schools and the four Specialist Units which are located on mainstream campuses. This means that Ceredigion is one of the most inclusive LEAs in Wales.

4.11.2 Of relevance to the development of education in Ceredigion is the issue of access of which there are three principal aspects:

a) Access to buildings

4.11.3 When consideration is given to building any 'new school' the LEA, in line with regulations will ensure that there is physical access to all areas both within and around the school for those who are wheelchair bound. It will be important also to ensure that there is appropriate access to toilets and changing facilities.

4.11.4 Currently a large proportion of older schools are not able to offer access to wheelchairs and are not disabled friendly. They would not be able to meet the needs of a small number of the school population who require wheelchair access. In such cases, where an admission request is received, each case will be considered and the requirements assessed to ascertain whether reasonable adjustments could be made making efficient use of resources.

4.11.5 If it is not possible to admit a child to the school of choice then the LEA will offer the nearest school that can best meet the child's needs. The LEA will be responsible for funding transport if the distance to the school offered is greater.

4.11.6 With regard to 'access to buildings' for pupils who have sensory needs, advice is sought from the LEA Sensory Service regarding reasonable adjustments.

4.11.7 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the Authority to plan provision for certain kinds of physical disabilities and conditions at specifically designated schools which may serve particular localities.

b) Access to the Curriculum

4.11.8 Ceredigion LEA supports schools in ensuring that each pupil may access the curriculum at an appropriate level according to their age, ability and where relevant their special educational needs. In accordance with the Authority's Special Educational Needs Policy, funding will be made available to schools in accordance with published criteria so that teachers and support staff are able to ensure curricular access through e.g. differentiating the curriculum.

c) Access to print

4.11.9 The LEA employs Specialist Staff who are able to offer advice and guidance to all schools with regard to the most appropriate font / print size and / or specialist equipment that some pupils may require in order to gain access to print. In general terms, the Local Authority has advised that all print should be Ariel font size 12 as default.

4.12 Secondary Education

4.12.1 Consideration for the development of education in Ceredigion must of essence include the provision for secondary education, which because of the nature of the county and the inter-relationships with the primary sector not only in terms of transition from the Key Stage 2 to key Stage 3 but because of the potential, in certain localities to develop common integrated and coherent learning approaches but also to deliver and share services.

4.12.2 Whilst opportunities will exist for collaborative approaches and strategies, the secondary phase is faced with significant challenges to develop and expand learning opportunities for young people particularly from 14 -19 and specifically post 16. Through the WAG Learning Pathways 14-19 initiative, collaborative approaches are being encouraged across schools, Further Education and Higher Education to provide a broad range of learning and experiences, academic and vocational, in order develop learners' maximum potential and to deliver the published goal of:

“95 per cent of young people by the age of 25 to be ready for high skilled employment or higher education by 2015”.

4.12.3 Estyn suggests that to have effective collaboration teaching and training partners need to:

- reflect an agreed common vision;
- establish partnerships that respond to the needs of the learners and the wider community;
- adopt an ethos of mutual trust and respect;
- establish common quality assurance measures for all provision;
- strive to establish best practice across the Network and avoid unnecessary duplication

4.12.4 This agenda is being reviewed separately which, inevitably, will influence the overall provision of education in Ceredigion. Currently a study is being commissioned to consider secondary school issues and particularly 14 – 19 provision. Where appropriate this strategic document will make reference to options and opportunities within particular localities, where constructive and tangible collaboration between secondary schools and their neighbouring primary schools may prove possible.

4.13 Information Technology

4.13.1 In this rapidly changing world of Information Communication Technology (ICT) it is paramount that we provide the opportunities and the resources for pupils and staff within Ceredigion to embrace its full potential. It will be necessary to ensure that all resources are updated to meet the demands of the 21st century and that staff are given opportunities to develop their own professional development. This, in-turn, will have a great impact upon the teaching and learning which will take place within education throughout Ceredigion. ICT will be utilised to enhance all subjects of the National Curriculum in Wales. It should motivate, support and challenge pupils and it can have a great impact upon their teaching and learning.

4.13.2 It will be necessary to provide opportunities for pupils, parents and schools to embrace ICT as a means of communication amongst each other and for parents, pupils and teachers to have access to learning resources and materials from any location. Schools and teachers will also be encouraged to use ICT as a means of sharing good practice and lesson resources.

4.13.3 To achieve these goals IT management, support and infrastructure will be enhanced, to ensure IT equipment can be fully maintained and supported, that data is stored and secured correctly and that printing facilities are networked.

5: Possible Patterns

5.0 In the context of our vision for the future of education in Ceredigion and the current challenges faced by schools, we propose, below, possible patterns for educational provision which will support our pupils and meet the needs of all learners in the 21st century.

5.1 The School Review Policy adopted by the Authority in July 2006 and ammended in January 2009, included a number of options for the future development of schools. These options, and the language used to describe them, are open to various interpretations. For clarity, this section provides definitions of the various organisational models which are being considered by the authority. These have been clearly described by Estyn in its report 'Small Schools in Wales' 2006, and the authority is broadly in agreement with the definitions provided.

5.2 At the present time, the schools in the county can be grouped into these categories:

- Schools in formal clusters
- Schools in informal federations – shared headship
- One Area School – Ysgol y Dderi

5.3 The more detailed definitions are as follows:

- Schools in formal clusters – collaboration / cooperation

The majority of the county's schools are organised in formal clusters and headteachers and staff work together at a local level on a range of planning and curricular issues. e.g. sharing of INSET days and developing joint policies and schemes of work. It also provides access to wider professional development opportunities and mutual support to reduce workload. Some clusters have developed partnership working further by introducing arrangements for sharing teachers in specialist areas, administrative support and resources.

Headteachers also attend the termly meetings of the area 'family of schools' based on secondary school catchment areas, where various strategies e.g. primary to secondary transition arrangements, assessment, professional development are discussed and developed. Headteachers also attend termly county conferences to discuss county and national curricular and organisational issues.

- Schools in informal federations – shared headship

In this type of arrangement a larger neighbouring school takes responsibility for the leadership and management in the small school. This arrangement is introduced following the vacancy of the headship of the small school. This type of arrangement has been introduced over the past 4 years and at present (April 2008) there are six shared headships in the county –

- Cwrtnewydd / Capel Dewi;
- Penparc / Llechryd
- Pennant / Cilcennin
- Talgarreg / Caerwedros
- Penllwyn / Sir John Rhys / Capel Seion
- Rhyd Lewis / Glynarthen

At present, to meet statutory legislation, each school has to have a governing body and headteacher. In November 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government, published a consultation document on the future organisation of federations. If the recommendations are accepted, it will allow informal federations to have one Governing Body for the group, without having to follow the statutory process as in a formal federation. The Governing Body of the school with the vacant headship can decide to either have its own headteacher or headteacher in charge from a neighbouring school. This decision is taken, in consultations with the authority, after due consideration of pupil numbers and future plans for the school. The post of headteacher at the second school is taken by an Assistant Headteacher. This arrangement leads to an increased workload for

the Headteacher in charge working with two governing bodies, and unless clearly defined could provide difficulties with accountability and decision-making responsibilities in areas of personnel management and budget setting. Schools, which have entered into this arrangement, have been provided with the county's agreed job description document, which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher in Charge and also the Assistant Headteacher at the second school.

- Area School – Ysgol y Dderi.

Ysgol y Dderi, Llanybi is an area community school. It was opened as an area school in 1976 following the closure of the schools at Cellan, Llanfair Clydogau, Betws Bledrws, Silian and Llanybi. Pupils from Gartheli School, which closed in 1984, also attend Ysgol y Dderi.

5.4 A number of possible options are being suggested for future arrangements of school organisation:

- Collaboratives (Non-Statutory)
- Informal or Soft Federation (Non-Statutory)
- Soft Governance Federation (Statutory)
- Formal or Hard Federations (Statutory)
- Area schools (Statutory)

The different types of federations with possible organisational models are as follows. The following information is taken from the Education Act 2002, section 24, and also the School Governance (Federations) Regulations, on the assumption that the orders for school federations from Welsh Assembly Government will be of a similar nature.

5.5 Collaboratives (Non-Statutory)

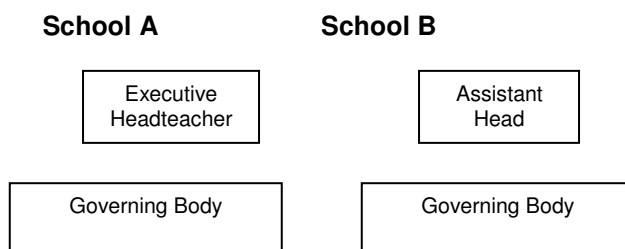
Collaboratives are many and varied and schools often find these easy to operate within, as there are no fixed legal arrangements or structures, therefore allowing for easy networking and sharing. Schools retain their present structures and organisation but collaborate in clusters to develop specific activities as required.

5.6 Informal or Soft Federation (Non-Statutory)

These schools have made a formalized commitment to work together, for example by creating overarching or joint committees on any aspect of teaching and learning or leadership, but each member school retains a degree of autonomy. Some have delegated responsibilities from individual governing bodies to joint committees but they must follow the guidance in the School Governance (Collaboration) Regulations. Under the Regulations, two or more governing bodies may arrange for any of their functions to be discharged jointly; and they may delegate any of their functions (subject to certain restrictions on delegation) to a joint committee.

- Executive Headteacher / Assistant Head and separate governing bodies

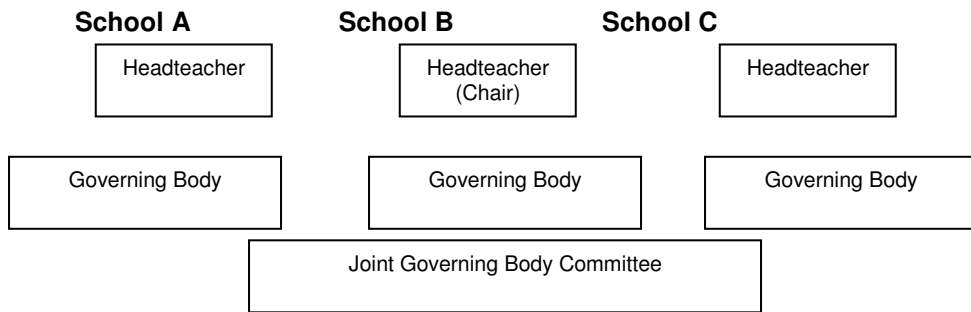
The informal federations (two schools with a shared headship and separate governing bodies) which have been established within the county should be considered as short term organisational models, leading eventually to more formal federations.



In the case of a larger sized school being part of the federation, a deputy head may also be part of the Senior Management Team.

- Separate headteachers (Co-Heads) and separate governing bodies

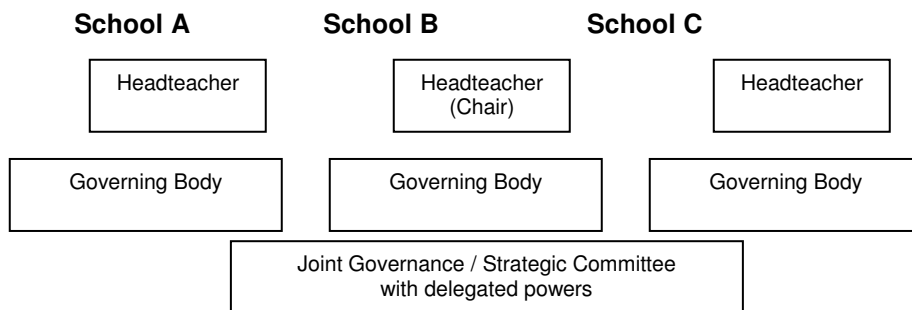
This model - separate headteachers (Co-Heads) and separate Governing Bodies should also be considered an interim step towards the establishment of either a formal federation or an Area School.



5.7 Soft Governance Federation (Statutory)

Soft governance federations are established using Collaboration Regulations, made under Section 26 Education Act 2002. Each school has its own governing body, but the federation has a **joint governance / strategic committee with delegated power**.

All schools share common goals and the joint committee can make joint decisions in some areas, but not all. There is no common budget, but if JSC has budgetary powers delegated to it, they can make prompt budgetary decisions for the group of schools.

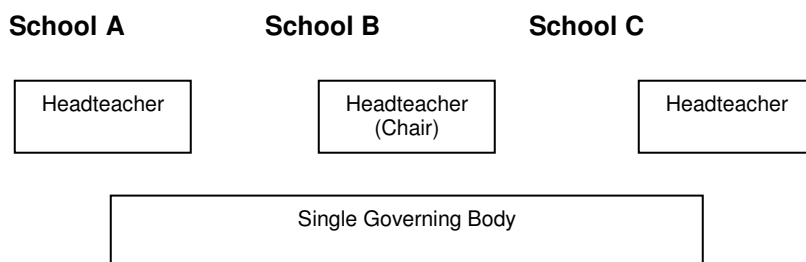


5.8 Formal or Hard Federations (Statutory)

These are single legal entities, with a single governing body across all schools in the federation. This is in accordance with the Education Act 2002, section 24, and also the School Governance (Federations) Regulations. They allow all categories of maintained schools to federate under one governing body, subject to the procedures stated in the Regulations.

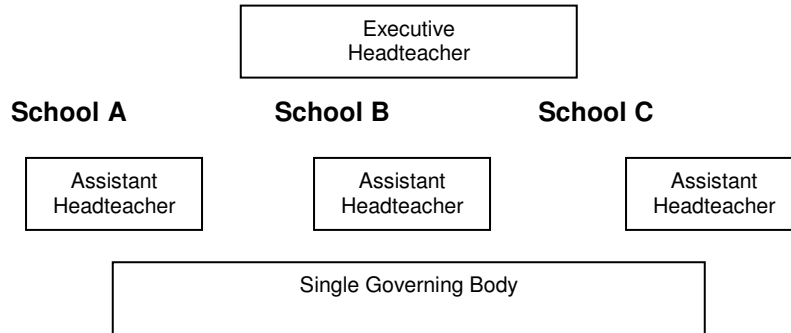
a. **Separate headteachers (Co-Heads) and a single governing body**

The provisions in section 24 and 25 of the Education Act 2002 allows for a formal federation with a single governing body with the schools remaining as separate legal entities with their own head teacher.



b. Executive headteacher and a single governing body

In establishing this type of federation, two or more schools are 'closed' to create a single 'split – site' school with one head teacher and one governing body. The governing body can continue to operate each school as separate units to include the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 in each unit, or it can organize schools so that the pupils are grouped by age - Foundation Stage in one school and Key Stage 2 in the other school. This type of grouping offers clear advantages with regard to planning and curriculum development but these could possibly be offset by increased costs and travel. Where Foundation Phase and Key stage 2 are on different sites, care is needed in ensuring continuity between the key phases.



5.9 Federations are able to provide schools with many new and exciting opportunities to enable them to respond to the challenges of the 21st Century. It enables schools to explore new leadership and management models and develop new structures, roles and responsibilities

It also provides an effective and efficient way of delivering services for children, families and the community including: childcare, recreational activities, health and social care; and adult education.

As federations are established across the Authority, members of staff and governors will be offered training courses, regarding the organisation and development of federations in the future.

5.10 The following lists some of the opportunities and also the challenges that may be faced in developing successful collaboration between schools.

OPPORTUNITIES

For Pupils

- Sharing of staff expertise will be reflected in improved planning and preparation of schemes of work, quality of provision and monitoring of subjects
- Greater opportunities for learning with pupils of the same age from other schools
- Improved opportunities for participating in social, cultural and sporting activities with pupils from other schools
- Increased opportunities to access links with the wider community e.g. International Dimension – (Wide Minds –WiMi)

Staff

- Enhanced performance management provision
- Improved professional development and increased opportunity for leadership for teachers
- Improved teacher morale
- More consultation, shared decision making and teamwork
- Sharing of experience and expertise
- Models of good practice to improve teaching and learning and inclusion

For the heads

- Improved work-life balance
- Less sense of isolation – increased support and joint decision making
- Less stress
- Enhanced professional stimulation and enjoyment
- Saving on planning and administrative time

For the school:

- A structured way for schools to collaborate, learn from each other and share best practice
- Cost effectiveness – economies of scale
- A basis for further partnerships, including cross-phase and with other providers (e.g. 14-19, community services etc).
- A greater base of expertise and knowledge to draw upon for school development
- More adaptable responses to the multiple demands, complexity and ambiguity of the role
- Different perspectives on difficult issues promote better decision-making
- More creative and collaborative leadership
- More completed projects
- Immediate head teacher cover in case of illness or absence
- Recruitment and retention – retaining experienced head teachers whilst attracting more new head teachers
- Developing individuals whilst sustaining continuity of leadership

CHALLENGES

- To have effective and clear communication
- To ensure a clear understanding of roles, responsibilities and accountability
- To establish a positive, professional working relationship between heads
- To have clear and effective communication between stakeholders in setting up the new arrangement.
- To secure the support and commitment of all stakeholders

5.11 Schools in Ceredigion which have worked collaboratively in clusters will be further along the Federation Continuum than schools which have no experience of joint working.

5.12 Small schools of the future will need to collaborate so that they:

- maintain the ‘family’ ethos that characterises small schools, whilst achieving greater efficiencies through cross-site management and administration;
- .share expertise and resources and improve opportunities for specialist teaching;
- .provide a wider range of learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities; and secure wider social benefits for pupils from isolated rural areas.

5.13 In 2005 the DfES Innovation Unit brought together a group of experienced federation heads to write a guide for those who might want to federate. In this, the authors identified what they considered to be the conditions for a successful federation partnership:

- A sense of **shared identity** between the schools. Geographical proximity and having common aims on curricular and non-curricular activities are extremely beneficial.
- A **common purpose**. Schools need a shared sense of what needs to be done and how, with a joint vision for improving attainment and achievement levels.
- **Leadership**. Partnership working requires strong leadership and federations will benefit from developing and sustaining leadership at all levels.
- A strong **management structure**. Schools must understand and co-operate with this for effective partnerships to grow.
- **Trust**. Trust is fundamental to effective collaboration and should be fostered at every level of management. There has to be a real sense of openness and a willingness to operate in a joined-up way amongst governors, heads and all other staff.

- **A system of review.** Good monitoring / evaluation systems are needed to show what anticipated benefits of federation are achieved.
- **Commitment.** Both time and resources are needed to ensure that the federation is effective and sustainable.
- **Communication.** Excellent communication mechanisms are required when introducing change, particularly where lots of schools are involved. Federations may develop intranets and various other e-forums.
- **Sustainability.** There must be a clear sustainability strategy in place to enable a collaboration to cope with changes. For example: if the leadership of one of the schools changes; if additional schools wish to join in; if existing schools wish to leave.
- If committing to contracts or expenditure for any length of time, **financial sustainability** is vital.

5.14 Area schools

To establish an area school, two or more schools may be closed and replaced by a new larger school. The new area school may be located either on one of the old school sites or in a new central location

6: Specific principles and policy recommendations

Principles

6.1 The document seeks to present a strategy for the development of education provision based on the following principles:-

i.Integrated Learning Communities

- to develop Integrated Learning Communities as a focus for providing co-ordinated lifelong learning opportunities through out Ceredigion

ii.Standards.

- to ensure the continued improvement of high standards of service in order to support equally high achievements for the learner

iii.Resources.

- to provide resources which are effectively and efficiently deployed at a time of financial constraints and falling pupil rolls

iv.Funding.

- to review the funding approaches for schools

v.Facilities.

- to provide facilities of quality to meet both the demands of learning, economic and social initiatives and needs of communities for the 21st Century

vi.Structures.

- to establish structures for collaborative working across respective agencies, providers for school in order to maximise the efficient deployment of resources and effective utilisation of expertise.

vii.Staff professional development

- to ensure opportunities for the continuous professional development of staff by establishing structures which will also afford the development of leadership and management at all levels thus protecting the work-life balance of all employees

viii.Buildings.

- to establish a programme of capital investment which will ensure that school based accommodation and facilities are fit for purpose

ix.Strategy.

- to gain the commitment of all stakeholders to adopt and implement the strategy.

Policies

6.2 Emanating from the principles, the analyses, the proposed structures and overall strategy are the confirmation and, where necessary, the formulation of policies:-

- to develop integrated learning communities
- to review the funding models of schools
- to reduce surplus places by reorganising school structures on the basis of units, either singularly or collaboratively, with a minimum admission number of half a class size
- to develop a position over time where no class shall contain more than 30 pupils and incorporate more than two age groups

- to provide schools, where necessary on a federated basis, of a minimum of 100 pupils thereby ensure management by a single governing body, leadership by one headteacher and supported by an appropriate teaching and non-teaching staffing structure which would afford a range of complementary expertise and professional development opportunities
- to pursue as necessary the statutory procedures for school reorganisation which include school closure, amalgamations and federations
- to maximise commitment to capital investment by a range of funding approaches including the authority's capital programme, borrowing regimes applicable at the time, external sources such as grants available from the Government in order to plan and resource effectively a strategy for ensuring that accommodation and facilities are fit for purpose
- to establish a corporate structure and encourage partnership relationships with external agencies to promote strategies and programmes benefiting the whole learner
- to review and implement the strategy for bi-lingual education
- to promote early years learning and the implementation of the foundation phase with providers at appropriate locations in order to maximise the provision for participants
- to effect a coherent and cohesive transition from one phase to another
- to encourage effective collaboration between secondary school with feeder primary schools
- to ensure effective collaboration between secondary schools and other education sectors to provide alternative pathways for learners 14 – 19.
- to continue to undertake regular reviews of schools and amend as deemed necessary the trigger criteria for review.
- to implement the authority's transport policy in accordance with statutory requirements in circumstances of school closure.

7: Development process

The process for implementing the development strategy will be as follows

Draft

- Cabinet adoption / approval of consultative document (May/June 2008)
- Scrutiny Committee (June / July 2008)
- Council approval adoption / approval of consultative document (June / July 2008)

Consultation

- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Public consultation (September – December 2008)
 - (i) Publication of draft strategy
 - (ii) Promotion of publication
 - (iii) Public meetings based on Secondary School areas (begin September 2008)
 - (iv) Formal invitation for responses from Governing Bodies, School staff, Community Councils, Staff Associations, Voluntary and Statutory providers, WAG and other relevant bodies
 - (v) Responses by 15th December 2008

Final approval/. Adoption

- Cabinet approval / adoption (January 2009)
- Council approval/ adoption (February 2009)

Implementation Phase.

The document – 'Possible future options - discussion document' remains a discussion document , which will be used as a basis for discussions with Governing Bodies and other interested parties . Discussions in some areas are at an advanced stage whilst others areas have yet to begin the process. It should be stressed that these discussions need to be held over a suitable period of time so that all the issues can be fully considered before decisions are made.

Statutory process

Federations

Embodied in the Education Act 2002 and Regulations awaited

School closures/change in the nature of the school

Where school closures or changes in the nature of the school are anticipated in relation to amalgamations and establishment of new schools such as the provision of area schools the following processes, which can take at least a year, will be instituted:-

- Proposal to proceed in accordance with the Developing Education in Ceredigion Plan agreed by Cabinet and Council i.e. schools will be reviewed in line with the 'School Review Policy' on an annual basis when they meet the criteria identified within the policy
- Consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents and Community.
- Invite the written observations of Governors, staff and parents together with neighbouring schools likely to be affected by the proposals
- Report to and confirmation / approval by Cabinet
- Publication of statutory notices - invitation for written objection *[2 months]*
- If **no** objections received Cabinet to confirm action and Council notified, or if **there are** objections the proposal is to be presented to the Minister for Lifelong Learning at the Wales Assembly Government for decision. *{two terms prior to proposed closure: one for deliberation + one term's notice to parents}*

8: The way forward

Developing the provision of Education Provision in Ceredigion : conclusion and summary

8.1. In order to address these challenges the restructuring of education provision must be a prime focus for the Children and Young People's Plan (2008 – 2011) Developments must be viewed within the context of the Council's Community Strategy "Ceredigion 2020".

8.2. Consequently the short, medium and long term goals to achieve restructuring are outlined below

Long term: (2015-2020)

- The concept of Integrated Learning Communities realised in all six areas – Cardigan, Llandysul, Tregaron, Aberaeron, Lampeter and Aberystwyth.
 - schools work in collaboration either in clusters or as an area group
 - there is multi agency provision of services, including child care facilities
 - there is a range of life long learning activities and opportunities for people in the community.
- Multi-agency working providing activities and services to meet the needs of the pupils, their families and the community at school, cluster and area level. (Core Aims 1 – 7)
- All schools in the County - area schools, federations and clusters of schools - functioning as Community Focused Schools

Medium term: (2011-2015)

- Continue to implement agreed plans and pursue as necessary the statutory procedures for school reorganisation which include the establishment of federations, area schools and clusters:
 - area schools provided where appropriate and practical
 - federations established with primary schools grouped under the same management team and governing body
 - primary and secondary families of schools established in order to plan and present education as a seamless progression
- Continue to implement the school Review Policy when schools meet the points for action.
- Continue to develop all schools in the County - area schools, federations and clusters of schools - as Community Focused Schools
- Secondary school resources for 14-19 improved
- Each school has a staffing structure in place.

Short term: (2008-2011)

- Develop strategy documents for developing and restructuring the education provision in Ceredigion (Primary and Secondary)
- Proposal agreed by Cabinet and Council
- Consultation with Governors, Staff, Pupils, Parents and Community
 - suggestions for school structures in each area presented and discussed
- Implement agreed plans and pursue as necessary the statutory procedures for school reorganisation which include the establishment of federations, area schools and clusters:
- Continue to implement the school Review Policy when schools meet the points for action.
- Implement the Authority's new Language Strategy for schools.

- Federal schools or schools that merge, as well as any new primary or secondary schools that will be established in the future will be defined, in accordance with Welsh Assembly Government Documentation 2007, as 'Welsh Medium' schools, which are schools that provide 100% Welsh medium education at Foundation Phase and at least 70% Welsh medium education at Key Stage 2.
(see 'Ceredigion Language Strategy Document')
- Provide schools with guidance and support to develop as community focused schools, so that they and their communities work together to:
 - develop local quality services responsive to local need
 - become increasingly involved in the decision making process on the provision of those services and the life of neighbourhoods
 - to work together to deliver the outcomes for the locality
(See COMMUNITY FOCUSED SCHOOLS Development Strategy)
- Plans for remodelling school staff are in place
- A school places strategy provided which includes the Foundation Phase and the 14-19 provision.
- To establish a corporate structure and encourage partnership relationships with external agencies to promote strategies and programmes benefiting the whole learner

Financial Requirements

8.3 A programme to provide appropriate and adequate facilities might be conservatively estimated to cost in the region of £11m for repair and maintenance and a further £30m for major capital projects.

8.4 In addition any restructuring of the organisation of service provision will have an impact on the modelling of the workforce, an element which is difficult to quantify until strategies and proposals are planned and costed.

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Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	2 May 2023
LOCATION:	Hybrid
TITLE:	Feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on sustainable infrastructure principles for education
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March 2023

BACKGROUND:

The Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the sustainable infrastructure principles for education report at its meeting on 30th March 2023.

In November 2018, the Welsh Government updated its statutory code in terms of school organisation and introduced a presumption against closure clause for rural schools. The definition of a rural school has been determined by the Welsh Government using the rural and urban categories of the Office for National Statistics, and as a result, 28 schools in Ceredigion have been defined as rural schools.

The Committee were informed that it is timely to present a document that outlines the principles of the service for the future.

Currently, the statutory code requires Local Authorities to follow a series of more detailed procedures and requirements when drawing up a proposal to close a visible school, when consulting on that proposal, and when deciding whether the proposal to close a rural school should be implemented.

Before deciding whether to proceed with a consultation, a proposal paper must be prepared and submitted to the Learning Communities Work Stream. Following the meeting of the Scrutiny Work Stream, the proposal paper is submitted to the Cabinet to consider whether to:

- a) Approve the proposal and proceed to conduct a statutory consultation
- b) Reject the proposal
- c) Offer an alternative option

The proposal paper would then be presented to the Learning Communities Scrutiny Committee before holding a Statutory Consultation.

Any decision will be based on the Principles in Appendix A together with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>)

Following questions from the floor, it was AGREED to:

- i. recommend that the Cabinet approve the Sustainable infrastructure Principles Document for education; and
- ii. confirm the membership of the cross-party work stream which would discuss any proposal papers brought forward in accordance with the School Organisation Handbook.

The workstream will be the already established workstream 'Ensure an effective and efficient infrastructure to meet our priorities' that comprises of the following members:

- Councillor Endaf Edwards
- Councillor Chris James
- Councillor Meirion Davies
- Councillor Eryl Evans
- Councillor Gareth Lloyd

Councillor Endaf Edwards
Chairman of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 02 May 2023

Title: Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

Purpose of the report: To provide information on the recent changes to Sex Education and the introduction of RSE in Curriculum for Wales (CfW). To ensure that as a Local Authority (LA) we have a suitable RSE policy that can be adopted and adapted by schools to support them in embedding the new curriculum and provide support, information, consistency and clarity.

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Councillor Wyn Thomas, Cabinet Member for Schools, Lifelong Learning and Skills

BACKGROUND:

RSE became a statutory element of CfW for all primary schools and those secondary schools that have committed to the roll out of the new curriculum from September 2022. This will be a phased approach for secondary schools, beginning with Year 7.

For some, RSE is a sensitive subject. A group named Public Child Protection Wales have challenged Welsh Government on the provision for RSE and a Judicial Review was held on 15th November 2022. On 22nd December 2022 the court supported the Welsh Government on all counts.

What is RSE?

RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions. It encompasses the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values that will empower learners to:

- support their health and well-being
- develop healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships of all kinds, including those with family and friends, and in time, romantic and sexual relationships
- navigate and make sense of how relationships, sex, gender and sexuality shape their own and other people's identities and lives
- understand and support their rights and those of others to enjoy equitable, safe, healthy and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives and advocate for these

This section of CfW framework contains:

- The RSE Code: this sets out the mandatory learning at developmentally appropriate phases
- The supporting statutory guidance: this provides support in developing RSE in a curriculum both as essential learning in its own right and also as a cross-cutting element in all Areas

This code contains mandatory requirements, the legal basis for which is set out in the legislation summary of CfW framework guidance. It sets out the themes and matters that must be encompassed in RSE:

- relationships and identity
- sexual health and well-being
- empowerment, safety and respect

The above strands incorporate 6 themes: relationships, rights and equity, sex gender and sexuality, bodies and body image, sexual health and well-being, violence, safety and support.

RSE provision helps to ensure learners develop a positive understanding of relationships and sexuality and to recognise misconceptions. RSE aims to empower learners in line with their needs, experiences and wider development. Through discussion and by responding to learners' questions and needs, it can provide safe and empowering environments that enable learners to reflect on and express their views and feelings on a range of issues, whilst also ensuring that the content is developmentally appropriate.

Teaching and learning in RSE should be supported by a whole-school approach to RSE and this is critical in supporting learners' well-being. This means effectively linking all aspects of school, including the curriculum, policy, staff, school environment and community to support learners in their relationships and sexuality education. Schools and settings should discuss RSE in the context of children's rights as protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A rights-based approach supported by equity should be embedded in the learning. In line with the mandatory requirements of the RSE Code, RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life. This of course includes gender equity and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer+ (LGBTQ+) inclusivity.

There are legal requirements for RSE to be developmentally appropriate, therefore responding to learners' needs, experiences, and evolving knowledge at appropriate times and ages, which also includes the resources schools use in implementing RSE. Each Area of the curriculum, and the range of subject disciplines within them each have a unique contribution to learning in RSE and across 3 phases, linked broadly to age.

- Phase 1: from age 3
- Phase 2: from age 7
- Phase 3: from age 11

The principles of progression across the Health and Well-being AoLE offer guidance to progression in RSE. Schools providing education for learners with moderate and severe, profound and multiple learning needs should consider how best to meet the needs of all learners whose understanding of sexual health and well-being issues may not match their development. Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community, offering them the opportunity to engage with learning and teaching in RSE

Why RSE is needed?

The world around us is evolving rapidly and significantly. As a society we are becoming ever more aware of:

- changing family structures and relationships
- shifting social, cultural and religious norms in relation to sex, gender and sexuality
- advances in technology including the rising influence of social media and increased use of digital communications and devices
- changing laws and rights around relationships, sex, gender and sexuality

In this context, RSE is an important support in enabling learners to navigate these changes. Understanding how relationships are formed, developed and maintained, enables children and young people to develop skills and attitudes to support them in their own relationships throughout their lives.

High-quality RSE provision will support learners to critically engage with what they are learning and experiencing. This supports them to understand their values and beliefs and to advocate for respect and understanding of others. WG believe all children and young people have the right to receive high-quality, holistic and inclusive education about relationships and sexuality. High-quality, holistic and inclusive RSE is associated with a range of positive and protective outcomes for all learners and their communities.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The current policies do not reflect the changes to Curriculum for Wales and need to be adapted. Schools are required to share information with stakeholders e.g. parents, and a policy is needed to support the wider school community and ensure everyone is aware of the expectations and procedures and ensure consistency across the county, as well as ensuring that there is a whole school approach to RSE. The draft policy has been developed by a number of contributors e.g. schools, Ceredigion Inclusion staff including ALN, deprivation and safeguarding, Brook Sexual Health Charity and Healthy Schools coordinators. Schools have received a 'draft' copy of the policy and welcome the opportunity to adopt the policy following Cabinet.

[English Draft Policy](#)

Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why Summary: Long term: Collaboration: Involvement: Prevention: Integration:
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Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To agree to adopt the contents of the Ceredigion RSE policy ii) That any comments proposed by the Welsh Government are included as amendments to the RSE Policy
Reasons for decision:	To comply with the legal requirements of Curriculum for Wales and provide a clear overview of the responsibilities of schools, to ensure a consistent and high-quality approach to delivering RSE across Ceredigion.
Overview and Scrutiny:	Presented to the scrutiny committee on 30th March. All for and support the policy and recommendations.
Policy Framework:	
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	Creating caring and healthy communities
Finance and Procurement implications:	
Legal Implications:	
Staffing implications:	
Property / asset implications:	
Risk(s):	
Statutory Powers:	
Background Papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Report • Relationships and Sexuality Education Statutory Guidance in CfW
Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceredigion Schools RSE Policy 2022- DRAFT (Appendix 1) • Relationships and Sexuality Education in CfW (Mandatory)
Corporate Lead Officer:	Meinir Ebbsworth, Corporate Lead Officer: Schools and Culture
Reporting Officer:	Gillian Evans (Corporate Manager– ALN, Inclusion and Wellbeing) & Laurie Hughes (Wellbeing Advisory Teacher)
Date:	04/04/23



Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy

This Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy has been written in line with Welsh Government (WG) Statutory Guidance, the RSE Code and Legislative Summary (January 2022) for schools and educational provisions in Ceredigion Local Authority.

Name of School / Provision	
Date Policy was Approved by School Governing Body / Management Committee	
Date Policy Review is Due	

Name of person with overall responsibility for RSE in this school / provision	
Name of person with responsibility for maintaining this RSE Policy	



Contents of this RSE Policy

1. Introduction
2. Legislation on RSE and the Equalities Act (2010)
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7. What does Good Quality RSE look like?
8. The RSE Curriculum and how it will be Implemented
9. RSE for Learners with Additional Learning Needs
10. RSE for Disadvantaged Learners
11. Learner Voice in RSE
12. Working with Parents and Carers
13. Working with External Agencies
14. RSE Resources
15. Appendix : A Whole School Approach to RSE Audit Tool



1. Introduction

The purpose of this RSE Policy is to provide all stakeholders (learners, staff, parents/carers, governors, and external organisations) at **(insert name of school/provision)** with information about our Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) provision.

High quality RSE allows for all learners to grow and develop in a safe environment to understand how to become healthy adults who are able to be critical thinkers, whilst developing positive and healthy relationships with others. It is important that learners are able to explore, develop and nurture positive attitudes towards equality, gender diversity and respectful relationships, and this RSE Policy supports wider approaches to preventing violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence ([VAWDASV](#)), harmful sexual behaviours, and [peer-on-peer harassment](#) and abuse.

As the world around us evolves at a rapid and significant rate, we will uphold learners rights under the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) to education (Article 28) which prepares them to understand others (Article 29) through an inclusive, holistic, evidence-based and participative RSE Curriculum.

(Insert name of school/provision) fully complies with the legal statutory duty stated in the RSE Code from Welsh Government, and the [Equalities Act 2010](#).

We provide learners with the opportunity to have a say about the RSE Curriculum they receive, and support parents/carers in understanding why high quality, inclusive RSE is vital to the development and learning of every learner.



2. Legislation on RSE and the Equalities Act (2010)

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is a statutory requirement in the new Curriculum for Wales framework and is mandatory for all learners.

The [RSE Code](#) is issued in legislation under Section 8 of the Curriculum and Assessments (Wales) Act 2021, and clearly states the legal mandatory requirements for RSE which schools and education provisions have to deliver. Key points are:

- RSE is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16 in Wales.
- Parents/carers are no longer allowed to withdraw their child/young person from RSE.
- Schools will design their own RSE Curriculum but the content has to be set within the context of these broad and interlinked learning strands:
 - Relationships and identity
 - Sexual health and well-being
 - Empowerment, safety and respect
- The RSE Curriculum must be developmentally appropriate for learners. This means schools and settings must take account of a range of factors including the learner's age; knowledge and maturity; any additional learning needs and anticipating their physiological and emotional development. Learning within the RSE Curriculum is to be linked to the following phases:
 - **Phase 1:** from age 3
 - **Phase 2:** from age 7
 - **Phase 3:** from age 11

This [link](#) outlines the learning expected in each phase from page 5.

- The RSE Curriculum must include learning that develops learners' awareness and understanding of different identities, views and values and a diversity of relationships, gender and sexuality, including LGBTQ+ lives.

The [RSE Statutory Guidance](#) (2022) is published under Section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and is designed to assist those responsible, as stated in the RSE Code, to design the RSE Curriculum for their school/education provision.

This RSE Policy aligns with the [Equality Act 2010](#). Under the provisions of the Equality Act, schools must not unlawfully discriminate against learners on the basis of their age,



sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership, or sexual orientation (collectively known as the *protected characteristics*). Schools/education provision must also make reasonable adjustments to alleviate disadvantage.

(insert name of school/provision) recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within our community and between learners, parents, staff, governors/management committee members and partners.

3. Related Policies

Those with responsibility for RSE at **(insert name of school/provision)** are aware and adhere to relevant school policies which complement RSE. These include:

- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding / child protection
- Anti-bullying (including procedures for dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying)
- Substance Misuse
- Equality and Diversity
- Online Safety (see WG document: [Sexting: Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Learners](#))
- Welsh Government are currently developing guidance in relation to Transgender policies which will be released for public consultation and is expected to be published in the Summer Term (2023) and should be included in this policy once published.

The list of policies within this section should be reviewed and adapted to reflect policy and practise specific to your school.

4. Responsibility for RSE

In line with a Whole-School Approach, RSE is everyone's responsibility at **(insert school/provision name)**. However, the Governing Body, Headteacher, Senior



Leadership Team, and RSE Lead have specific roles to ensure the careful, considerate and successful implementation of RSE and a safe environment for all learners.

Role of the School/Provision Governing Body

The role of the Governing Body at **(insert school/provision name)** is to:

- Determine and authorise RSE Policy, ensuring it is compliant with the Statutory Requirements outlined in the RSE Code
- Ensure that curriculum provision for RSE is noted clearly in the high level curriculum statement that the school must make public.
- Ensure the RSE Policy is up to date and reviewed annually.
- Ensure the RSE Policy is widely disseminated throughout the whole school community.

Role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team at **(insert school/provision name)** is to:

- Co-ordinate the formulation of **(insert school/provision name)** RSE Policy by involving all relevant stakeholders ensuring effective communication.
- Inform all staff and adults involved with the delivery of RSE within the school of the contents of the policy and its implications to them as providers.
- Assess the Continued Professional Development needs of school staff involved with the programme and seek to respond to these needs with suitable professional training.
- Provide support to the RSE Lead where appropriate, including supporting any challenges from learners, parents and carers.
- Determine and allocate funding allowance for RSE Curriculum to support resources/professional training/external organisations costs.
- Review the RSE Policy and make appropriate changes and amendments annually according to need.

Role of the RSE Lead

The role of the RSE Lead at **(inserts school/provision name)** is to:



- Develop and implement a **developmentally appropriate** RSE Curriculum for all learners, in line with the statutory requirements outlined in the RSE Code.
- Monitor and evaluate RSE in conjunction with other subject leaders to ensure that RSE is integrated effectively across all Areas of Learning Experience (AoLE).
- **Secondary School/Provision only:** Liaise and make appropriate links with feeder schools to ensure continuity and development from Phase 2 learning.
- Monitor and evaluate the scheme of work and the suitability of resources.
- Ensure pupil voice is reflected within the RSE Curriculum and emotional support is provided.
- Liaise with outside agencies and co-ordinate their involvement with the RSE programme where appropriate.
- Liaise with parents and carers where needed regarding RSE Curriculum.
- Liaise with the Local Authority and Healthy Schools Team.

5. Monitoring and Evaluating RSE

RSE Policy Implementation will be monitored by the Headteacher and Governing Body, and should be reviewed and up-dated annually in line with the local authority safeguarding audit.

When the RSE Policy is reviewed, learners, teachers, governors, families, and outside agencies (where applicable) will be consulted to ensure it is effective and meeting statutory requirements.

The RSE Curriculum will be monitored and evaluated by the RSE Lead annually to ensure that it remains relevant, up to date and is meeting the needs of all learners.

6. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

The RSE curriculum at **(insert school/provision name)** supports learners to be able to develop their knowledge, awareness and understanding on how to recognise discriminatory behaviours, harmful sexual behaviours, unhealthy and abusive/violent relationships, whilst ensuring that all learners develop an understanding of what consent is, including developing skills on how to give and withdraw consent.

It is important that all school staff receive the appropriate Safeguarding Training and understand that they have a duty to follow the Safeguarding Protocol at **(insert**



school/provision name), which will follow the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019 / Ceredigion LEA protocol if there is suspicion that a learner may have suffered or be at risk of suffering significant harm.

Good quality RSE delivered in an inclusive and safe environment could lead to an increase in disclosures from learners. It is important that learners are sensitively informed that school/education provision staff cannot guarantee confidentiality if they disclose anything to them, as staff have a duty to care for them and to report anything which causes concern. It is important that learners are supported adequately by an appropriate member of staff.

If a Safeguarding concern is suspected or identified, staff must ensure that they immediately notify the School's Designated Safeguarding Person, or the Deputy DSP in their absence, whom will be responsible for taking the appropriate action. It is never the responsibility of staff to disclose learners' sexual orientation or gender identity to others without their permission.

Where appropriate, for learners aged 13 and above, staff can issue/signpost learners to information on contraception and where they can access local sexual health provision. Remember, [The Sexual Offences Act 2003 \(England and Wales\)](#) states that young people under the age of 13 cannot consent to sexual activity, therefore if a learner under the age of 13 discloses that they are sexually active, the Safeguarding Protocol for **(insert school/provision name)** must be followed.

It is recognised by Estyn that [peer-on-peer sexual harassment](#) is highly prevalent in the lives of young learners and the whole school approach to RSE at **(insert school/provision name)** ensures that a preventative and proactive approach is adopted to tackle the issue. WG are working on recommendations for schools following Estyn's report which are expected in the autumn term (2022).

This includes providing learners with assurance that school/education provision staff will take every incidence of peer-on-peer sexual harassment seriously and work in partnership with the learners, parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate to deal with any incidents.

In order to create an inclusive and safe learning environment for learners throughout their RSE Curriculum, the RSE Lead and other school/education provision staff will receive regular, high quality professional learning opportunities. This will ensure that



staff feel prepared and able to support learners on topics like relationships, consent, sexuality, the law, diversity, gender transitioning, and harmful sexual behaviours.

7. What does Good Quality RSE look like?

Good quality RSE is protective, preventative and underpinned by a developmentally appropriate needs led, rights based approach which takes a positive view of human sexuality and relationships.

Good quality RSE should also:

- Provide developmentally appropriate, accurate facts.
- Use correct biological terminology during RSE lessons.
- Promote a safe, positive, open and honest learning culture free from stigma, shame, fear and guilt which is positively inclusive, respectful and safe for all learners.
- Promote a critical awareness of the different attitudes and values in relation to RSE.
- Empower learners to make responsible, well-informed decisions and to be able to understand themselves and others.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes and perceptions, including gender norms.
- Provide access to developmentally appropriate, objective, supportive and inclusive information about growing up, body changes, healthy relationships, reproductive and sexual health.
- Provide developmentally appropriate information on where learners can access help and support services in relation to RSE.
- Be coproduced by the school community, including the voice of learners, parents, carers and input from relevant stakeholders who support its delivery. See [Designing Your Curriculum](#) document.
- Be developmentally appropriate. See [RSE Code Phases](#).
- Assess learners to gauge an understanding of where they are on their developmental journey.

The RSE Curriculum at **(Insert school/provision name)** enables learners to form and maintain a range of relationships, all based on mutual trust and respect, this is the foundation of RSE at our school/education provision.



8. The RSE Curriculum and how it will be Implemented

(Insert school/provision name) seeks to provide a high quality pluralistic RSE Curriculum which is inclusive, factually correct, and encourages learners to critically engage with the material taught to them. The RSE Curriculum will be taught by trained staff using cross-cutting themes within the [Areas of Learning Experience \(AoLE\)](#) in lessons, using teaching strategies and techniques according to the learners needs. This means that RSE will not only be delivered through Health and Wellbeing but through all AoLE's.

If school/education provision is a Primary provision:

The RSE Curriculum will be taught through the Health and Well-being AoLE and cross-cutting themes and will incorporate all five statements of what matters. The teaching of topics will be in line with requirements outlined in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the RSE Code.

If school/education provision is a Secondary provision:

As the school introduces the new Curriculum for Wales as a phased roll out (starting with Year 7 in 2022/23), RSE will also be taught through Personal and Social Education (PSE), and for some year groups the Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning Experience (AoLE). The teaching of topics will be in line with requirements outlined in Phase 3 of the RSE Code. **(If your school chooses to apply the new curriculum to all year groups from 2022/23 this section will need to be amended to reflect this).**

The RSE Curriculum should be based on three strands outlined in the RSE Code:

- **Relationships and identity:** helping learners develop the skills they need to develop healthy, safe, and fulfilling relationships with others and helping them to make sense of their thoughts and feelings.
- **Sexual health and well-being:** helping learners to draw on factual sources regarding their sexual and reproductive health and well-being, allowing them to make informed decisions throughout their lives.
- **Empowerment, safety and respect:** helping to protect learners from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect and enabling them to recognise unsafe or harmful relationships and situations, supporting them to recognise when, how and where to seek support and advice.



If staff are asked questions by learners during RSE lessons (which maybe be of a sensitive nature) they will never disclose their personal experiences, and they are to use their professional judgement in providing answers which are age and stage appropriate to the age and maturity of the learner or of other learners who may be listening.

9. RSE for Learners with Additional Learning Needs

The RSE Curriculum must be provided for learners with additional learning needs. Staff at **(insert school/provision name)** must consider how best to meet the needs of individual learners whose additional needs means that their understanding of sexual health and well-being may not match their chronological age. Learners with more severe needs can be very vulnerable so teachers have a responsibility to include elements of the RSE curriculum within the provision from a very young age in order to ensure that they have an understanding of 'stranger danger' and 'private and public touch' by the time they reach puberty.

All staff, including ancillary staff, physiotherapists, nurses and carers must be aware of the school's approach to RSE when working with learners with additional learning needs.

10. RSE for Disadvantaged Learners

The RSE Curriculum must demonstrate equitable practice and be available to all learners, regardless of personal or social circumstances. Equitable schools and provisions will recognise and understand that advantages and barriers exist in education, acknowledge each learner experiences education differently, and will work hard to correct any educational imbalance. At best, this involves schools and provisions offering additionality to overcome disadvantage and commit more time and effort to support disadvantaged young people.

To that end, it is essential schools and provisions ensure each learner has equal opportunity to engage with the RSE curriculum. At times, it may be beneficial to repeat sessions or offer opportunities for further discussion. Teachers and school staff, in this situation, often need to play a parental role and offer ongoing support. In more complex cases, schools and provisions should consider whether the young



person is entitled to more bespoke, person-centred access to this part of the curriculum.

It is a common misconception that deprivation is exclusively associated with poverty. It is true, of course, that disadvantaged learners live in poverty; however, true disadvantage spans far wider. In Mid Wales, for example, all learners must overcome rural poverty and have poor access to services and opportunities when compared to other learners across urban parts of Wales. In relation to RSE, it may be that families need additional support to engage young people in diverse, well-balanced, and developmentally appropriate conversations relating to RSE. Again, it may be purposeful here for the schools develop a secure and safe place, with a suitable professional, for young people to speak openly about any questions, concerns, or beliefs they may have.

11. Learner Voice in RSE

As stated in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), children and young people have the right to be consulted on decisions being made about their lives ([Article 12](#)). To ensure the RSE Curriculum meets learners' needs and addresses emerging trends, **(insert school/provision name)** will consult learners and involve them in the curriculum content for RSE and retain flexibility to address the issues learners identify.

The RSE Lead will undertake regular evaluation with learners to ensure the RSE Curriculum is as robust, purposeful and engaging as possible.

12. Working with Parents and Carers

The RSE Code has withdrawn parent and carers right to withdraw their child from RSE – it is **mandatory** for all learners aged 3-16. However, **(insert school/provision name)** acknowledges that parent and carers have an important influence and role to play in terms of delivering messages about sex and relationships. Parent and carers are the key people in teaching their children about sex and relationships and maintaining the culture and ethos of the family. As a result, we see RSE as a shared responsibility and



seek to keep parents and carers informed about this RSE Policy, the RSE Curriculum, and resources where possible.

The school welcomes any comments from parents and carers that are aimed at improving the school's provision in this area. In situations where parents and carers are unhappy with elements of the RSE Curriculum, they are asked to follow the Complaints Policy for **(insert school/provision name)**.

13. Working with External Agencies

Whilst **(insert school/provision name)** is responsible for the delivery of the RSE Curriculum, we recognise the value of involving appropriate external agencies/visiting speakers to complement the RSE Curriculum. This input is not to substitute or replace the schools/education provisions delivery of RSE. If the school/educational provision is approached by an unknown external agency/speaker, then advice regarding suitability will be sought.

Good practice for when working with external agencies/visiting speakers:

- Complete research to check that the external agency has the right skills, knowledge and competency, and has a reputable and professional reputation for being holistic and inclusive in their approach to RSE.
- An agreement of aims and learning outcomes for the visit to ensure the content is age appropriate for the intended learners.
- The external agency/visit speakers have a DBS and are considered appropriate in respect of Safeguarding Procedures.
- The school/education provision have made the external agency aware of their schools policies and their expectations for their visit.
- Staff will inform and prepare learners for the visit of an external agency/visiting speaker and allow them time to prepare questions prior to this.
- Staff will remain in the classroom at all times as they are responsible for the learners and behaviour management.

14. RSE Resources



It is vital that the RSE Lead uses appropriate RSE resources to support the RSE Curriculum.

At XXX we use the following resource to deliver developmentally appropriate RSE:

- XXXXXXXX

(Schools will need to adapt this list to reflect the resource used within their setting.)

15. Appendix 1: A Whole School Approach to RSE Audit Tool

This checklist is primarily for the use of the designated member of the senior leadership team with overall responsibility for managing holistic RSE provision.

Success Criteria	<i>Fully in place</i>	<i>Partly in place</i>	<i>Not in place</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Leadership and Commitment				
A member of the senior leadership team has overall responsibility for RSE.				
There is a member of staff who coordinates the delivery of RSE.				
There is a named governor for RSE.				
There is an action plan to ensure continuous review and development of the RSE curriculum				
The school has an up to date RSE policy which has been developed by staff in consultation with learners, parents governors and has been agreed by the governing body				
Understanding the Needs of Learners and the School Community				



Learners are actively involved in the development of the RSE curriculum				
The diverse experience of learners, such as vulnerable groups and those with additional learning needs are acknowledged and their RSE needs met.				
The school is aware of the emerging priorities and health needs within the local school community that are pertinent to RSE				
Engagement				
The RSE policy has been disseminated to all members of the school community, including parents/carers and visitors involved in the delivery of RSE.				
Staff are actively engaged and involved in developing the RSE policy and curriculum provision				
Parents / carers receive information on their child's learning in RSE				
Arrangements are in place for parents/carers to view RSE teaching materials.				
Information is provided to support parents / carers in their role as educators of RSE in the home.				
Arrangements for managing parental requests to withdraw their child from sex education are followed.				
Workforce				
All staff involved in the delivery of the RSE programme receive appropriate training and support.				
RSE is taught by trained, knowledgeable and confident staff.				
Relationships				



The school can demonstrate how it fosters and develops healthy relationships between all members of the school community				
The school actively promotes the UNCRC				
Support Services				
Contributions to RSE by external agencies support and enhance the RSE programme and do not replace teaching by school staff. Visitors comply with school policy.				
Secondary aged learners have access to appropriate local information, support and advice.				
The school actively engages with specialist services e.g. school nurse				
Learning Environment				
Learners feel safe in RSE lessons.				
Learners can access support and advice in designated areas in the school.				
Contingencies are in place to support children and young people who may be emotionally affected by the lesson and who may feel the need to leave.				
Curriculum				
Learners are actively involved in the development of the RSE curriculum.				
RSE curriculum overviews have been developed clearly identifying progression steps.				
Resources are carefully selected for their suitability and are reviewed for their effectiveness.				
A range of teaching and learning strategies are used which encourage participation with opportunities for learners to develop positive values, skills and attitudes around RSE.				



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Iach
Ceredigion



Assessing learners achievement in RSE is planned into the programme.				
<u>Next steps</u>				
Completed by:		Date:		

(Adapted from Welsh Government Circular No: 019/2010, Sex Education Forum 'Whole School RSE Audit Tool': 2018, WNHSS National Quality Award by Monmouthshire Healthy Schools Scheme May 2022)

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	2 May 2023
LOCATION:	Hybrid
TITLE:	Feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide feedback from the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 March 2023

BACKGROUND:

The Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy at its meeting on 30th March 2023.

The Wellbeing Advisory Teacher provided information on the recent changes to Sex Education and the introduction of RSE in Curriculum for Wales (CfW). This was to ensure that as a Local Authority (LA) they had suitable RSE policy that could be adopted and adapted by schools to support them in embedding the new curriculum and provide support, information, consistency and clarity. The following information was presented to the Committee:

- Background
- What is RSE?
- Policy Content
- Current Situation
- Support to Schools

It was AGREED to recommend to Cabinet:

- (i) to adopt the contents of the Ceredigion RSE policy; and
- (ii) that any comments proposed by the Welsh Government were included as amendments to the RSE

Councillor Endaf Edwards
Chairman of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	2 nd May 2023
Title:	Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for housing in the county for the next 5 years
Purpose of the report:	For information and request to begin formal consultation on the Local Housing Strategy
For:	Information and decision
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Matthew Vaux, Cabinet Member for Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection

BACKGROUND:

Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities have a strategic role to play in the way the local housing market functions. One of the key ways for this to be delivered is through a Local Housing Strategy. The intention is for the local authority to play a lead role in developing an approach to housing across all tenure and ensure the delivery of appropriate housing and related services in order to meet local need.

The current Local Housing Strategy has been in place since 2018 and was a 5-year plan. As a result, the Housing Strategy has been reviewed and updated. The review has involved Senior Officers of the Housing Team, key Partners, and Corporate Managers from across the Pwrth's together with data collection and analysis.

The updated Housing Strategy sets out the vision for a further 5 years:

“There will be sufficient, suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents’ needs now and in the future”

CURRENT SITUATION:

The purpose of the Local Housing Strategy is to set out a clear vision for housing within the county along with the key priorities which identify and respond to the challenges ahead for the 5 years, 2023 – 2028.

The Housing Strategy recognises the important role that Housing plays together with the influence it has on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and the wider community and remains considerate to the Welsh language and culture. It is important that we understand and consider the demands of future generations, their needs, and preferences and how they can be catered for. We need houses that can be adapted and which can sustain people at different stages of their lifetime. This will go a long way to ensure a healthier population, alongside better use of existing housing stock, and improved standards and living conditions.

We need to provide quality housing which is suitably located which will enable people to live at home for longer; this has the potential to create more resilient and

connected communities and should be seen as a key component in delivering the vision set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In addition, the Strategy remains considerate of local Strategies, in particular the Ceredigion Corporate Strategy and the Through Age Wellbeing Strategy.

Key challenges have been identified within the Housing Strategy. The national picture of the economic recession, legislative changes and the Pandemic recovery will all play their part in impacting the local issues affecting Ceredigion, identified as follows:

- High housing costs
- Ageing population
- Homelessness
- Rurality
- Poor transport availability
- Skills and labour shortage in the Construction industry

In addition, the impact of the Phosphates issue in the County means we will need to think differently about how we increase the housing stock, whilst continuing to improve living conditions and supporting our residents. Therefore, using all the evidence collated, we have developed 2 main priorities, with 2 objectives each:

- Increasing supply and improving housing conditions
 - Provide housing that meets our communities needs
 - Ensure residents are living in good quality, suitable and sustainable accommodation
- Supporting residents in their own homes and communities
 - Ensure homelessness is rare, brief and unrepeatable
 - Provide timely and appropriate support to maintain independent living.

The Strategy will be delivered in partnership with key stakeholders, who play a crucial part in the realisation of the Strategy. In order to monitor our progress and success, an Action Plan will be developed and shared on a regular basis through our Strategic Housing Partnership.

Our intention, on agreement from Scrutiny and Cabinet, to undertake a public consultation on the Draft Housing Strategy through May and June 2023.

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why Yes

Summary:

Long term:

The term for the Strategy is 5 years. After which it will be reviewed to ensure it is still meeting residents needs and amended accordingly. The development of housing addresses longer term issues.

Short term needs are addressed through immediate response and support provision.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Collaboration: The Strategy has been developed in conjunction with Partners and will continue to need their support in order to fully maximise the potential of the Strategy and its delivery. The Strategy can only be realised through the partnership working in both Public and Third Sector.

Involvement: We have sought involvement through a workshop held regarding the Strategy, to which stakeholders were invited and encouraged to contribute to the development of the Strategy. Updates on the progression of the strategy are given regularly and considered at the Strategic Housing Partnership. There will be a formal consultation process before adoption.

Prevention: The Strategy embodies the aim of prevention in order to maintain independence and sustainable communities. Housing Support services will play a big role in prevention and escalation.

Improving and adapting peoples home conditions will promote independence and sustainability. The strategy will have a positive impact, improving the quality of housing which is suitably located which can enable people to live at home for longer; it has the potential to create more resilient and connected communities and improve people's health and wellbeing. With a high density of Welsh speakers within the County, there is a need to ensure, as far as possible, that housing needs fosters and strengthens the language.

Integration: The Housing Service is fully embedded in the Through Age Wellbeing model, holistically working with other services for a person focussed outcome. The Strategy encourages collaboration and partnership working to ensure delivery of its key priorities.

The Strategy has been developed with Partners and will continue to be monitored through the Strategic Housing Partnership meeting to ensure delivery of key outcomes.

Recommendation(s): Recommend to Cabinet for approval and to begin the formal consultation on the DRAFT Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028.

Reasons for decision: To enable the Council to fulfil the requirements in relation to the strategic housing function.

Overview and Scrutiny:	At the time of writing the Report, the Strategy has not been discussed at Scrutiny. The Strategy is being presented to O&S on the 13 th April.
Policy Framework:	N/A
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment • Creating Caring and Healthy Communities • Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities
Finance and Procurement implications:	N/A
Legal Implications:	N/A
Staffing implications:	N/A
Property / asset implications:	N/A
Risk(s):	N/A
Statutory Powers:	Housing (Wales) Act 2014
Background Papers:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A- Draft Housing Strategy Appendix B- Integrated Impact Assessment
Corporate Lead Officer:	Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Gofal
Reporting Officer:	Llŷr Hughes – Corporate Manager – Housing Services & Cerys Purches-Phillips – Senior Housing Officer – Strategy & Monitoring
Date:	09/03/2023



HOUSING FOR ALL



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This document is available in Welsh or English. If you require this document in Welsh or an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact cerys.purchases-phillips@ceredigion.gov.uk

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our new Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for Housing in the County for the next 5 years, 2023-2028. Housing for All, provides a firm foundation for addressing the priorities facing housing and housing related services in Ceredigion.

The Strategy aims to address the needs and priorities facing the County for the years 2023-2028 which also includes the impact upon the Welsh language and culture, that we recognise can be supported through appropriate housing development. Housing plays a critical role in influencing the health and well-being of the residents of Ceredigion. It is important that we consider the demands of future generations, their needs and preferences and how we can ensure they are catered for when developing this Strategy.

With high house prices and low incomes, Ceredigion is unaffordable to many, making it harder for first time buyers and local people to remain in their communities. In addition, much of the housing stock has low energy efficiency ratings and when factoring in low incomes, there are a significant number of households facing fuel poverty.

With an ageing population, we need houses that can be adapted, which can sustain people at different stages of their lifetime. This will go a long way to ensure a healthier population, alongside better use of existing housing stock, improved standards and living conditions, and supporting people in their own homes, all of which are a priority.

Improving the quality of housing which is suitably located can make it possible for people to live at home for longer; it has the potential to create more resilient and connected communities.

The Housing Strategy links with other strategies and policies, including both Ceredigion County Council Corporate Strategy 2022-2027, and the Through Age Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 2027.

Ceredigion's Corporate Strategy contains four Wellbeing Objectives:

- Boosting the Economy, Supporting Businesses and Enabling Employment
- Creating Caring and Healthy Communities
- Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages
- Creating Sustainable, Green and Well-connected Communities

The Through Age Wellbeing Strategy aims to ensure:

- Citizens of all ages will have an improved quality of life
- Improved support networks for families and those in need across the County
- Improved wellbeing and health by adopting effective interventions
- Supporting well established networks of community and voluntary groups providing preventative support
- Improved choice and quality of local housing

The Housing Strategy feeds directly into the objectives contained in the strategies, ensuring synergies in approach and direction.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has forced change and challenges on an unprecedented scale, with significant issues being brought to the fore. Challenges faced include economic recession, tackling the national housing crisis and responding to homelessness, whilst continuing to meet the changing needs of Ceredigion. Housing plays a key role in ensuring that our residents and communities are given opportunities to succeed in the challenges ahead.

This Strategy continues to be the focal point for all housing partners and related services to identify, plan and accomplish improved service delivery and enhance the lives of the residents of Ceredigion.

Councillor Matthew Vaux - Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection



KEY FACTS

33,557

Total dwellings, including caravans and mobile homes

1715

Dwellings are second homes

3400

Units of social and affordable housing for rent

80

Units of temporary accommodation

1750

Households registered on the Common Housing Register (January 2023)

120

Applications to the Common Housing Register each month, on average

280

Social Housing lettings each year, on average

322

Additional affordable homes, since 2018

74%

Owner Occupied properties, the highest tenure type in the County

9.4%

Social rented accommodation in Ceredigion (16% Wales average)

17%

In private rented accommodation in Ceredigion (14% Wales average)

833

Empty properties

KEY FACTS

690

Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation

47

Supported living placements

404

Sheltered Scheme accommodation units in Ceredigion

104

Extra Care Scheme units

£31,162

Ceredigion median household income (CACI Paycheck 2021)

£262,535

Average property price in Ceredigion (September 2022)

82.4%

Of properties off mains gas

24.9%

Homes in fuel poverty

11,407

Properties on oil

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

HOUSING FOR ALL 2018—2023

£540,000

Spent on 10 Houses into Homes loans

£510,853

Spent on 35 Home Improvement loans

£3.5m

Warm Homes Fund, for heating and insulations/ upgrades

£511,982

Gained through Citizen's Advice Bureau Income Maximisation Scheme

3500

Declarations issued for ECO LA Flex Scheme

£2.5m

of revenue funding secured through the Community Renewal Fund for 2022/23

9

Awards received for Energy Efficiency Projects

25

Empty properties brought back in to use

210

Units of Social Housing developed

56

Units of Extra Care accommodation at the new site, Maes y Mor

Numbers of affordable housing delivery are increasing annually, and it is anticipated that the significant increases in funding will enable this trend to accelerate

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Net additional General Market Homes Permitted	1927	2080	2198	2112	2333	2413
Net additional Affordable Homes Permitted	800 – 42%	838 – 40%	875 – 40%	829 – 39%	860 – 37%	901 – 37%
Net additional General Market Homes Completed	1020	1104	1201	1753	1901	2048
Net additional Affordable Homes Completed	432 – 42%	450 – 41%	494 – 41%	521 – 30%	640 – 34%	657 – 32%

The table above shows the Affordable Housing Monitoring Data

As a Local Authority, we have worked closely with developers and landlords to provide a range of affordable housing within the County

The Local Authority has utilised the Social Housing Grant and the Intermediate Care Fund, to acquire accommodation within the County to develop specialist premises, working with local partners and across the Through Age Wellbeing model

Through the use of the Common Allocations Policy and supporting Local Lettings Policies, all allocations through the Housing Register have ensured the right property has been allocated to the right family, maximising downsizing opportunities and enabling people to maintain their independence

Allocations of Social Housing

2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
262	314	267	278	338

Since 2018, approximately 2,500 people have received support through Housing Support Grant, per year

The Local Authority has supported 61 Refugee households, over the last 5 years

Disabled Facility Grants Issued

Year	Disabled Facility Grants (DFG)	Minor adaptations (SWS and C&R)	Total	Total spend
2017 - 18	120	125	245	
2018 - 19	143	149	292	
2019 - 20	136	135	271	
2020 - 21	67 (Covid)	61	128	
2021 - 22	127	128	255	
Total	593	598	1191	£5,309,031.98

WHERE WE WANT TO BE

OUR CHALLENGE

“There will be sufficient, suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents’ needs now and in the future”

The challenges faced by the Housing Service remain similar to that of the previous Strategy but compounded by the economic recession, legislative changes and Covid-19 Pandemic recovery.

As a result, despite previous successes, there continues to be a lack of suitable and affordable housing of good quality. This, coupled with the need to tackle homelessness, and support the most vulnerable in our society, means that significant investment and work is required to address this situation.

Ceredigion County Council will work to ensure that local people and Welsh speakers are supported to continue to afford to live in their communities, contributing to the vitality of the Welsh culture and language.

The National Picture	Mixed with local issues	Creates some specific challenges for Ceredigion	So we will...
<u>Economic Recession:</u>	High housing costs and low wages	Supply and Demand	Increase the availability of
Budget cuts, reduced funding opportunities, higher unemployment, and lower wages	Ageing population	Finance and Affordability	affordable and
<u>Legislative change:</u>	Homelessness	Quality	safe homes which
New legal powers and duties	Rurality	Type and Suitability	enable residents to access the right
<u>Pandemic Recovery:</u>	Poor transport availability	Support	support to maintain independence.
Cost of materials, skills and labour shortage and impact of housing affordability	Skills and labour shortage (Construction)		

1. INCREASING SUPPLY AND IMPROVING HOUSING CONDITIONS

1.1 Provide housing that meets our communities needs

Ceredigion does not have a sufficiently wide range of housing stock to meet the changing needs of its residents. The social housing sector is relatively small and does not meet the identified need for one and two bedroom properties. Past changes in benefit legislation resulted in an identified need for affordable one bedroom and shared accommodation for the under 35's. This is especially true of residents in Temporary Accommodation, highlighting the significant need of smaller properties and further actions that need to be taken in respect of a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

The Local Housing Market Assessment further predicts that the average household size continues to decrease. Although the total population in Ceredigion is expected to continue a decreasing trend, the reduction in size of household means that we expect to see an increased number of households which need accommodating.

Needs are influenced by:

- High housing costs in the County—the average property price has increased by 42% since January 2020
- Lack of availability of suitable affordable housing options, placing increased demand on Temporary Accommodation
- Small social housing sector
- A lack of the right type of properties
- Rural nature of the County and poor transport links
- High proportion of second homes
- Fuel poverty

The Authority is currently reviewing its Gypsy Traveller provision in line with Government guidance and is required to agree the Gypsy Traveller Assessment with Welsh Government.

Due, in part, to the Covid-19 Pandemic; high demand and restricted supply has seen an increasing pressure on housing in the County, causing land and house prices to soar. This was as a direct result of the increased demand and, in part, to increased opportunity to work remotely.

The number of people working in construction in the County has decreased over the last ten years from 2,761 (8.6% of workforce) in 2011 to 2,582 (8.5% of workforce) in 2021. Enterprises are generally small or micro-sized, meaning its more difficult to compete for contracts, particularly larger contracts. With restrictions on development due to phosphate issues and fluctuating costs of materials, the construction and development sector is currently poorly positioned to deliver additional homes within the County. The high build costs will make some housing schemes unviable, therefore, alternative methods of construction may need to be considered.

Outcomes: How we will know we are there

People are provided with housing appropriate to their needs

Sufficient affordable housing to meet needs

To get there we will:

Work with partners to develop accommodation to address needs and emerging trends

Identify and enable the delivery of new sites to include affordable housing

Maximise the funding streams available to build affordable housing

Increase the range of affordable housing option tenures, including Low Cost Home Ownership, to enable people to remain in the County

Work with partners to deliver affordable housing through the use of publicly owned assets

Support the Rural Housing Enabler to address the shortage of affordable homes in rural communities

Consider the evidenced influence of second homes in the County and take measures, where appropriate

Consider Commuted Sums and Council Tax Premiums in order to facilitate future development and community schemes

Support the local economy and local contractors through the Council's Procurement Policy

This will be measured by:

Evidence of housing need

Number of clients from specific groups rehoused in suitable accommodation

Variety of properties developed on new sites

Number of affordable housing using built

Range of affordable housing option tenures available in the County

Number of new sites delivered

Number of affordable housing units supported through Council incentives

1.2 Ensure residents are living in good quality, suitable and sustainable accommodation

A high proportion of the housing stock in Ceredigion is old, difficult to heat and expensive to improve to current safety and energy efficiency standards.

- A high proportion of pre-1919 homes with poor energy efficiency
- Increasing financial pressures due to energy/heat inefficient housing stock in all tenures leading to a growing affordability issue coupled with rising energy prices
- High number of empty properties in the County
- Growing pressure on housing related support and social care provision, as a result of changing needs linked to the ageing population
- High number of Houses in Multiple Occupation

Together with the cost-of-living crisis and below average earnings, Ceredigion is a prohibitively expensive place to live for many.

Outcomes: How we will know we are there

People live in good quality housing

People live in energy efficient and affordable homes

People live in homes suitable for their needs

To get there we will:

- Engage with partners to raise standards through identification of poor housing standards
- Work with Landlords and Homeowners to identify and remove high risk hazards (Category 1 HHSRS) to improve housing standards
- Support communities to secure funding and guidance to improve the energy efficiency and fuel economy of their homes
- Work with Partners to improve thermal efficiency in the housing stock and reduce fuel poverty
- Maximise funding opportunities and enforcement provisions to bring empty dwellings back
- Work with Registered Social Landlords and other partners to utilise empty dwelling stock through purchase or leasing arrangements
- Ensure Landlords meet legislative requirements through robust enforcement
- Ensure all qualifying Houses in Multiple Occupation in the County are licensed
- Maintain appropriate Additional Licensing schemes for smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation and residential caravan sites
- Expand Leasing Scheme Wales to improve provision of affordable rented accommodation
- Work with Partners to deliver a range of adaptations to support independent living and hospital discharge

This will be measured by:

- Number of referrals received from the Health and Wellbeing Sector
- Number of Category 1 hazards which have been eliminated
- Number of properties in receipt of thermal efficiency measures
- Number of households receiving income maximisation and energy efficiency advice
- Number of empty properties brought back into use
- Number of enforcement interventions undertaken
- Percentage of Houses in Multiple Occupation licences issued without conditions
- Number of unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation investigated
- Number of licences issued
- Number of properties signed up to the Leasing Scheme Wales
- Number of allocations made from the Older Persons' Register
- Number of allocations made from the Accessible Housing Register
- Number of accessible properties delivered through Welsh Government funding streams
- Number of adaptations completed

2. SUPPORTING RESIDENTS IN THEIR OWN HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

2.1 Ensure homelessness is rare, brief and unrepeated

In 2019 the Welsh Government published a Strategy setting out the vision of “A Wales where everyone has a safe home that meets their needs and supports a healthy, successful and prosperous life. A Wales where we work together to prevent homelessness and, where it cannot be prevented, ensure it is rare, brief and unrepeated.” Each Local Authority is required to develop a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan to meet this vision. The Plan sits under the Housing Strategy and is the focus for minimising temporary housing.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan will focus on:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Avoid repeat presentations to homelessness
- Improving relationships with Private Rented Sector
- Growing Leasing Scheme Wales

The call on homelessness services has increased in recent years and is set to grow further. The Pandemic has enabled the Local Authority to gain a greater insight into the scale of homelessness, together with unmet support needs. The direction of Welsh Government is to minimise homelessness and changes in legislation are being developed to support the aims.

As mentioned previously, with lower-than-average earnings, Ceredigion residents also face higher-than-average house prices and rents. The Covid-19 Pandemic had a major impact on the housing market and housing affordability locally. The increase in demand combined with the limited stock has caused a mini housing ‘boom’ in the County, leading to an increase in rents. Local Housing Allowance rates are insufficient to meet the market rents in Ceredigion. The Homelessness service has also seen an increase in evictions through Notices served. It is suggested that this can be, in part, attributed to the introduction of the Renting Homes Wales Act 2016.

Demand for Discretionary Housing Payments has increased recently. It remains to be seen how the Economic Recession will impact on the Homelessness service.

Outcomes: How we will know we are there

Homelessness is prevented, where possible

People are in temporary accommodation solutions for as short a time as possible

People are supported to move to suitable and secure accommodation

To get there we will:

Work to prevent homelessness through a range of interventions

Ensure Temporary Accommodation is suitable

Develop services to manage the rapid transition to tenancies

Review the Common Allocations Policy in light of changing demands and legislation

This will be measured by:

Number of households where homelessness is prevented

Number of households moving in to suitable accommodation

Number of reviews of suitability of Temporary Accommodation

Progression into the Rapid Rehousing model

Number of days spent in Temporary Accommodation

Develop Time Critical Intervention / Housing First support services to manage the rapid transition to tenancies for complex clients

2.2 Provide timely and appropriate support to maintain independent living

Providing support for all ages is a significant challenge. A change in demographics, an ageing population and longer life expectancy, together with the impact of substance abuse, poor mental health and domestic abuse has led to an increasing need for housing support to vulnerable clients to prevent housing crisis.

In addition to the above, accommodation needs are changing as a result of the following:

- The likelihood of obtaining social housing, with considerably lower proportion of social housing stock
- Increase in household running costs
- Greater desire for independence in later life

The Housing Support Grant forms a key element to meeting the above objective. Early intervention can prevent people from becoming homeless, stabilise their housing situation or help potentially homeless people to find accommodation. Ensuring that, overall, people are supported into the right homes, with the right support to succeed in living independently, meeting a key aim of the Through Age Wellbeing Strategy.

Again, as the cost-of-living crisis unfolds, the impact is likely to be felt in this area.

Outcomes: How we will know we are there

People can access the right support to live independently in their own communities

To get there we will:

Promote all funding options that are available for Landlords, Tenants and Owner Occupiers to improve their homes

Provide support, advice and assistance to Tenants, Landlords and Owner Occupiers to raise standards across all tenures

Develop and promote support solutions for tenants enabling access to early support to sustain tenancies

Enable people to move to alternative accommodation when appropriate and feasible to do so

Seek to support schemes which enable continued independent living in peoples' own homes and communities

Promote access to support services through the internal Housing Support Gateway

This will be measured by:

Number of grants and loans issued

Number of people assisted to raise housing standards within their homes

Number of tenants supported to remain in their homes and sustain tenancies

Number of people rehoused through the Common Housing Register

Number of people supported to identify alternative accommodation

Number of people provided with grants to remain in their own homes and communities

Number of people supported through Housing Support Grant

Number of referrals received from a variety of services

THE BIGGER PICTURE

The right houses in the right place will enable people to maintain their independence and remain in their communities for longer, supporting the Welsh Language and culture. The Housing Strategy 2023–2028 will aim to realise this by considering the bigger picture, and how working with other services impacts on Housing both locally and nationally.

The Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 has been developed through engagement with residents and analysis of evidence. The robust engagement, together with the Local Wellbeing Plan, highlighted that Affordable Housing is a clear concern and priority to the public. The Corporate Wellbeing vision and objectives are shown below:

Ceredigion County Council delivers value for money, sustainable bilingual public services, that support a strong economy and healthy environment, while promoting well-being in our people and our communities

Corporate Well-being Objectives:



Like the Housing Strategy, the Ceredigion Corporate Strategy 2022-2027 acknowledges that housing affordability has been, and continues to be, a major challenge for Ceredigion.

There has been a significant increase in demand for housing in the County, causing property prices to increase by record levels. During the Pandemic, Ceredigion saw a significant growth in property prices as demand outstripped supply. Prices began to increase as soon as the Pandemic first reached Wales in March 2020 and grew significantly throughout 2021.

As a result, nationally, Ceredigion has the 4th highest Housing Affordability Ratio behind Monmouthshire, Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff. This makes it harder for local people and first time buyers to purchase in their chosen communities, especially when considering earnings in Ceredigion are below average. The median annual earnings, by place of residence, was £23,576 in 2021 in Ceredigion.

Further, a study by the Bevan Foundation highlighted that there were no properties advertised in August 2022 at or below Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in Ceredigion, of any size. Remarkably, across Wales there were only approximately 6% of properties available at LHA rate, with regional variations. LHA is supposed to cover 30% of properties within an area. With the rates of LHA staying at the 2020 rate for 2023/2024 affordability of private rentals continues to be an issue.

The Through Age Wellbeing Strategy plays a key part in Ceredigion County Council's Corporate Strategy. The Through Age Wellbeing Strategy aims to:

"Enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing for the people of Ceredigion"

Within the Strategy there are a number of key points with direct links to the Housing Service:

- Increased demand on services, reducing supply (high life expectancy)
- Lowest average earnings
- High levels of alcohol consumption
- Increase in drug and alcohol misuse in communities
- Rising cost of accommodation
- Poor standard of housing conditions
- Many people receive care and support from families

The average property price in Ceredigion in September 2022 was £262,535.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has caused demand on services to increase significantly, not least impacted by a change in homelessness approach. The beginning of the Pandemic, in March 2020, ensured that a homeless response was put in place in recognition of the potential impact that Covid-19 could have on homeless people and especially rough sleepers. The “no-one left out” approach resulted in a significant number of people being brought in to emergency accommodation, showing a clearer picture of the scale of homelessness, together with previously unmet support needs. The Welsh Government and Ceredigion County Council are committed to continuing with this approach.

Many areas of work during the Covid-19 Pandemic were put on hold because face to face visits were suspended. Work is continuing to address the backlog in these areas and the impact is still being felt. Homelessness prevention continued throughout, largely delivered remotely however, changes highlighted above mean Emergency Accommodation remains oversubscribed and move on options are limited.

In addition to the Covid-19 Pandemic impact and recovery, the Housing service has also worked closely with other departments and Partners to support the Home Office Resettlement Scheme in light of the Ukraine War.

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on Local Authorities to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics of: disability, age, gender reassignment, sex, race, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, religion or belief or lack of belief. The requirements of Welsh speakers are also protected.

Welsh Language and Culture

Ceredigion continues to be one of the strongholds of the Welsh language within Wales where the language is an integral part of Ceredigion’s society. Welsh and bilingual communities are the foundation of its culture and everyday life. However, communities are changing and this is having an impact on Welsh language and culture; especially as young people, who benefited from Welsh language education within the County, move away. The Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan aims to tackle the challenges facing Welsh speaking communities with a high concentration of second homes and, as a result, the Housing Strategy will continue to be conscious of this Plan and also support the Ceredigion Language strategy 2023—2028.

In the 2021 Census it was reported that 31,678 (45.3%) of the residents of Ceredigion who are over 3 years old are able to speak Welsh. This was less than the number and percentage reported in the 2011 Census, a decline of 3,286 persons and 2 percentage points. However, Ceredigion remained the Local Authority with the third largest proportion of Welsh speakers, aged 3 and over nationally.

Underpinning the 'Housing For All' Strategy therefore, is the basic principle that the best means of maintaining the vitality of the Welsh language is by sustaining communities. With such a large proportion of the existing population living in rural settlements a strategy that supports rural, as well as urban, communities is vital for the health of the Language.

To sustain the culture and enhance the use of the Welsh language in all aspects of everyday life in the County, one of the principle aims of the Strategy is to address affordable housing for local people. The Strategy aims to ensure sufficient opportunities for local people to access affordable or social housing through having a local connection.

Number and percentage of Welsh speakers in Ceredigion by age group 2011 and 2021, according to Census reports:

	3 – 15 years	16-64 years	65+ years	Everyone over 3 years
2011	78.4% (7,175)	41.9% (20,503)	46.4% (7,286)	47.3% (34,964)
2021	71.8% (6,123)	42.4% (18,219)	39.9% (7,347)	45.3% (31,678)

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 requires the Local Authority to develop a range of early intervention and prevention Strategies that include collaborative arrangements with communities and the voluntary sector to support independent living. 'Housing for All' aims to meet this requirement through early help and support delivered via our Housing Support Programme which aims to stabilise and sustain housing for people.

Unemployment levels coupled with low-income levels has placed increased difficulties on the ability of people to access safe and affordable housing. Poor quality and inaccessible housing are often the cause of falls and trips in the home; it can contribute towards feelings of loneliness and isolation and can cause delayed transfers of care. All these come at an enormous cost to the NHS, Social Services and other public services. Therefore, getting housing right makes financial sense.

The Welsh Government's program "**The Programme for Government – 2021-2026**" sets out how the Government will deliver on 10 wellbeing objectives, designed to reflect priorities for protecting and developing the economy, society, environment and culture. This includes developing services for vulnerable people, a focus on decarbonisation and reforming housing law.

The Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 is the biggest change to housing law in Wales for decades. It changed the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties, improving how people rent, manage, and live in rented homes in Wales. The Act makes renting easier and provides greater security for both Tenants and Landlords.

However, this hasn't come without challenges, as landlords perceiving the additional responsibilities weigh up the benefits of continuing in the sector.

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 aims to improve the supply, quality and standards of housing in Wales. The key elements of the act are:

- Introduction of a compulsory registration and licensing scheme for private rented sector Landlords and Letting and Management Agents.
- Reform of homelessness legislation, which places a stronger statutory duty on Local Authorities to prevent homelessness through advice and assistance, which also allows them to use suitable accommodation in the private sector
- Placing a duty on Local Authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers, where a need has been identified
- Introduction of standards for Local Authorities on rents, service charges and quality of accommodation
- Reform of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system
- Giving Local Authorities the power to charge more than the standard rate of Council Tax on long term empty properties and certain types of second homes
- Assisting the provision of housing by Co-operative Housing Associations
- Amendment of the Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993

Phosphate Levels

Following new evidence from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee about the damaging effects of phosphates to water ecosystems and species, National Resources Wales (NRW) conducted an assessment of the nine relevant areas in Wales, including the River Teifi in Ceredigion, and in January 2021, published the results. Over 60% of the waterbodies in Wales failed the targets, including the River Teifi. NRW produced an interim planning position statement advising that any proposals for developments within Special Areas of Conservation river catchments, in particular those that will generate increased volume or concentration of wastewater, must now prove that the design will not contribute to increased phosphate levels. As a result, housing in some areas has stopped, which will inevitably impact on the delivery of affordable homes. The Council are working with all relevant partners to find short and long term solutions to the issue to allow development to proceed and to restore the health of the rivers.

The Local Housing Market Assessment, published in October 2020, considers the whole of the housing market and the differing needs of communities, including older people, students and people with disabilities. In addition, the West Wales Care Partnership has also identified key areas for focus in their Housing and Accommodation Needs Assessment for people with Learning Disabilities and people with Mental Health needs in West Wales, published in February 2022. Also in development is a Regional Strategy for Housing and Care which will provide direction in relation to specialist housing schemes.

These sources of evidence are also used in the development of our Housing Prospectus, which provides direction for our Social Housing Delivery Programme, and in development of new schemes, for specific need.

DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY

Partnership Arrangements

In delivering our housing priorities Ceredigion County Council will need to work closely with others, developing ideas, enabling opportunities and delivering projects. Our key partners in realising the strategy include:

- Resident Social Landlords
- Local developers and construction industry
- Private Landlords
- Third Sector Organisations
- Hywel Dda Health Board

We are all working to achieve the same goals and that it is in everyone's interests for Ceredigion to have homes where people can thrive. We also understand that each of our partners will have their own considerations and that we may not all take the same route to achieve our goal. Given the scale of the challenges we are facing, it is more important than ever to have solid, effective partnerships built on a foundation of trust and mutual respect.

From the Council's Through Age Wellbeing Strategy we know that "Providing support for all ages and needs is a significant challenge for the Council, with limited resources. The profile of society and demographics have changed considerably over the last decade with a significant increase in the prevalence and impact of substance abuse, poor mental health, domestic abuse and older age groups living in Ceredigion. As a consequence, demand for certain services has increased placing a greater financial pressure on those service areas. In addition, the unemployment levels, coupled with the low income levels has placed increased difficulties on the ability of people to access safe, affordable housing" Therefore, we will continue to work across Council services and support wherever possible to meet identified housing needs and ensure priorities are inclusive, co-produced and client focussed.

We understand that some people living in Ceredigion may have unique needs. We will work in partnership with all of these groups and aim to meet their specific needs on a case by case basis.

Performance and Governance

We will monitor the actions and measures set out within the Strategy on a quarterly and annual basis through the Strategic Housing Partnership, which contains representatives from our key partners. In addition, at appropriate intervals, an update on the progress of the Strategy will be provided to Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Action Plan

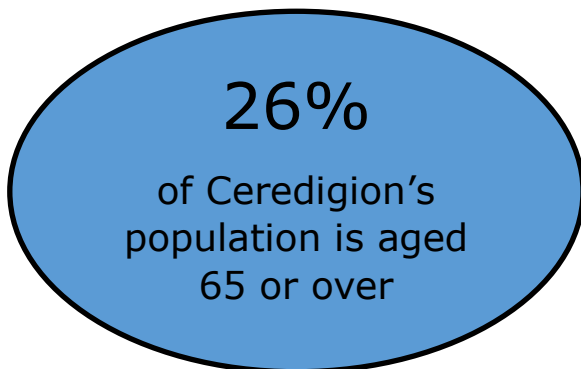
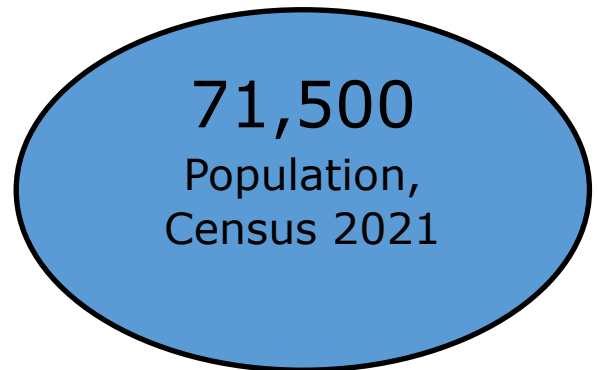
We will prepare an Action Plan setting out our targets, key projects and activities and how we will measure our progress. Delivery against the Plan will be reported to Members and Partners through the Strategic Housing Partnership.

EVIDENCE PAPERS

The wider evidence is presented below. The local and national context, together with the evidence base shown on the following pages have led us to establish our main priorities and objectives for this Strategy.

Demographics

The latest Census results from 2021 show that the population of Ceredigion is 71,500, some 4,492 lower than the population in 2011. Between mid-year 2011 and 2011 the population rose from 75,400 to a peak of 75,800 in 2004, and then reached a new peak of 76,000 in 2012 which has been followed by a slow decline. It is suggested that by 2031 numbers will continue to decrease to 70,445.



According to the latest (2018-based) population projections, this will rise to 30% of the population (21,000 people) by 2030; while the number of people aged 85+ will increase from 2,400 to 3,200.

Data from 2021 Census for Ceredigion

Age Group	Population	%
0-18	12,572	18
18-50	26,168	37
50+	32,728	46
Total	71,468	100*

Figures do not sum to exactly 100% due to computer roundings

A higher share of the population in Ceredigion (26%) is of retirement age than in Wales in general (21%)

Social Housing

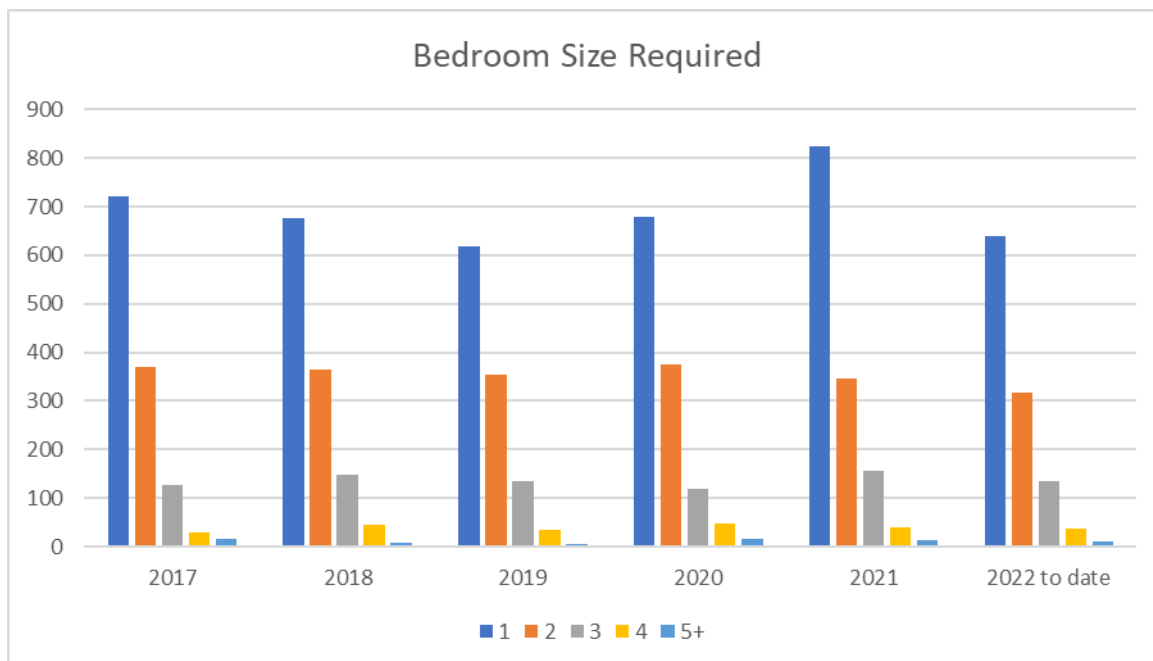
9.4%
Social Housing
stock, in Ceredigion

At the end of January 2023, there were 1750 Housing Register Applications seeking Social Housing in Ceredigion. An increase from 1400 in 2018. On average there are 280 allocations made per year, leading to a large discrepancy between demand and supply.

Social Housing stock accounts for 9.4% of housing in Ceredigion, compared to 16% Wales average (2020 Dwelling Stock Estimates, Welsh Government) The availability of Social Housing is a barrier to securing affordable housing in the County.

The following table shows the Social Rented property breakdown by bedroom numbers in Ceredigion (RSL Stock data). (Ceredigion 2021)

	No	%
1 Bed Flats / Apartments	469	16
2 Bedrooms	1348	46
3 Bedrooms	1029	35
4 Bedrooms	64	2
5 Bedrooms	6	0.5
6 Bedrooms	3	0.5
Sub total:	2919	
Sheltered Accommodation	404	
Extra Care	104	
Total units:	3427	



The table above shows the demand for bedroom sizes, according to the Common Housing Register

The table above shows a significant demand for 1 bed properties in the County, which has remained through the life of the previous Strategy. There is also an increase in demand for 2 and 4 bed properties. We can see from the table below that the current stock does not match our demand.

Demand for social housing by bedroom size is identified in the table below. There is a mismatch between demand for smaller units and the availability of smaller units within the social housing stock.

Bed size	Current stock	Demand
1 bed	16%	60%
2 bed	46%	24%
3 bed	35%	11%
4 bed	2%	4%
5+ bed	1%	1%

Bedroom size demand compared to current Social Housing Stock

Affordable Housing

The Local Authority Prospectus highlights the need to review the range of Affordable Housing options available and investigate opportunities to create affordable pathways to home ownership. To include:

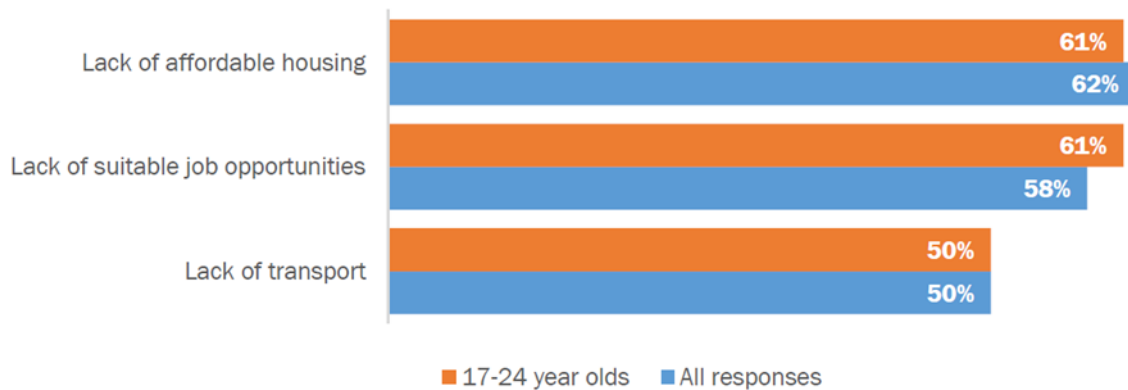
- Shared Ownership
- Shared Equity
- Rent to Own
- Homebuy Scheme
- RSL Shared Equity Scheme
- Help to Buy Wales
- Extra Care

Affordable Housing Options demand, as identified on the Common Housing Register



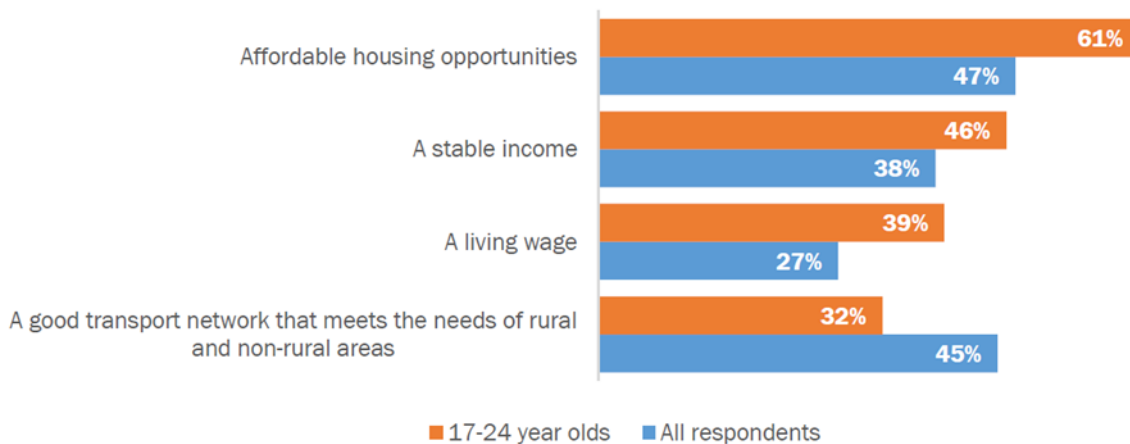
The Local Wellbeing Assessment was carried out in 2022 and identified that the residents of Ceredigion were concerned about affordable housing opportunities.

Looking ahead, what concerns you the most about prosperity in the county?



Source: Ceredigion PSB Well-being Survey

Which three things do you value most in a prosperous community?



Source: Ceredigion PSB Well-being Survey

Thinking about the future, lack of affordable housing was the area of greatest concern for residents. With rising house prices and the increased cost of living

Housing Standards

16.6%

Private rented properties, in Ceredigion

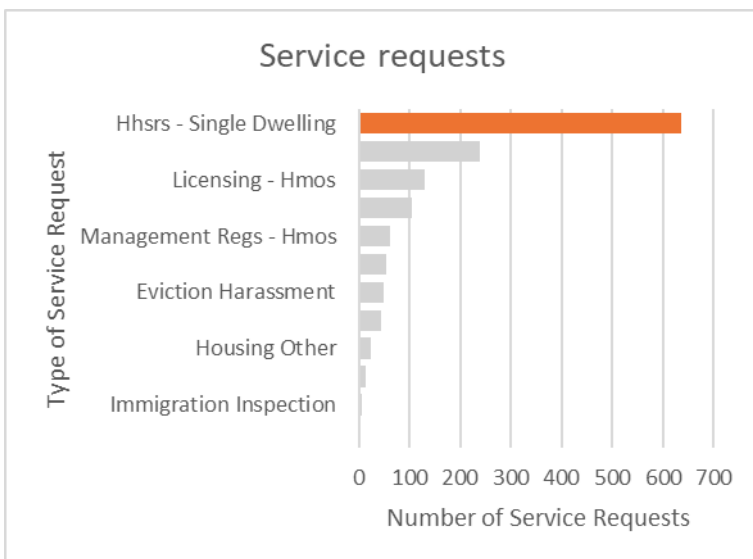
Private rented homes are generally considered to be in worse conditions than other tenures. Ceredigion has a high proportion of privately rented properties, 16.6% compared to a Wales average of 14.2%

The Local Authority recorded 1383 housing related Service Requests between 2017 and 2022. 178 Category 1 Hazards identified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and 62 Enforcement Interventions were required.

1383

Housing related Service Requests

The table below shows the type of Service Requests received by the Housing Service



The top four Hazards identified during HHSRS Assessments are as follows:

- Damp and Mould
- Excess Cold
- Fire
- Electrical Hazards

Much of the housing stock in Ceredigion, especially in rural areas, is hard to heat because of its age, construction, and lack of mains gas supply. Home adaptations may provide a lifeline in less suitable properties but cannot solve all of the issues. Good quality housing has a strong effect on health for all ages. It is estimated that poor quality housing costs the NHS in Wales > £95m per year (Nicol and Garrett, 2019), being a factor behind issues such as falls and accidents in the home, and health issues caused or worsened by cold and damp living conditions.

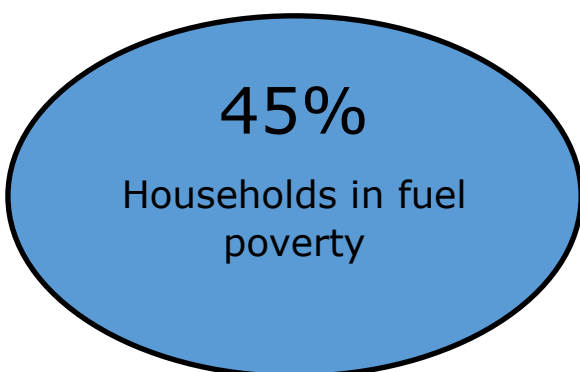
The current means of assessing 'bad housing' is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which classifies defects in dwellings by assessing their potential effect on the health and safety of occupants and visitors. The system allows the seriousness of any hazard to be rated, differentiating between minor hazards and those where there is an immediate threat of major harm. Where a hazard scores 1,000 or more on the HHSRS it is deemed to be a Category 1 hazard and any dwelling with such a hazard is considered to be below the minimum acceptable standard for housing and thus classified as 'poor' or 'bad' housing.

Category 1 Hazards

Year	Total No HHSRS Assessments	Total No Category 1 Hazards identified	Improvement Notices Served
2017/18	253	37	2
2018/19	100	52	4
2019/20	223	23	2
2020/21	30	17	0
2021/22	66	22	0

Demand continues for Home Improvement Loans. The Local Authority gives priority to Homeowners and Landlords offering the property to let at affordable/intermediate rent levels, or who offer the housing for Social Housing or nomination rights.

Fuel Poverty

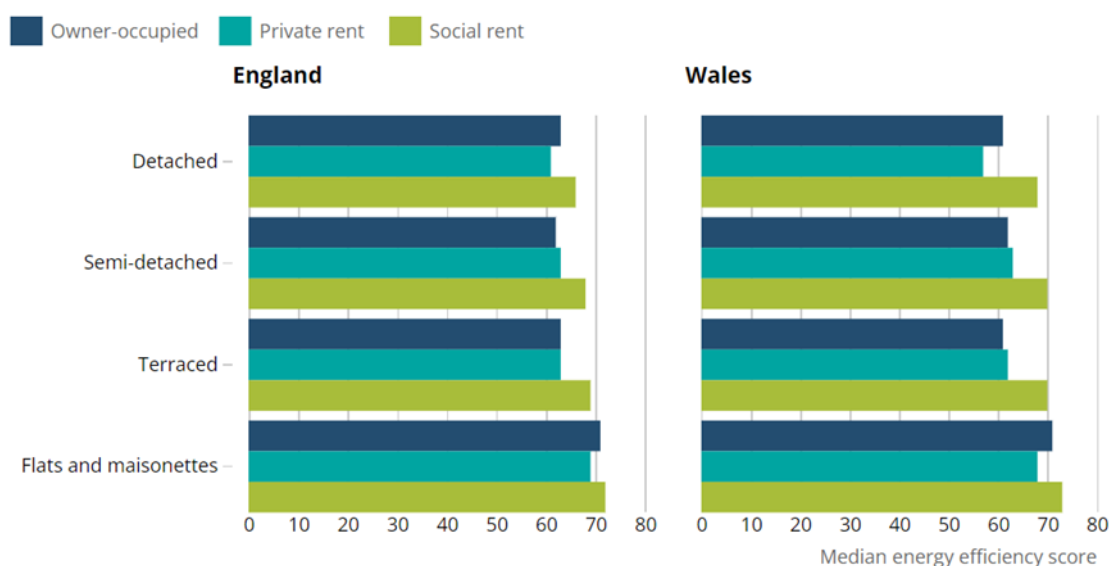


New official Welsh Government fuel poverty estimates say up to 45% of Households in Wales are likely to be struggling to keep warm and safe at home, trapped in fuel poverty.

Energy Efficiency

Several factors affect the energy efficiency of housing, including property type, tenure and when it was constructed. Much of the housing stock in Ceredigion, especially in rural areas is hard to heat because of its age, construction and lack of mains gas supply.

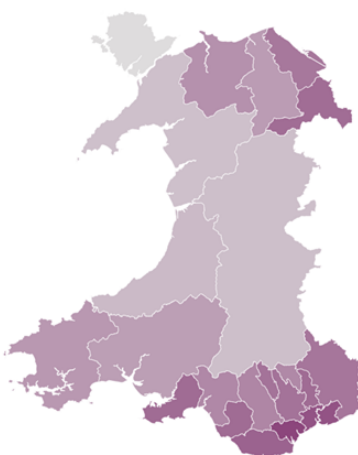
- 82.4% of properties not on mains gas (29,693 properties)
- 6926 properties with an EPC rating of F or G



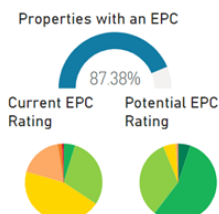
The table above shows median energy efficiency score by tenure and property type, England and Wales, up to March 2022 (Source: Department of Levelling Up)

Rent Smart Wales Data indicates that the average EPC Rating in the RSW registered Private Rented Sector properties in Ceredigion is 58, 4th lowest in Wales.

Cardiff	67
Newport	66
Vale Of Glamorgan	65
Torfaen	64
Bridgend	64
Swansea	64
Wrexham	64
Caerphilly	63
Merthyr Tydfil	63
Mornmouthshire	63
Flintshire	63
Rhondda Cynon Taf	62
Neath Port Talbot	62
Blaenau Gwent	62
Conwy	61
Pembrokeshire	60
Denbighshire	60
Cardiganshire	60
Ceredigion	58
Powys	58
Gwynedd	57
Isle Of Anglesey	55



EPC Rating	Properties	%
A (92+)	84	0.0%
B (81-91)	8262	4.7%
C (69-80)	51797	29.6%
D (55-68)	78801	45.1%
E (39-54)	31700	18.1%
F (21-38)	3029	1.7%
G (1-20)	1245	0.7%



Domestic Private Rented Property in Wales are regulated by the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. An EPC rating of E or above is required on these properties in order to comply with the law. Energy efficiency schemes assist both home owners and those in the private rented sector to improve the energy efficiency of their properties through installation of a variety of energy efficiency measures.

Empty Properties and Second Homes

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022/23 as at 06.01.2023
Long Term Empty Properties	226	260	255	189	154	210
Long Term Empty Premiums	736	665	684	720	680	646
Second Homes	90	85	91	82	72	87
Second Homes Premium	1622	1621	1637	1609	1727	1793

The figures above, identified through Council Tax records, show the number of empty properties in Ceredigion.

Empty properties and Second homes are subject to a 25% Council Tax Premium

There are some fluctuations between empty properties, second homes and commercially let holiday homes subject to business rates

In January 2023, the following was apparent of Empty Properties within Ceredigion:

Number of empty properties in Ceredigion: 833 (210 Long Term Empties and 646 Long Term Empty Premium)

Aberystwyth – 119 (27 long term, 92 premiums)

Cardigan – 48 (21 long term, 27 premiums)

Lampeter – 29 (8 long term, 21 premiums)

Whilst the numbers of empty properties has reduced over recent years, implementation of the Empty Property Action Plan will allow targeted action to bring empty properties back into use, enhancing the number of affordable housing available within the County.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Dwellings which contain more than one household are known as Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and cover a wide range of housing types mainly in the private rented sector. They are often occupied by younger people and can include some vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

There are two University Towns in Ceredigion. As a result, the County has a higher than average number of HMOs in Wales for its population size. As of December 2022 there were 558 licensed HMOs in the County. The Housing Act 2004 requires mandatory licensing of certain types of HMO. Mandatory licensing is required where the HMO is occupied by five or more persons living in two or more separate households. The Housing Act 2004 also provides for licensing to be extended by a local authority to include HMOs not covered by mandatory licensing. An Additional Licensing scheme was declared in April 2019 in Ceredigion. The use of Additional Licensing has to be consistent with the local authority's Housing Strategy and should be co-ordinated with the authority's approach on homelessness, empty properties and antisocial behaviour. The Scheme lasts for a period of 5 years and is due for review before April 2024.

The Additional Licensing Scheme applies in respect of HMOs occupied by three or more persons, forming three or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys, in the following wards of the County:

- Aberystwyth—North
- Aberystwyth—Central
- Aberystwyth—Penparcau
- Aberystwyth—Rheidol
- Aberystwyth—Bronglais
- Llanbadarn Fawr—Padarn
- Llanbadarn Fawr—Sulien
- Faenor

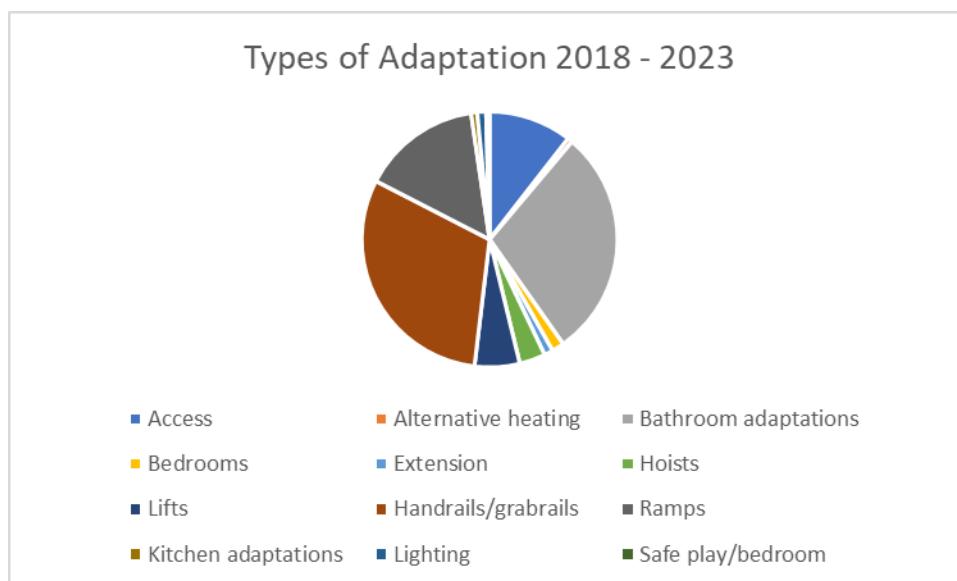
Leasing Scheme Wales

As a result of the “no one left out approach” there has been an increase in investment from Welsh Government in funding areas, together with the launch of the Private Rented Sector Leasing Scheme Wales. Ceredigion County Council have signed up to the Welsh Government’s Leasing Scheme Wales initiative to improve access to properties at an affordable rent.

Adaptations

On average 265 large, medium and small adaptations are delivered annually to assist residents to maintain independence in their own homes and facilitate hospital discharge. A range of adaptations are undertaken including extensions, through floor lifts, stairlifts, level access showering facilities, hoists, grab rails, ramps and access to outside space. Adaptations are delivered according to the needs of the client as recommended by the Occupational Therapist.

- 19% (increased from 17%) of households on the Ceredigion Common Housing Register have requested an adapted property (self reporting across all levels)
- 21% (increased from 14%) of households on the Ceredigion Common Housing Register have requested Older Persons' Accommodation



The table above shows the type of Adaptations installed between 2018 and 2023

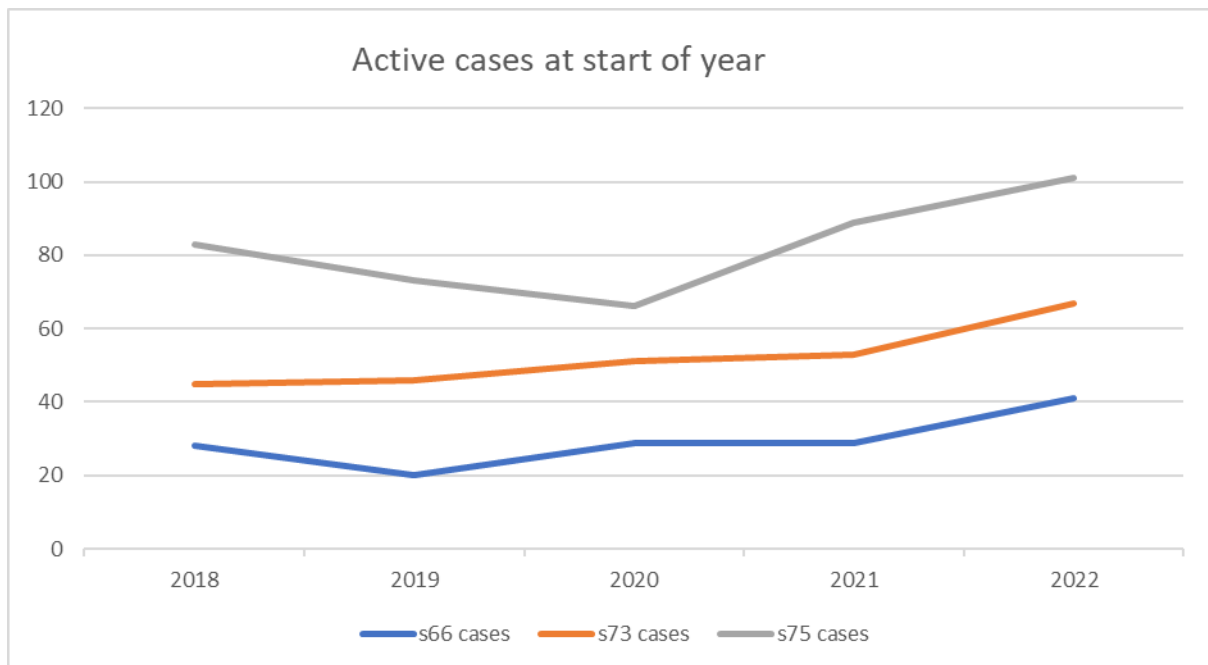
Homelessness

Over the last few years and during the pandemic the number of presentations to the homelessness service have remained broadly consistent. However during the pandemic an 'Everyone In' approach followed by changes in legislation by Welsh Government means that the case numbers at full homelessness duty (s75) have increased. The Housing Options team are less able to close cases at an earlier stage, due to lack of suitable housing options for people to move into. In addition the changes in legislation mean that people who were not eligible for support or accommodation at this stage due to not being in priority need are now eligible. This means that we support people for a longer period.

This can be represented by looking at the active case numbers over the last five years. The number of cases at all homelessness duty stages are trending upwards, and in particular the s75 cases have markedly increased.

Further information in this area can be found in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

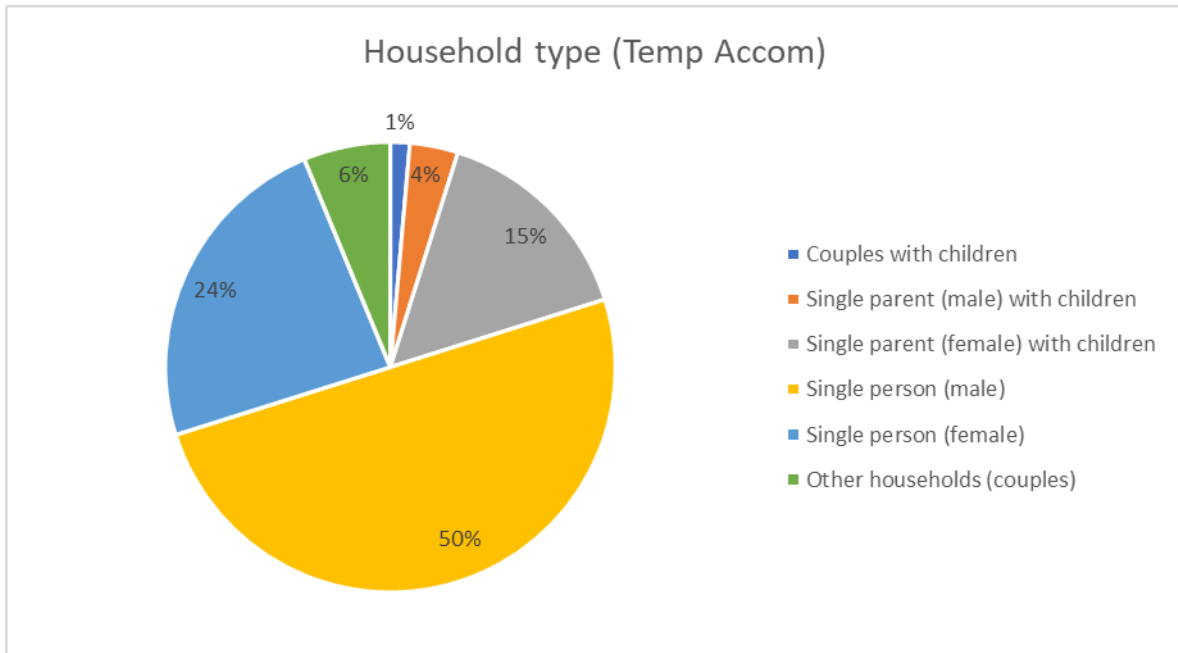
The table below shows active case numbers 2018–2022



Temporary Accommodation

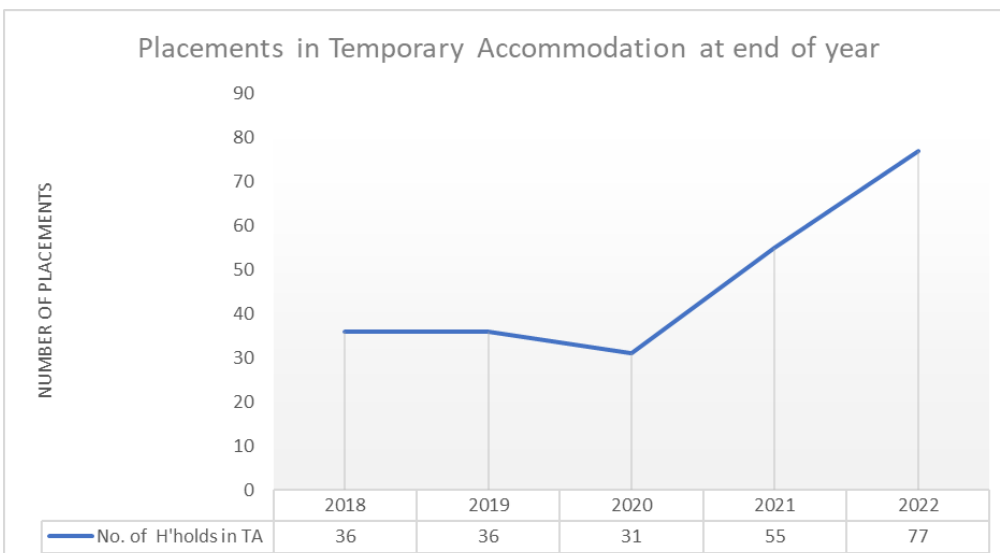
The data below looks at the makeup of households accommodated in temporary accommodation over 2021/2022. During this time 189 placements were made, accommodating 144 households.

Household type placed in temporary accommodation



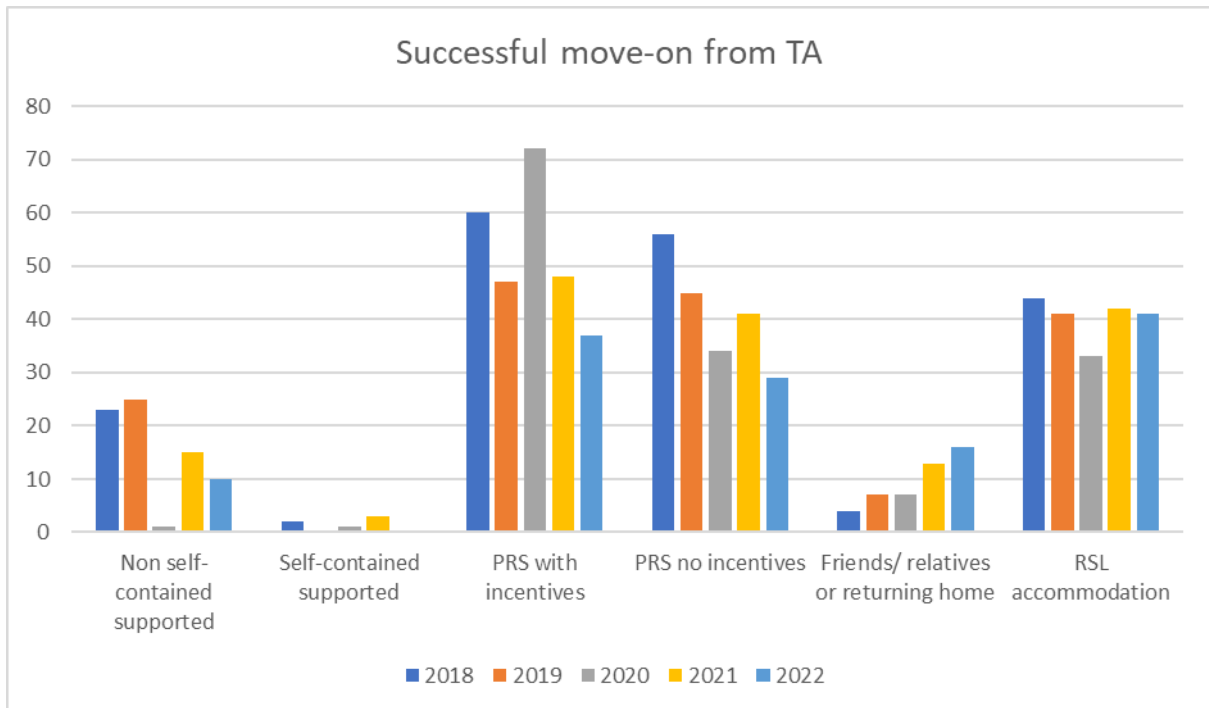
74% of all homeless placements are for single persons. This is in comparison to the Census 2011 data which indicates just 33.1% of the total population of Ceredigion is in a single person household.

Households placed in temporary accommodation



There is an increasing demand on temporary accommodation due to insufficient housing options for people.

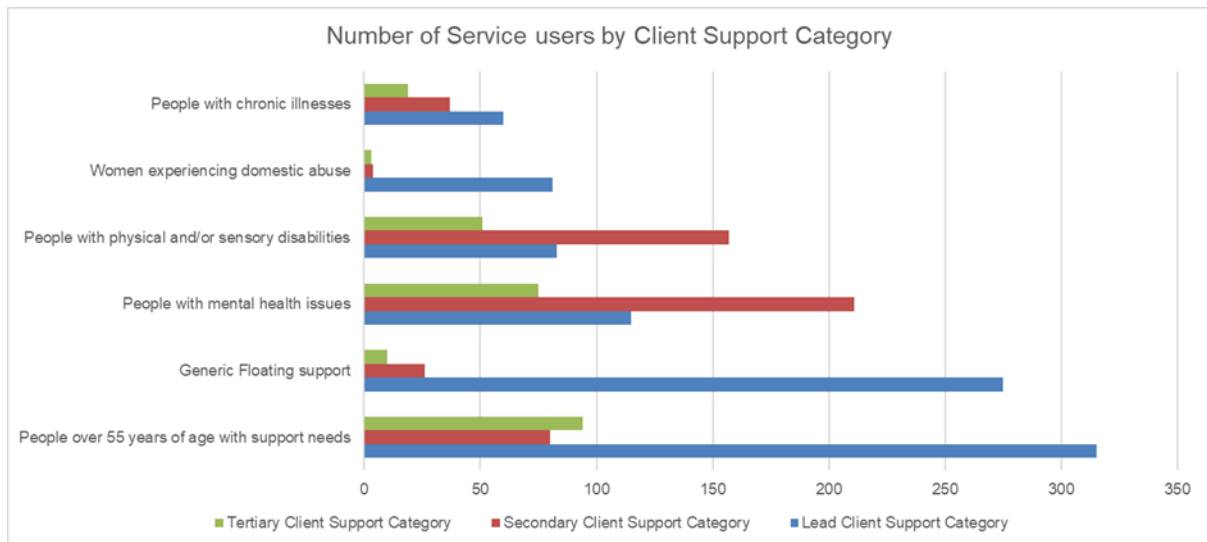
Successful move on from Temporary Accommodation 2018 –2022 (percentage)



The chart above shows the successful result of move on from temporary accommodation for the period 2018–2022. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to move-on homeless households from temporary accommodation to the private rented sector. The drop in numbers in 2020 was impacted by moving home being prevented for the large part due to the Pandemic. This had a knock on effect on the ability to move persons into particularly Registered Social Landlord properties and supported placements.

As a result of the Covid Pandemic, the Council worked hard to accommodate all those at risk, under an 'Everybody In' umbrella. This is shown in the increased number of Households accommodated in temporary accommodation. This has corresponded with a decrease in successfully discharging into the private rented sector. This has led to increased pressures on the Housing Options and Support teams, highlighting the need to reconsider the move-on options available, including a review of the Common Allocation Policy.

Housing Support



The table above shows the needs of Service Users (Housing Support Needs Assessment)

Evidenced in the Housing Support Programme Needs Assessment and identified as priorities within the Housing Support Programme Plan, our focus will be to;

- Maintain current provision and enhance the range of specialist accommodation available
- Provide Specialist Accommodation to house individuals who are unwilling or unable to manage even the most basic accommodation
- Address lack of provision of Supported Accommodation for clients with complex needs and chaotic lifestyles

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessible Housing Register	A register for applicants who are either mobility impaired or disabled and in need of suitably adapted properties. The Register is managed by the Local Authority on behalf of its partner Registered Social Landlords in Ceredigion.
Affordable Housing	Affordable housing can be generally referred to as "Low Cost Home Ownership". It can also include Discounted for Sale or Shared Ownership/Equity or Intermediate/affordable rented housing.
Affordable Housing Register	A register for applicants who are unable to access open market housing which is suitable for their needs. Applicants may be able to afford Intermediate Rent or Affordable Rent or alternatively qualify to buy one of the Low Cost Home Ownership options. The Register is held by the Local Authority and is also available to Registered Social Landlords in Ceredigion.
Common Housing Register	The Housing Register is managed by Ceredigion County Council on behalf of its Registered Social Landlord Partners in order to match suitable applicants to social housing properties.
Community	The 'community' can be defined in a number of ways. It can be used to define a group of residents in a precise location. It can also be used to refer to a group of individuals who share a particular interest or viewpoint. Community is not simply about facilities but also about social networks, in terms of meeting and greeting. The importance that the Welsh language plays in this is significant in order to sustain the vitality of Welsh culture and language in Ceredigion. Evidence suggests that a high density of speakers is necessary for the Welsh language to be used as a normal vibrant community language. (National Welsh Language Survey 2013-15)
Commutated Sums	A Commuted Sum, in the context of the Ceredigion Local Development Plan, is the payment of a capital sum by a developer, to the Local Authority in lieu of on-site provision of affordable housing (where the local planning authority agree this is not possible) or where the construction of whole affordable housing units on site does not meet the developer's full obligation under the affordable housing policy. The payment is a contribution to a fund administered by the authority and used to supplement the development of affordable housing elsewhere in Ceredigion.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)	The Disabled Facilities Grant can be used for adaptations and equipment required to enable a person to maintain independence in their home.
Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)	An Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is a report that assesses the energy efficiency of a property and recommends specific ways in which the efficiency of your property could be improved.
Empty Property Action Plan	This Plan will help bring empty properties back into use and improve the physical condition of the existing environment, targeting those properties having a detrimental effect.
Fuel Poverty	A fuel poor household is defined as one which needs to spend more than 10% of its income on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime (usually 21 degrees for the main living area, and 18 degrees for other occupied rooms)
Housing Support Grant	The purpose of the Housing Support Grant (HSG), funded by Welsh Government, is to prevent homelessness and support people to have the capability, independence, skills and confidence to access and/or maintain a stable and suitable home.
Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assesses 29 housing hazards and the effect that each may have on the health and safety of current or future occupants of the property. If a hazard is a serious and immediate risk to a persons' health and safety, this is known as a Category 1 hazard.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	A house in multiple occupation is a property rented out by at least three people, who are not from the same household, but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.
Local Housing Allowance Rates (LHA)	The Valuation Office Agency Rent Officers determines Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates used to calculate housing benefit for tenants renting from private landlords. LHA rates are based on private market rents being paid by tenants in the broad rental market area (BRMA). This is the area within which a person might reasonably be expected to live.

Local Housing Market Assessment	The Local Housing Market Assessment provides assistance in determining the level of housing demand in Ceredigion.
Older Person's Register	An Older Person's Register is a Register for housing specifically suitable for person's over 55 years of age.
Rent Smart Wales	Rent Smart Wales process landlord registrations and grant licences to landlords and agents who need to comply with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	A Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is a planning document intended to support local authorities make the transition to a Rapid Rehousing model of homelessness services.
Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)	Registered Social Landlords are private non-profit making organisations also called Housing Associations that provide low cost social housing.
Social Housing	Social Housing is housing that is let at low rents and on a secure basis to people in housing need. It is generally provided by Local Authorities and Housing Associations.
Social Housing Grant	Social Housing Grant is a grant given to Registered Social Landlords by Welsh Government and managed by the Local Authority. The grant aims to provide new affordable housing for rent and low cost home ownership.
Social Housing Prospectus	Local authorities are required to identify their strategic priorities for utilising Social Housing Grant and the Prospectus provides a summary of Ceredigion's housing priorities.

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



This **Integrated Impact Assessment tool** incorporates the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Welsh Language Standards requirements) and Risk Management in order to inform effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS: (Policy/Change Objective/Budget saving)

Proposal Title	Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's visions and plans for housing in the county for the next 5 years				
Service Area	Housing	Corporate Lead Officer	Donna Pritchard	Strategic Director	James Starbuck
Name of Officer completing the IIA	Cerys Purches-Phillips	E-mail	Cerys.purches-phillips@ceredigion.gov.uk	Phone no	Skype

Please give a brief description of the purpose of the proposal

The Local Authority plays a lead role in developing an approach to housing across all tenures in the County. The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure the delivery of more integrated housing and related services in order to meet local need, whilst also safeguarding the heritage and culture of the County. Sustaining existing communities is key to this strategy, and vital for the health of the Welsh language in Ceredigion.

Who will be directly affected by this proposal? (e.g. The general public, specific sections of the public such as youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits, staff members or those who fall under the protected characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act and for whom the authority must have due regard).

Residents of the County, across all tenures could be impacted by the strategy.

VERSION CONTROL: The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development, Welsh language and equality considerations wherever possible.

Author	Decision making stage	Version number	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
Cerys Purches-Phillips	<i>e.g. Budget Process, LG, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc.</i>			<i>This will demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development throughout the evolution of a proposal. Have you considered and applied the sustainable development principle and Well-being Goals?</i>

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: Which of the Council's Strategic Objectives does the proposal address and how?				
Boosting the Economy, supporting Business and enabling employment.	The Strategy will have a positive impact on the local construction industry providing job opportunities in the development of new homes and adaption and improvement to existing homes. It will also provide the opportunity for residents to maintain a sustainable home as a basis to find secure employment.			
Creating caring and healthy communities	The Strategy will provide opportunities to enable local people to remain in their communities, safeguarding cultural heritage and language, especially in areas of high proportion of Welsh speakers. The Strategy will aim to provide early assistance and support for peoples' housing needs, sustaining their accommodation or enabling them to move on where appropriate. The right level and type of support will be provided at the right time, to prevent escalation. Wherever possible, through a variety of options, we will maximise people's independence enabling them to remain in their own homes and communities.			
Providing the best start in life and enabling Learning at all ages	The Strategy will provide the opportunity for residents to maintain a sustainable home as a basis to find education / secure employment.			
Creating sustainable, greener and well-connected communities	Providing quality housing, suitably located will enable people to stay in their own homes for longer, promoting community resilience. Improvements to existing homes can enhance an area giving a sense of community pride. The Strategy will support schemes to improve energy efficiency.			

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NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. These need to include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the judgement you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation will have a positive or negative effect. Data sources include for example:

- *Quantitative data - data that provides numerical information, e.g. population figures, number of users/non-users*
- *Qualitative data – data that furnishes evidence of people's perception/views of the service/policy, e.g. analysis of complaints, outcomes of focus groups, surveys*
- *Local population data from the census figures (such as Ceredigion Welsh language Profile and Ceredigion Demographic Equality data)*
- *National Household survey data*
- *Service User data*
- *Feedback from consultation and engagement campaigns*
- *Recommendations from Scrutiny*
- *Comparisons with similar policies in other authorities*
- *Academic publications, research reports, consultants' reports, and reports on any consultation with e.g. trade unions or the voluntary and community sectors, 'Is Wales Fairer' document.*
- *Welsh Language skills data for Council staff*



2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES: How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the five sustainable development principles, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in its development?			
Sustainable Development Principle	Does the proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not, explain why.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the principle?
Long Term Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The term for the Strategy is 5 years. After which it will be reviewed to ensure it is still meeting residents needs and amended accordingly. Short term needs are addressed through immediate response and support provision. 	The development of housing addresses longer term issues.	N/A
Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy has been developed in conjunction with Partners and will continue to need their support in order to fully maximise the potential of the strategy and its' delivery. The Strategy can only be realised through partnership working in both Public and Third Sector. 	Regular attendance at the Strategic Housing Partnership together with workshops held 9 th January 2023 and 12 th January 2023 to develop the Strategy. Partners include: Wales & West Housing, Ceredig, Barcud, HDUHB, together with Corporate Managers from other Council service areas.	N/A
Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have sought involvement through a workshop held regarding the strategy to which stakeholders were invited and encouraged to contribute to the development of the strategy. Updates on the progression of the strategy are given regularly and considered at the Strategic Housing 	Regular attendance at the Strategic Housing Partnership together with workshops held 9 th January 2023 and 12 th January 2023 to develop the Strategy. Partners include:	N/A

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	Partnership. There will be a formal consultation process before adoption.	Wales & West Housing, Ceredig, Barcud, HDUHB, together with Corporate Managers from other Council service areas.	
Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy embodies the aim of prevention in order to maintain independence and sustainable communities. 	Housing Support services will play a big role in prevention and escalation. Improving and adapting peoples home conditions will promote independence and sustainability.	The strategy will have a positive impact - improving the quality of housing which is suitably located, which can enable people to live at home for longer. It has the potential to create more resilient and connected communities and improve people's health and wellbeing. With a high density of Welsh speakers within the County, there is a need to ensure, as far as possible, that housing needs fosters and strengthen the language.
Integration Positively impacting on people, economy, environment and culture and trying to benefit all three.	<p>The Housing Service is fully embedded in the Through Age Wellbeing model, holistically working with other Services for a person focussed outcome.</p> <p>The Stategy encourages collaboration and partnership working to ensure delivery of its' key priorities.</p>	The Strategy has been developed with partners and will continue to be monitored through the Strategic Housing Partnership Meeting to ensure delivery of key outcomes.	Consider specific national strategies developed for protected groups, e.g. Armed Forces, Anti-Racism, Gypsy and Traveller.

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3. WELL-BEING GOALS: Does your proposal deliver any of the seven National Well-being Goals for Wales as outlined on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. We need to ensure that the steps we take to meet one of the goals aren't detrimental to meeting another.

Well-being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts-	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?
<p>3.1. A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs.</p>	<p>The strategy positively contributes to a prosperous Wales, through opportunities for local procurement, community involvement through local development and energy efficiency schemes.</p>	<p>Opportunities for local procurement are pursued through adaptations, development and energy efficiency. £4million is invested into the County through the Housing Support Programme.</p>	<p>Community benefits can be realised through procurement avenues.</p>
<p>3.2. A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change).</p>	<p>The Strategy encourages opportunities for a resilient Wales to improve energy efficiency within peoples homes and build community resilience through the provision of sustainable cost effective homes.</p>	<p>Examples of funding bids for warmer homes together with other new development schemes. Evidence Papers contained in the Strategy support this view.</p>	<p>Requirements relating to environmental considerations will be addressed through Planning.</p>
<p>3.3. A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and health impacts are understood.</p>	<p>The Strategy aims to improve the living environment which will have a positive impact on a persons physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>The Housing Support Programme, which supports the Housing Strategy, will address peoples physical and mental wellbeing, in the context of their housing need.</p>	<p>Housing Needs Assessment.</p> <p>Evidence Papers contained in the strategy outline the contributing factors and key statistics are shown as examples of improved living standards.</p>	<p>Close working with other Pyrths through the Through Age Wellbeing model.</p>



		adaptations and affordable housing.	
<p>3.4. A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected.</p>	<p>The Strategy will have a positive impact in creating attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.</p>	<p>Evidence indicates that socio-economic status and deprivation, access to services and facilities, and crime, have the greatest impact on community cohesion and resilience. Provision of quality, affordable housing in the right location that meets residents needs will have a positive impact on both socio-economic status and deprivation. Enabling local people to remain in their communities will contribute towards sustaining cultural heritage and language.</p>	<p>Requirements relating to community considerations will be addressed through Planning.</p>
<p>3.5. A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental well-being.</p>	<p>There is a positive impact for a globally responsible Wales through encouraging and supporting energy efficiency schemes in both new build and existing properties whilst reducing peoples' carbon footprint.</p> <p>The Housing Service actively supports Refugee Resettlement within the County.</p>	<p>Evidence of carbon reduction before and after schemes are implemented.</p>	



<p>3.6. A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.</p> <p><i>In this section you need to consider the impact on equality groups, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement.</i> <i>You need to consider how might the proposal impact on equality protected groups in accordance with the Equality Act 2010?</i> <i>These include the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation.</i> Please also consider the following guide:: Equality Human Rights - Assessing Impact & Equality Duty</p>	<p>Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.</p> <p><i>Using your evidence consider the impact for each of the protected groups. You will need to consider do these groups have equal access to the service, or do they need to receive the service in a different way from other people because of their protected characteristics. It is not acceptable to state simply that a proposal will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone. You should demonstrate that you have considered all the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed.</i></p>	<p>What evidence do you have to support this view?</p> <p><i>Gathering Equality data and evidence is vital for an IIA. You should consider who uses or is likely to use the service. Failure to use <u>data</u> or <u>engage</u> where change is planned can leave decisions open to legal challenge. Please link to involvement box within this template. Please also consider the general guidance.</i></p>	<p>What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p> <p><i>These actions can include a range of positive actions which allows the organisation to treat individuals according to their needs, even when that might mean treating some more favourably than others, in order for them to have a good outcome. You may also have actions to identify any gaps in data or an action to engage with those who will/likely to be effected by the proposal. These actions need to link to Section 4 of this template.</i></p>																
<p>Age Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their age? (Please tick ✓)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Positive</th> <th>Negative</th> <th>None/ Negligible</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Children and Young People up to 18</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>People 18-50</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Older People 50+</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Children and Young People up to 18	✓			People 18-50	✓			Older People 50+	✓			<p>There is a positive impact for all age groups as we are creating homes which are suitable for each stage of life from safe, warm homes for children, families and through to adapted and independent homes for the elderly.</p> <p>Within the Housing Strategy there is a recognised need for smaller housing suitable for younger people wishing to establish themselves in the area.</p>	<p>21% of households on the Ceredigion Housing Register have requested Older Persons' Accommodation.</p> <p>Evidence papers and key statistics contained in the Strategy support this view.</p> <p>Ceredigion's population is expected to age over the coming years, with significant increases in the numbers of people aged 65 and over, and more particularly in the 85+ age group. As life</p>	<p>Actions have already been taken to better contribute to positive impacts for young people and older people.</p> <p>There are specific Housing Support commissioned services to address the needs of younger and older age groups.</p>
	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																
Children and Young People up to 18	✓																		
People 18-50	✓																		
Older People 50+	✓																		



				<p>There is an equal desire and need for Older Persons' accommodation and as such, developments are in the pipeline for appropriate schemes.</p>	<p>expectancy increases, the demand for housing which is suited to the needs of the elderly is likely to increase further.</p> <p>Data from 2021 Census for Ceredigion:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Population</th> <th>%</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0-18</td> <td>12,572</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18-50</td> <td>26,168</td> <td>37</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50+</td> <td>32,728</td> <td>46</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>71,468</td> <td>100*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Figures do not sum to exactly 100% due to computer roundings</i></p> <p>A higher share of the population in Ceredigion (26%) is of retirement age than in Wales in general (21%).</p>	Age Group	Population	%	0-18	12,572	18	18-50	26,168	37	50+	32,728	46	Total	71,468	100*	
Age Group	Population	%																			
0-18	12,572	18																			
18-50	26,168	37																			
50+	32,728	46																			
Total	71,468	100*																			

<p>Disability Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their disability? (Please tick ✓)</p>			<p>19% of households on the Ceredigion Housing Register have requested an adapted property, thus creating the Accessible Housing Register. The Accessible Housing Register needs are</p>	<p>Evidence papers and key statistics contained in the Strategy support this view.</p> <p>The 2021 Census identifies 22% of the population as having a long term health</p>	<p>There are specific Housing Support commissioned services to address the needs of disabled people.</p>
<p>Hearing Impairment</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p>Negative</p>			

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Physical Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	considered when planning social housing developments. Adaptations can be realised through the Disabled Facilities Grants process, where small and medium grants are no longer means tested. It is important to provide a range of housing services that enable people to maintain their independence and wellbeing through each stage of life. There is a positive impact for the full range of disabilities as future housing should address individuals needs as and when they occur.	problem or disability which limits their day to day activities.	
	✓					
Visual Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Learning Disability	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Long Standing Illness	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Mental Health	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					

Transgender Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on transgender people? (Please tick ✓)				There will be no differential impact on transgender persons. Individual needs are identified through application and addressed accordingly.	Figures on gender reassignment are difficult to establish since most people experiencing gender dysmorphia are likely to wish to remain undetected. One in eight people in Ceredigion aged under 35 years old identify with an LGBTQA+ sexual orientation, new census figures show.	Individual needs are identified and a person centered approach taken to support.
Transgender	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			



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					<p>The Census data shows 1,660 people aged between 16 and 24 years old in Ceredigion said they identified with a sexuality other than heterosexual when the Census took place in March 2021, alongside 500 aged 25 to 34.</p> <p>In addition, the latest Census figures show that 1 in 8 people in Ceredigion, aged under 35 years old identify with an LGBTQA+ orientation.</p>	
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<p>Marriage or Civil Partnership Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on marriage or Civil partnership? (Please tick ✓)</p>				<p>The Strategy aims to provide housing to suit the individuals need irrespective of marital status.</p>	<p>According to 2021 Census Reports, the proportion of married people is at 43.1%, which is slightly less than 43.8% across Wales as a whole. The proportion of a same-sex civil partnership is at 0.2%, which is higher than the 0.1% across both Wales and England.</p>	<p>Individual needs are identified and a person centered approach taken to support.</p>
Marriage	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Civil partnership	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

<p>Pregnancy or Maternity Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on pregnancy or maternity? (Please tick ✓)</p>				<p>The Strategy aims to provide housing to suit the individuals need. Pregnant women and women with dependant children are considered as priority need for homelessness.</p>	<p>Legislative requirement.</p>	<p>Individual needs are identified and a person centered approach taken to support.</p>
Pregnancy	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

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Maternity	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Race Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on race? (Please tick ✓)				<p>Customs, beliefs and traditions within diverse communities will be respected.</p> <p>Development of affordable housing sites contain a mix of housing types to meet diverse needs and culturally appropriate accommodation.</p> <p>Gypsy & Traveller needs are catered for through a regular Accommodation Assessment.</p> <p>The Council participates in National Refugee Resettlement schemes.</p>	<p>The majority of Ceredigion's residents (96.2%) are white, with the majority of those being White Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, English, or British. The next largest ethnic group in Ceredigion is Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh with 1,096 people or 1.5% of the County's population. A further 867 or 1.2% of the population are from Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, and 366 or 0.5% are Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African.</p>	<p>The use of interpretation services might be required for service users who are migrants and have limited or no Welsh/English language skills.</p> <p>Consider Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.</p>
White	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Asian / Asian British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Other Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					

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Religion or non-beliefs Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs? (Please tick ✓)				<p>Customs, beliefs and traditions within diverse communities will be respected.</p>	<p>The largest proportion of the population in Wales describe themselves in the 2021 Census as having no religion (47%), followed by Christian (44%). Muslim is the next largest group in Wales with 66,947 members representing 2.2% of the population. In Ceredigion, the largest proportion of the population</p>	<p>N/A</p>
Christian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Buddhist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Hindu	Positive	Negative	None/			

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			Negligible	state their religion as Christian (47%), followed by no religion (43%). Other religions, which includes Pagan, Spiritualism and Spiritualist are the next largest group at 0.9% of the population.
	✓			
Humanist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	
	✓			
Jewish	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	
	✓			
Muslim	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	
	✓			
Sikh	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	
	✓			
Non-belief	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	
	✓			
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	
	✓			

Sex Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on men and/or women? (Please tick ✓)				The Strategy aims to provide housing to suit the individuals need.	According to the 2021 Census, females (51%) account for slightly more of the population in Ceredigion than males (49%).	N/A
Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Women	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					

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Sexual Orientation Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different sexual orientation? (Please tick ✓)				The Strategy strives to provide suitable accommodation for all specified groups. There will be no differential impact. Individual needs are identified through application and addressed accordingly.	For the first time in 2021, information on sexual orientation was recorded in a Census. In Ceredigion, 85% identified as Straight or Heterosexual, with 10% choosing not to answer this question. A further 3% or 1,617 are bisexual, and 2% or 941 are gay or lesbian. Prior to the Census in 2021, it had been estimated that 5-7% of the population were lesbian, gay or bisexual.	N/A
Bisexual	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Gay Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Gay Women / Lesbian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Heterosexual / Straight	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					

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In further regard of a more equal Wales, we have considered also the following specific groups.

Armed Forces Personnel Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on Armed Forces Personnel? (Please tick ✓)				The Common Housing Register gives additional consideration to this Group. Information on this is collated and monitored.	The Census 2021 tell us that 2525 people in Ceredigion (4.1%) have previously served in the Armed Forces, compared with 4.5% across Wales.	N/A
AF Personnel	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					

Carers Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on Armed Forces Personnel? (Please tick ✓)				There is a positive impact for the full range of disabilities and their Carers, future housing should address individuals needs as and when they occur.	According the Census 2021, there are 7,421 unpaid carers in Ceredigion. There are 2,338 providing 50 hours per week or more which is slightly higher than the 2,225 in 2011.	N/A
Carers	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					



Having due regards in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty - determine whether the proposal will assist or inhibit your ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality and foster good relations.

3.6.2. How could/does the proposal help advance/promote equality of opportunity?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to: ● Remove or minimise disadvantage ● To meet the needs of people with certain characteristics ● Encourage increased participation of people with particular characteristics

The Strategy will help promote equality of opportunity for all residents to be provided with safe, quality, affordable living accommodation suitable to their individual needs.

3.6.3. How could/does the proposal/decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation?

You should consider whether there is evidence to indicate that: ● The proposal may result in less favourable treatment for people with certain characteristics ● The proposal may give rise to indirect discrimination ● The proposal is more likely to assist or impede you in making reasonable adjustments

The Strategy helps to eliminate discrimination by being accessible to all groups, and by making reasonable adjustments, whenever required.

3.6.4. How could/does the proposal impact on advancing/promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to: ● Tackle prejudice ● Promote understanding

No group is shown favour and the strategy encourages inclusivity. We aim to provide inclusive housing to all those in need and to encourage and support community cohesion within diverse communities. Peer support within communities is encouraged through the Housing Support Programme.

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Having due regard of the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society.

As a listed public body, Ceredigion County Council is required to have due regard to the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010. Effectively this means carrying out a poverty impact assessment. The duty covers all people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, including people with protected characteristics.

3.6.5 What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to the proposal?

Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.

Evidence points to those with low incomes having restricted housing choices which can impact their opportunities within their local community, for support, employment and education.

What evidence do you have to support this view?

LHMA, Census Data, Wellbeing Plan, Demographics.



What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Housing Support Programme provides assistance and advice around money management, income maximisation, budgetting, healthy lifestyles and managing accommodation. The Housing Strategy also aims to maximise delivery of affordable housing and affordable housing options.

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3.7. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language				Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Culture, heritage and Welsh Language are promoted and protected. <i>In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This in order to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language Measure 2011.</i>						
Will the proposal be delivered bilingually (Welsh & English)?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Strategy will be available in both Welsh and English.	Bilingual copies of the final Strategy will be available on the corporate website in accordance with full compliance with the Council Welsh Language Standards.	N/A
	✓					
Will the proposal have an effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	Impact is positive in this case. Communities are changing in Ceredigion, and this is having an effect on language use.	Ceredigion Welsh Language Profile: 45.3% (31,678) of the population over 3 years old are welsh speakers according to Census 2021 returns.	N/A
	✓					



				<p>Within the Strategy we aim to</p> <p>(i) Ensure that there are affordable homes for local people so that they can remain in their communities and sustain the vitality of the language.</p> <p>(ii) Ensure that there are sufficient homes available for young people, should they wish to establish themselves in the County.</p>	We record applicants language of choice on application.	
Will the proposal increase or reduce the opportunity for persons to access services through the medium of Welsh?	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible	<p>Impact is positive.</p> <p>Service users may access their housing service in Welsh or English in accordance with the Council's language policy.</p>	Applicants can apply in either Welsh or English and receive a full service.	N/A
How will the proposal treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?	Positive ✓	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Strategy and relevant documents will be available in both languages.	One of the principle aims of the 'Housing for All' Strategy is to address affordable housing for local people. The Strategy aims to ensure sufficient	N/A



				We are always mindful of language and culture and seek to provide homes for local people to remain in their communities in order for the language to thrive.	opportunities for local people to access affordable or social housing through having a local connection.	
Will it preserve promote and enhance local culture and heritage?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	The Strategy will aim to have a positive effect on local culture and heritage as it aims to increase affordable homes for local people.	Actions will address the needs of local residents which includes language needs, and protecting cultural heritage of the county.	N/A
	✓					

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4. STRENGTHENING THE PROPOSAL: If the proposal is likely to have a negative impact on any of the above (including any of the protected characteristics), what practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts as identified in sections 2 and 3?

4.1 Actions.

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?	Progress

4.2. If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative impacts please justify why.
(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination, immediate and potential, as a result of this proposal, the proposal must be changed or revised).

No negative impacts identified.

4.3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing.
How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The impact and the effectiveness of the Strategy will be monitored through Strategic Housing Partnership and continuous conversations with Partners.

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5. RISK: What is the risk associated with this proposal?					
Impact Criteria	1 - Very low	2 - Low	3 - Medium	4 - High	5 - Very High
Likelihood Criteria	1 - Unlikely to occur	2 - Lower than average chance of occurrence	3 - Even chance of occurrence	4 - Higher than average chance of occurrence	5 - Expected to occur
Risk Description	Impact (severity)		Probability (deliverability)		Risk Score
No risks identified					<i>Probability x Impact e.g. 3 x 5 = 15</i>
Does your proposal have a potential impact on another Service area?					
Yes, partnership working with Through Age Wellbeing model and Economy and Regeneration will ensure maximum positive impact throughout the County.					

6. SIGN OFF			
Position	Name	Signature	Date
Service Manager	Llŷr Hughes		14/03/2023
Corporate Lead Officer	Donna Pritchard		14/03/2023
Corporate Director	James Starbuck		15/03/2023
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Matthew Vaux		15/03/2023

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Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	2 May 2023
LOCATION:	Hybrid
TITLE:	Housing Strategy, setting out Ceredigion's vision and plans for housing in the county for the next 5 years.
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 April 2023

BACKGROUND:

Members of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028.

Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities have a strategic role to play in the way the local housing market functions. One of the key ways for this to be delivered is through a Local Housing Strategy. The intention is for the local authority to play a lead role in developing an approach to housing across all tenure and ensure the delivery of appropriate housing and related services in order to meet local need.

The current Local Housing Strategy has been in place since 2018 and was a 5-year plan. As a result, the Housing Strategy has been reviewed and updated. The review has involved Senior Officers of the Housing Team, key Partners, and Corporate Managers from across the Pyrth's together with data collection and analysis.

The updated Housing Strategy sets out the vision for a further 5 years:

“There will be sufficient, suitable and sustainable accommodation to meet residents' needs now and in the future”

Following discussion, Members considered the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

Recommend to Cabinet for approval and to begin the formal consultation on the draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028.

Members agreed to recommend that Cabinet approve and begin the formal consultation on the draft Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028; subject to consideration of the following:

- Committee Members recommend that Cabinet write to Ms Elin Jones, Senedd Constituency Member and to the four regional Senedd Cymru members, expressing concern that providing sufficient housing according to need in Ceredigion is not possible due to all regulations requiring LPAs under the Habitat Regulations, to consider the phosphorus impact of proposed developments on water quality within the SAC river catchment. This has a significant impact on our current housing crisis and should be considered.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

To enable the Council to fulfil the requirements in relation to the strategic housing function.

Councillor Caryl Roberts
Chairman of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 02/05/2023

Title: The Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy

Purpose of the report: To consider the new strategy regarding the regional approach to adult advocacy services in West Wales in line with legislative obligations.

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member: Councillor Alun Williams, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing

BACKGROUND:

The provision of Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) is a legislative requirement under Part 10 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014. This type of advocacy is provided in circumstances such as where a citizen's access to care and support services is in question. Advocacy itself can be seen on a continuum, and, while IPA provision is specifically mandated, other types are to be encouraged, building on individual and community capacity.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Advocacy is recognised, in all recent health and social care legislation, as being fundamentally important in situations within which individuals and marginalised groups need support to have their voices heard and their rights respected. Advocacy is designed and delivered to facilitate participation by individuals and groups within the decisions and processes that affect their lives.

Although not a statutory requirement, the Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy seeks to shape our commissioning arrangements to meet the legal requirements to ensure good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

This strategy is based on an extended period of engagement with citizens, especially those who engage with health and social care services, advocacy organisations, health and social care practitioners, statutory commissioners and other relevant stakeholders.

This Adult Advocacy Strategy has five priority areas, all aimed at improving outcomes for people who need advocacy. The priorities have been defined in the light of co-productive activity to date, engagement, the Regional Population Assessment, and in response to legislative requirements. They include:

- Priority 1. Maintain and develop further our co-productive approach
- Priority 2. Raise awareness of, and understanding of, advocacy

- Priority 3. Ensure advocacy is easily accessible and equitably available
- Priority 4. Ensure advocacy is of a consistently high standard of quality
- Priority 5. Maintain specialisms and non-statutory forms of advocacy

Each priority within the strategy outlines why it's important & what the current situation is in West Wales. Following this each priority outlines the actions that need to be taken to ensure each of the priority areas are met.

	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why	Yes
	Summary:	
	Long term:	The strategy is one for the next 5 years whilst also referencing short term issues to address
Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Collaboration:	The development of the strategy has been overseen by the Advocacy Working Group (Local Authority, 3 rd sector and health board representation)
	Involvement:	The development of the strategy involved a period of co-production with stakeholders closest to advocacy services
	Prevention:	Advocacy as a provision can support the preventative agenda
	Integration:	The strategy promotes integrated work of health and social care to streamline advocacy provision
Recommendation(s):	To approve the West Wales Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy	
Reasons for decision:	To ensure the obligations under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) are met in respect of adult advocacy provisions.	
Overview and Scrutiny:	The strategy was presented to the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 13 th of April 2023	
Policy Framework:	Social Services & Wellbeing Act (2014)	
Corporate Priorities:	Ceredigion Council Corporate Strategy 2022 – 2027: Wellbeing Objective(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Caring and Healthy Communities • Providing the Best Start in Life and Enabling Learning at All Ages 	
Finance and Procurement Implications:	N/A	

Legal Implications:	To meet the requirements of the Social Services & Wellbeing Act (2014)
Staffing Implications:	N/A
Property / Asset Implications:	N/A
Risk(s):	N/A
Statutory Powers:	Social Services & Wellbeing Act (2014)
Background Papers:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1- Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy Appendix 2- Integrated Impact Assessment
Corporate Lead Officer:	Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal & Donna Pritchard, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Gofal
Reporting Officer:	Rebecca Johnson, Service Manager Commissioned Contracts on behalf of the Regional Working Group
Date:	02/05/2023

2023 - 2027

Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy

DRAFT



Foreword

Advocacy is recognised, in all recent health and social care legislation, as being fundamentally important in situations within which individuals and marginalised groups need support to have their voices heard and their rights respected. Advocacy is designed and delivered to facilitate participation by individuals and groups within the decisions and processes that affect their lives.

This Adult Advocacy Strategy seeks to shape the commissioning arrangements of Hywel Dda University Health Board, Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council in order to meet their statutory duties. However, more importantly it seeks to ensure that good quality advocacy is readily and equitably available to those who want, or need it, in the West Wales region of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire.

Increasingly, it is recognised that significant numbers of people who require health or social care services also need forms of support that allow them to have an equal voice and control of how these services are planned and provided. The range of advocacy provision in our region looks to address this key support need and also encourages the development of individuals' confidence and skills to participate and express their own voices and choices through self-advocacy.

There are certain groups within our communities who need a significant level of support to be able to have their voice heard and their rights and entitlements fully met. This includes people with specific difficulties expressing their wishes and preferences, for example but not restricted to, people with learning disabilities, people with autism, people with dementia, people with complex mental health issues, some people with multiple or sensory impairments and some carers. It is to those groups which this strategy sets out to shape our future commissioning and provision of advocacy.

We intend that, through working in partnership with our communities and stakeholders, we will, in the next five years, be able to shape, through our commissioning arrangements, how the most appropriate forms of advocacy in the region will meet the range of advocacy needs. We intend to build upon what is already a solid base of existing provision whilst looking to develop advocacy provision in areas that require development. We intend to prioritise advocacy support to those individuals and groups who most need it.

We look forward to meeting these important challenges to ensure that access to, and the quality of, advocacy provision in our region is of the highest possible standard and reflects what our communities need from advocacy provision.



Judith Hardisty
Chair, West Wales Regional Partnership Board

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BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

To set the overall context in which the Adult Advocacy strategy for West Wales will operate we undertook a review of Welsh legislation that impacts this area.

Social Services and wellbeing act

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) requires that the three regional Local Authorities must [commission statutory Independent Professional Advocacy](#) services and for the Local Authorities to promote access to the [spectrum of advocacy provision](#).

Advocacy should be considered as an inherent part of the Act to focus social care around people and their well-being. Advocacy helps people to understand how they can be involved, how they can contribute and take part and whenever possible, to lead or direct the process.

(Wales) Act Advocacy Code of Practice p.8

Social Services and Well-Being

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) places a lot of emphasis on voice and control for people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

Advocacy has an important role to play in relation to voice and control and underpinning the wider requirements of the Act in terms of well-being, safeguarding and prevention. It can greatly assist people to express their views and make informed choices, thereby ensuring they have access to relevant services.

Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act Advocacy Code of Practice p.2

National Outcomes Framework & Wellbeing of future generations

The National Outcomes Framework (Social Services) and the Well-being of Future Generations Act place the concept of individual voice and participation at the centre of the approach to achieving well-being in Wales.

**My voice is heard and listened to.
My individual circumstances are considered. I speak for myself and contribute to the decisions that affect my life or have someone who can do it for me.**

National Outcomes Framework statement relating to achieving personal well-being.p.5

Mental Health Act & Mental Capacity Act

There are similar requirements in the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act for the Hywel Dda University Health Board to commission Independent Mental Capacity Advocate and Independent Mental Health Advocate services across the region.

West Wales Population Needs Assessment & Area Plan

Effective commissioning needs to draw upon the information ascertained through [co-production](#) and the demographic data in the [West Wales](#) Area Plan 2018-23 and the West Wales Population Needs Assessment.

What Is Advocacy and Who Needs It?

A widely accepted definition of advocacy is set out below:

'Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes [social inclusion](#), equality and social justice.' [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) Advocacy Charter 2018



The diagram above, produced by the [Golden Thread Advocacy Project](#), illustrates the [spectrum of advocacy provision](#). Each form has particular benefits:

Type	Description
Self-Advocacy	When individuals represent and speak up for themselves
Informal Advocacy	When family, friends or neighbours supporting an individual in having their views wishes and feelings heard which may include speaking on their behalf.
Peer Advocacy	One individual acting as an advocate for others who shares a common experience/ background.
Collective Advocacy	Involves groups of individuals with common experiences, being empowered to have a voice and influence change and promote social justice.
Citizen Advocacy	Involves a one-to-one long-term partnership between a trained or supported volunteer citizen advocate and an individual.
Independent Volunteer Advocacy	Involves an independent and unpaid advocate who works on a short term, or issue led basis, with one or more individuals.
Formal Advocacy	May refer to the advocacy role of staff in health, social care and other settings where professionals are required as part of their role to consider the wishes and feelings of the individual and to help ensure that they are addressed properly.
Independent Mental Health Advocacy (Statutory)	Specially trained advocates who support people to speak up and have their voices heard around their mental health care and treatment. It is a type of statutory advocacy.
Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (Statutory)	An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) helps people who lack capacity so that they can be involved in decisions that are being made on their behalf. It is for people who have been assessed as lacking the mental capacity to make a decision for themselves.
Independent Professional	Involves a professional, trained advocate working in a one-to-one partnership with an individual to ensure that their views

Advocacy (Statutory)	are accurately conveyed and their rights upheld. This might be for a single issue or multiple issues.
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There is an important distinction to be made between instructed and non-instructed advocacy. Instructed advocacy is when advocates are instructed by the individual, even if the latter didn't refer themselves to the advocacy services. Together, they are able to establish a relationship and identify the advocacy issues, goals and intended outcomes in accordance with the wishes/preference of the service user.

The non-instructed form of advocacy may be needed when matters of communication and capacity mean that instruction and expression of choices and concerns are not apparent. This would involve taking affirmative action with or on behalf of a person who is unable to give clear indication of their views or wishes in a specific situation. Non-instructed advocates seeks to uphold the persons right, ensure fair and equal treatment, ensure access to services, and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for their unique preferences and perspectives (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014)

West Wales Position Statement

Key Stakeholders



There has been a coordinated focus on advocacy in West Wales for a number of years, with the Three Counties Advocacy Network having been in existence for over 12 years. Representing providers of both statutory and non-statutory advocacy services across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, the Network's aim is to improve, promote, and develop advocacy services whilst providing training opportunities for those services. This sits alongside an Advocacy Working Group which brings together the commissioners of advocacy services across West Wales, which include Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion County Council and Pembrokeshire County Council. These relationships are demonstrated in the adjacent Venn diagram.

Regional Review




The original proposal was developed through a co-productive approach, as proposed by the [Golden Thread Advocacy Programme](#).

In 2017, the Three Counties Advocacy Network was awarded funding to undertake engagement work following a self-assessment exercise which identified areas for potential to improve practice, as part of the [Golden Thread Advocacy Programme](#). Engagement work, supported by the [West Wales Care Partnership](#), was undertaken with individuals, professionals, and other [stakeholders](#) from across the region, which included a survey (142 responses), five county events and one regional event.

This work, and the resultant report, culminated in the definition of and design of the proposed regional service model - key features include what was told to be important to those involved in the engagement: a single point of contract; local delivery; the continued recognition of specialisms (child protection, carers, learning disabilities); and the importance of linking with information, advice and assistance (IAA) services. The service model recognises the crucial role of [IPA](#) within a wider support context of non-statutory forms of advocacy. The so-called 'fried egg' model is presented below.

Three County Advocacy Network Proposal for IPA Framework - February 2019



	Supported groups or organisations in the wider network. Some may be working towards becoming IPA providers
	Generic and Specialist IA providers across the area meeting required standards for IPA
	Wider advocacy network including the Advocacy Strategy Network

Commissioning of [Independent Professional Advocacy Services](#)

In responding to the review, the local authorities in the Region agreed to jointly commission a single [IPA](#) service for adults (separate and distinct arrangements exist for children). This was influenced in part by the [West Wales Care Partnership's](#) commitment to regional commissioning, under Part 9 of SSWBA, and it was proposed that the service be supported by an associated pooled fund arrangement – made up of existing spend devoted to advocacy.

Whereas both Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire had existing contractual arrangements for the supply of advocacy, Ceredigion was providing ad hoc [IPA](#) on a 'spot-purchase' basis. The absence of existing contracts meant that arrangements for Ceredigion were a priority; and due to the risk of destabilising the market elsewhere, it was agreed to pilot the intended regional approach in Ceredigion initially, prior to wider rollout. The pilot approach also had an advantage in being an opportunity to assess (as then, unquantified) demand for [IPA](#), versus other types of advocacy.

The Ceredigion pilot commenced 1st October 2019, with the intention that subject to evaluation, a regional commissioning exercise would follow in 2020. However, the COVID pandemic which started in March 2020, has resulted in regional commissioning plans for the [IPA](#) service being delayed in to 2022

Commissioning of Independent Mental Health Advocacy and Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

The Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) service is a statutory role created under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The IMCA service provides a safeguard for people who lack capacity to make important decisions. The IMCA role is to support and represent the person in the decision-making process. Essentially, they make sure that the Mental Capacity Act 2005 is being followed, when a decision needs to be made about a long-term change in accommodation or serious medical treatment.

The Act placed a duty on professionals. (Social Workers and/or Medical Staff) to appoint an IMCA for anyone who, aged 16 or over, has been deemed as lacking capacity and are unbefriended. IMCAs may also be involved in decisions concerning Care Reviews or Adult Safeguarding Cases. The IMCAs role is to support and represent the person who lacks capacity, therefore IMCAs have the right to see

relevant health and social care records and any reports provided by IMCAs must be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Mental Health Matters Wales provides the IMCA service within the Hywel Dda Health Board region. The IMCA contract sits with the Health Board on behalf of the region and Local Authorities, however work is currently ongoing to create a National All Wales IMCA contract which will be put to tender locally. Tenders should be ready by the summer with winning bidders notified by the autumn and a new contract to commence April 2024.

Commissioning of Community Advocacy Services

Hywel Dda University Health Board are recommissioning Community Advocacy across the West Wales region, with a view to provide Community Advocacy services for those who are experiencing low level Mental Health concerns.

Community Advocacy is to be community focused and is to support individuals to be heard and treated with respect to live within their community, safely, independently and feeling supported.

This type, and level of Advocacy, is to provide early support and early intervention in order to reduce pressures on Primary Care Services as well as reduce escalations of Mental Health concerns and demands on larger advocacy services.

Current regional provision of advocacy services

Across West Wales, advocacy provision can be broadly categorised as statutory and non-statutory provision. Building on work undertaken by the Three Counties Network, and noting the work outlined above, the current provision of advocacy services (June 2021) is as follows:

Service	Area	Commissioner	Provider (as at April 2021)
Independent Mental Health Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	Hywel Dda University Health Board	Advocacy West Wales
Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	Hywel Dda University Health Board	Mental Health Matters
Independent Professional Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	Regionally Commissioned by all 3 Local Authorities	3CIPA
Non-Statutory Advocacy	Carmarthenshire Ceredigion Pembrokeshire	N/A	Advocacy West Wales

Working Together – Our Shared Vision

Prior to the pandemic our vision for advocacy was as follows:

The [West Wales Care Partnership](#) will ensure equitable access to high quality advocacy in our area.

Since the pandemic and since this vision was drafted, a lot of work has been done to ensure equitable access to high quality advocacy in the region. A prime example of this work includes a jointly re-commissioned regional IPA service with a contractual framework.

Members of the Advocacy Working Group felt it was important that we kept this old vision in the final strategy as a means of highlighting distance travelled over the last 2-3 years in terms of regional advocacy provision.

Naturally, this vision is no longer suitable as it doesn't fit the aspirations held for advocacy services. Therefore, a new vision will be developed and will require a co-productive partnership with all key agencies, community forums and stakeholders to ensure that developments reflect the actions needed. This vision is to be agreed in a newly created regional advocacy steering group which will be set up in line with the publishing of this strategy.

All significant planning and development will be agreed within a co-productive regional advocacy steering group, terms of reference and membership to be developed, which will serve as a sub-group of the Commissioning Group which in turn acts on behalf of the West Wales Care Partnership (WWCP). The WWCP will have responsibility for ensuring this strategy meets our agreed aims.

Working with individuals who access care and support services, and their representatives will be central to our approach. The regional Advocacy Strategy Network (ASN), made up of local advocacy organisations, will be a key reference point for developments. It is essential that developments are not only co-produced but also collectively owned by all the different partners, stakeholders and people who use services.

Underpinning these principles is the need for advocacy organisations to have both organisational governance and operational independence.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

This strategy is based on an extended period of engagement with citizens, especially those who engage with health and social care services, advocacy organisations, health and social care practitioners, statutory commissioners and other relevant [stakeholders](#). This engagement began in 2016 and continued through till 2019 and was led by the national [Golden Thread Advocacy Programme \(GTAP\)](#), a project funded by the Welsh Government, to develop effective Local Authority commissioning of the [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) services which are now a requirement under the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales).

The strategy will be framed by a set of nationally agreed advocacy principles set out in the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) Advocacy Code of Practice:

Advocacy services should:

- be led by the views and wishes of the individual
- be champions of the individual's rights and needs
- be well publicised and easy to use
- work exclusively for the individual
- be well managed, prompt, responsive and provide value for money
- respect confidentiality
- have effective, accessible Compliments and Complaints procedures
- promote and monitor equality

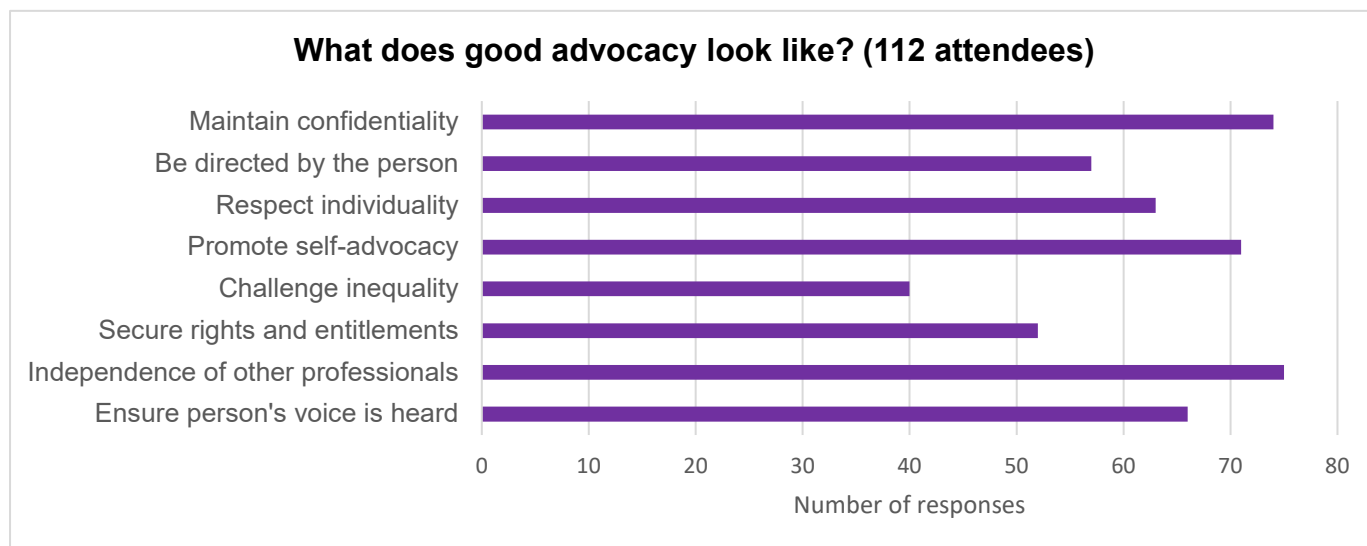
Working together with commissioners and the Three County Network, [Golden Thread](#) arranged a series of engagement events across the region and [service-user](#) groups which culminated in an Open event in Ceredigion in March 2019.

These events asked two questions:

1. What does good advocacy look like?
2. What is needed in terms of advocacy for West Wales?

What does good advocacy look like?

Recognising that this will mean different things to different people, there was general agreement that good advocacy should support people to have their voice heard, be independent, secure individual's rights and entitlements, challenge inequality, promote [self-advocacy](#), be directed by the person, be respectful of individuality and be confidential.



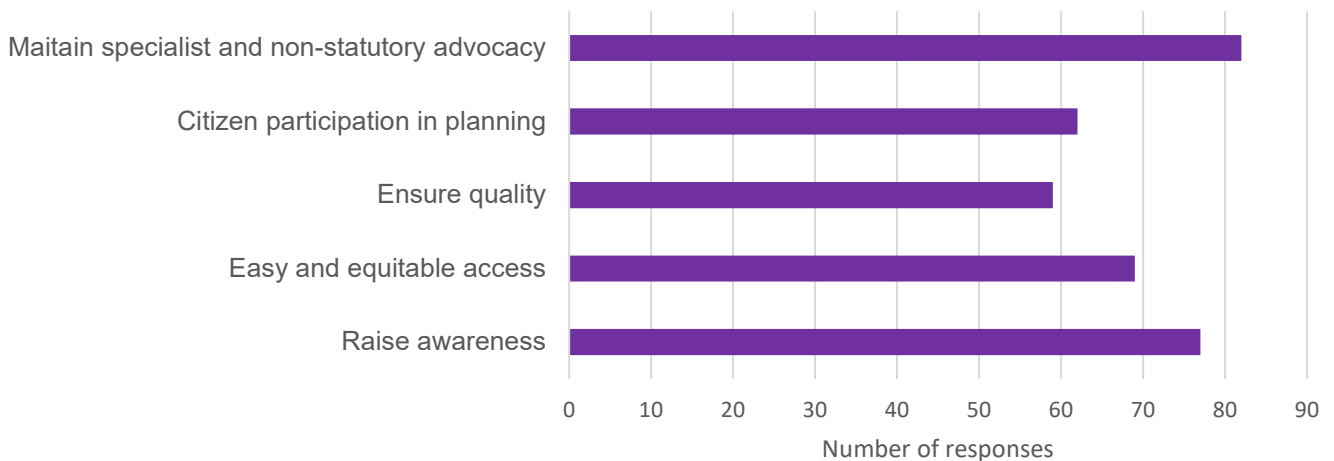
What is needed in terms of advocacy for West Wales?

Responses in relation to what is needed were quite diverse and differing priorities were identified from the different groups involved. However, it was possible to identify some shared themes from these responses which then informed the second phase of [co-production](#) engagement:

The need to:

1. Raise awareness amongst professionals and communities about the different forms of advocacy and the potential benefits of each.
2. Be able to access advocacy more easily and to make it equitably available across our region, particularly for individuals and groups who have to date not found it easy to access the right form of advocacy.
3. Ensure that the quality of advocacy services is of a high and consistent standard and that outcomes of advocacy can be effectively evaluated
4. Maintain and develop the full participation of citizens, communities and a range of organisational partners in how advocacy services are developed and delivered.
5. Support specialist and non-statutory forms of advocacy

What is needed in terms of advocacy for West Wales? (112 attendees)



Through 2020, a Project Lead within the [Regional Advocacy Development Project](#), held a series of individual discussions and focus groups exploring in more detail how these themes could translate into a detailed strategy.

When the COVID pandemic made it difficult to have face to face engagement further surveys and questionnaires were conducted. The WWCP is confident that sufficient information and views have been gathered to inform the strategic priorities. Ongoing [co-production](#) action planning will review and refine the strategy implementation as it evolves.

As we emerged from the COVID pandemic the Advocacy Working Group felt it was necessary to conduct further engagement again to not only bolster/supplement existing engagement but also ensure those closest to advocacy services have their voices highlighted prominently within the strategy. These were gathered via a series of virtual focus group events and also by attending existing forums/groups with stakeholders of advocacy provisions.

In this more recent engagement, responses from [service-users](#), carers, organisations delivering advocacy, other [stakeholders](#) and health and social care professionals showed a significant level of agreement on key priorities. These aligned closely with the five key findings from the earlier [GTAP](#) engagement.

What service-users said there is a need for:

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings, a significant number of [service-users](#) expressed the preference to receive advocacy from a family member or close friend. They felt that if there was a need for an independent advocate, they should be allowed sufficient time to develop trust and that this would require a reasonable amount of time.

“My family help me to explain to Social Workers and Doctors the sort of help I want”

- Diane

“I need an advocate who takes time to get to know me”

- Matthew

“I want to speak up for myself most of the time. I only want support on the big decisions in my life”

- Gregg

What individual organisational stakeholders said was needed.

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings a significant number of people from _ organisations felt the strategy needed to reference the need for greater co-operation and collaboration between advocacy organisations and related organisations providing [Information, Advice and Assistance](#) as a way of improving outcomes for people.

“Most advocacy is good but it’s not easy for people to find the right advocacy for them”

- Mary

“People would get better outcomes if advocacy, advice and other forms of support were better joined up”

- Paul

What advocates and their managers said was needed

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings:

More secure and longer term-funding arrangements as a means of sustainable service planning.

The introduction of an [‘active offer’](#) approach to accessing advocacy. [Active offer](#) is a more facilitative approach taken by professionals when discussing the engagement of advocacy support.

“If more people were given good and timely information about advocacy, we could provide better advocacy support to those who most need it”

- Kelly

“I get frustrated that we are not able to make long-term plans to develop our service because our contract is short term and insecure”

- Jason

“Social Workers should always consider if a person would benefit from advocacy support”

- James

What professionals working in health and social care said was needed.

In addition to the [GTAP](#) findings:

The ability to deal with the complexity of advocacy need in relation to:

- Having well-resourced services that can cope with increases to demand on services
- Able to be flexible and responsive to deal with specialist and unknown issues arising in the future

““have we got enough advocates for in advocacy services to actually match? If you like the referrals that are coming in, it's about capacity”

- Susan

“Even before COVID, we had issues with things like access to carers assessments and backlog of waiting lists for carers assessments”

- Lorraine

General view of what is working well and what needs to change

From those people who had received advocacy support there was a very positive view of the benefits it had delivered. Of the forty-three people who had received advocacy support within our survey, only one said that it was not entirely helpful.

Once they were aware of the availability of advocacy support and how to access it, they felt things worked well. They felt that they would return for further advocacy support when they needed it and were also more confident to self-advocate.

"I feel much more confident to let people know what I want"

- Sarah

"I know where to go if I need advocacy again"

- Ben

The key challenge individuals felt was gaining initial access to the right type of advocacy support and at the right time. They felt that much more focus on providing information about advocacy and making it easier to access was crucial.

What Are We Going to Do?

This Adult Advocacy Strategy has five priority areas, all aimed at improving outcomes for people who need advocacy. The priorities have been defined in the light of co-productive activity to date, engagement, the Regional Population Assessment, and in response to legislative requirements.

The strategy will promote and support a shared commitment amongst key partners to implement developments equitably across the region.

Our five key priorities are.

The need to:

Priority 1. Maintain and develop further our co-productive approach

Priority 2 Raise awareness of, and understanding of, advocacy.

Priority 3. Ensure advocacy is easily accessible and equitably available

Priority 4. Ensure advocacy is of a consistently high standard of quality

Priority 5. Maintain specialisms and non-statutory forms of advocacy

Priority 1. Maintain And Develop Further Our Co-Productive Approach

Why is it important?

[Co-production](#) is central to the way the Welsh Government requires all health and social care services to be planned, commissioned, and delivered.

[Social Care Wales](#) (formerly known as the Care Council for Wales), Planning, Commissioning and [co-production](#) Code of Practice defines [co-production](#) as **'the concept of genuinely involving people and communities in the design and**

delivering of public services, appreciating their strengths and tailoring approaches accordingly.'

Voice, participation and responsibility will each lead to ensuring that action planning will reflect developments that all partners and [stakeholders](#) will feel that they have shared and collective control and ownership of.

It is important that those providing advocacy services are fully engaged in the detail of action planning, tendering and commissioning arrangements as they are uniquely placed in terms of their specialist knowledge and experience. Ensuring effective communication, engagement, reflection and learning helps to ensure that commissioning teams are fully informed of the practical application of advocacy and how positive outcomes are best achieved.

Closer collaboration and integration within health and social care planning is considered essential by the Welsh Government in terms of offering better outcomes for individuals and communities.

The WWCP is fully committed to ensure that the development and implementation of this strategy, through its associated action plan, will be maintained and strengthened.

What is the situation in West Wales?

The Regional Advocacy Strategy Network, which represents regional advocacy organisations, has established links with the [WWCP](#). The Network has been a key reference point in the development of this strategy and will have a significant ongoing role in action planning decisions. There has been active co-operation between the Network and Regional Commissioners through a process of effective communication, engagement, reflection and learning in the recent tendering of advocacy services which has led to improvements in service specifications, delivery and evaluation.

The Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) is a key partner in the [WWCP](#). In terms of the strategy, appropriate levels of collaboration and integration between the Board and the three Local Authorities are agreed within the [WWCP](#) decision-making framework.

What will we do?

We will through co-produced action plans:

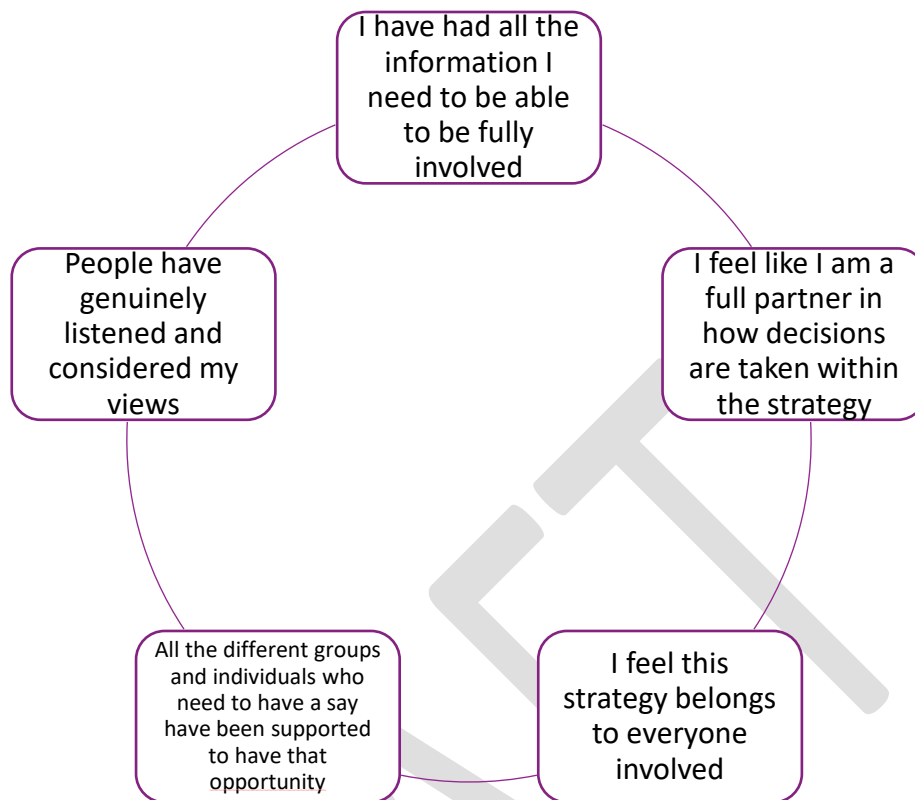
1. Ensure the necessary structures will be supported to develop a culture of effective and meaningful co-production ensuring broad representation of stakeholders across the region who can inform and shape decision-making reflecting what matters most

2. Adopt principles of effective communication, engagement, reflection and learning to shape and inform the approach to commissioning and tendering
3. strengthen the link between the [WWCP](#) and the Regional Advocacy Strategy Network
4. explore opportunities for closer collaboration and integration in advocacy planning and commissioning arrangements between statutory bodies

What will success look like?

- The contributions of citizens, [service-users](#) and carers will be acknowledged and valued
- Decision-making within action-planning to implement the strategy will have been significantly informed by citizens, particularly [service-user](#) groups and carers
- There will be a flow of relevant information between the different groups and structures within [co-production](#) including the Advocacy Strategy Network (ASN), service user groups etc.
- A culture of responsibility and ownership will have been created within the [co-production](#) partners.
- There will be regular engagement between the [WWCP](#) and the Regional Advocacy Strategy Network
- Building on the new regionally commissioned IPA services by ensuring we are working collaboratively to develop service

People receiving advocacy will say?



Priority 2: Raise Awareness Of, And Understanding Of, Advocacy.

Why is this important?

Advocacy provides an essential support service allowing people's voice to be heard, their rights protected and their entitlements to be secured. Raising awareness, and understanding of advocacy, will promote improved access to advocacy, especially for those who need it most.

Our engagement clearly evidenced that there is not always awareness and understanding of the different forms of advocacy, their functions and the benefits that each can offer. There is significant scope to develop both awareness and understanding within professional disciplines, [service-users](#) and key [stakeholders](#).

This commitment to further develop awareness of, and understanding of advocacy, will offer increased opportunities for individuals, especially those in most need, to access the right form of advocacy and in that way ensure that their voices are heard, their rights respected, and their entitlements secured. It is important to remember the correlation between awareness/promotion of advocacy and the number of referrals a service will receive. Advocacy providers must be supported to create well-resourced services that has the capacity to meet this additional demand.

What is the situation in West Wales?

The provision of informational and marketing materials by each advocacy organisation which relates to their own services is apparent but more general awareness and understanding could be further developed.

The rurality of our region presents particular challenges in terms of being able to reach out equitably to isolated individuals, groups and communities in terms of awareness-raising.

There are a range of different advocacy organisations in the region offering different forms of advocacy and this [spectrum of advocacy provision](#) does present challenges in terms of understanding and awareness. [Service-users](#) and professionals have awareness of advocacy services to which they have familiarity and contact but may be unaware of other provision that could also be appropriate.

There is scope for staff working for care providers, including residential and nursing homes, to have a better understanding of advocacy services.

There is scope for advocacy organisations and organisations providing [Information, Advice and Assistance](#) to work more collaboratively to raise awareness and understanding.

What we will do?

We will through a co-produced action plan:

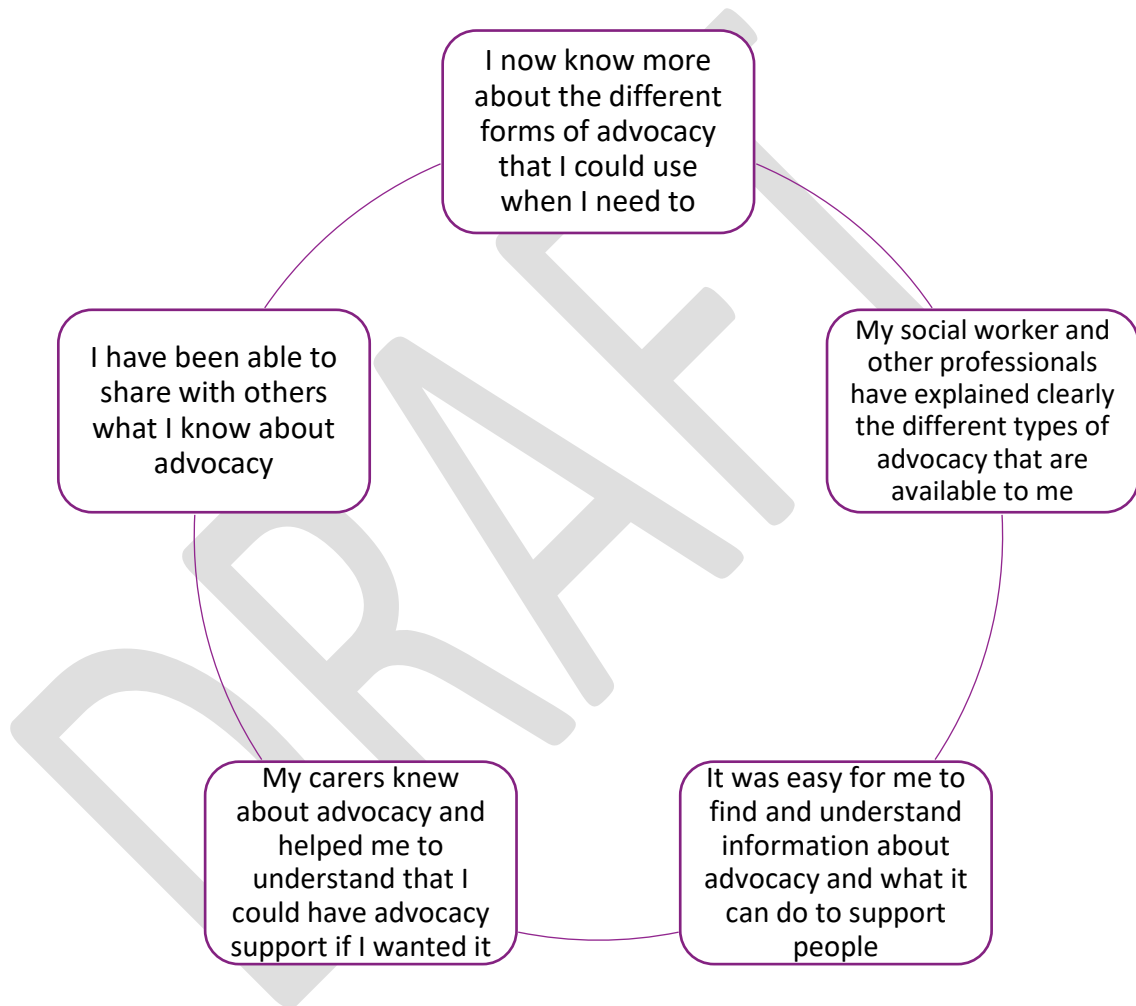
1. Agree a shared and structured approach to raising awareness and understanding of advocacy amongst citizens, [service-user](#) groups, health and social care professionals, care providers and other relevant [stakeholders](#).
2. Explore opportunities for using creative approaches to awareness-raising, including the range of digital platforms
3. Ensure that commissioned advocacy services provide information in the most accessible formats
4. Support & promote collaborative arrangements between advocacy organisations and those organisations offering [Information, Advice and Assistance](#)

What will success look like?

- There will be improved and updated informational materials in a range of accessible formats covering the [spectrum of advocacy provision](#) which will be widely distributed.

- Other creative approaches, including digital platforms, will have been further developed
- All relevant professionals will have an awareness and understanding of advocacy provision and its functions
- Those who are eligible to access advocacy support will know what the different types of advocacy can offer

People receiving advocacy will say?



Priority 3: Ensure Advocacy Is Easily Accessible and Equitably Available

Why is this important?

For advocacy to be able to provide support to those who need it most, it must be easy to access and equitably available.

Our [co-production](#) engagement identified that it was not always easy for people who would benefit from advocacy to get in touch with the most appropriate advocacy

organisation to support them. It was also clear that advocacy services were not always equitably distributed across the region. A more equitable geographical spread of the range of advocacy services, would allow individuals from different [service-user](#) groups to access advocacy support more locally.

The various engagement events evidenced that whilst there is a range of provision available, some people find it difficult to navigate to find the service that is right for them.

A key requirement in the Social Services and Well-Being Act Advocacy Code of Practice is for advocacy services to be engaged at an early stage in social care processes as an aspect of the 'preventative agenda'. This requires referrals from professionals being made at the earliest possible time allowing advocacy support to be meaningful and effective by ensuring that an individual's voice is heard when it most matters and to prevent issues escalating.

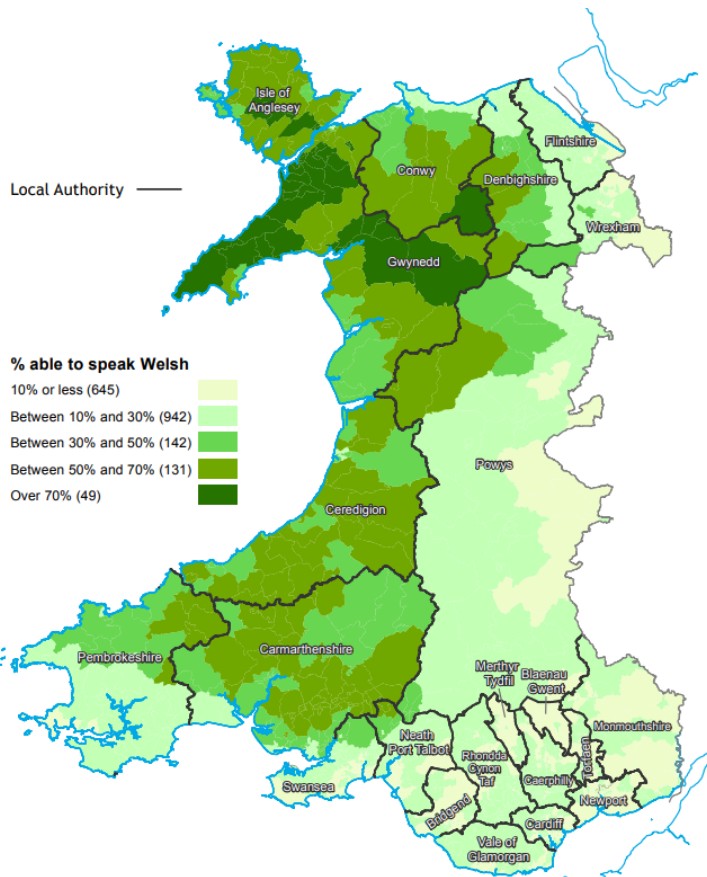
Similarly, [the Act](#) stresses the key role of advocacy support in [Safeguarding](#) processes and how advocacy referrals need to be made at the early stage of involvement to allow individuals the support they need to fully participate in decision-making and to achieve the most positive person-centred outcomes. A consistent and equitable approach to engaging [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) at the right time is essential.

Situation in West Wales

Advocacy provision in West Wales is relatively well established in our region, particularly in relation to specialist support for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health needs. For other [service-user](#) groups and carers generic [IPA](#) services are now in place and becoming established. This means that for most people who require advocacy, services are available.

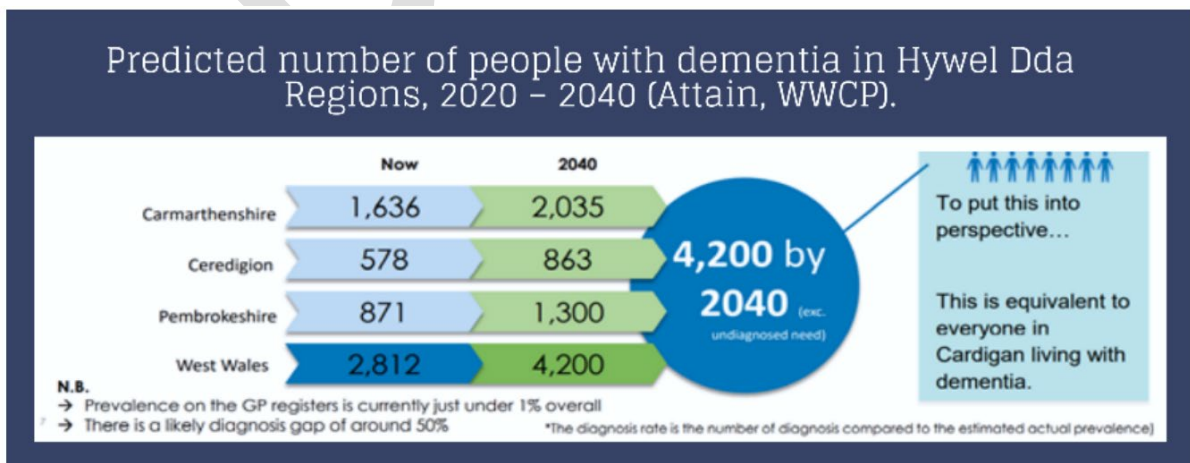
The predominantly rural nature, demography and geography of our region poses some challenges to facilitating physical access to most community-based health and social care services, including advocacy.

Similarly, we have significant numbers of Welsh speakers in our region and for our advocacy services to provide equitable access there is a need to ensure that advocacy services can be accessed through the Welsh language.



% of Welsh Speakers in Wales (Population Census, 2011)

The most significant factor identified in the [West Wales Population Assessment](#) is the growing numbers of older people likely to need some level of support services and specifically a sharp increase in the projected number of people with dementia. These demographic changes are most significant in isolated rural areas. These demographic changes will also increase the number of people becoming unpaid carers. These changes are likely to require a greater focus on access to advocacy services for older people and carers in the region and particularly in the more rural areas.



West Wales Population Assessment (2022)

What we will do?

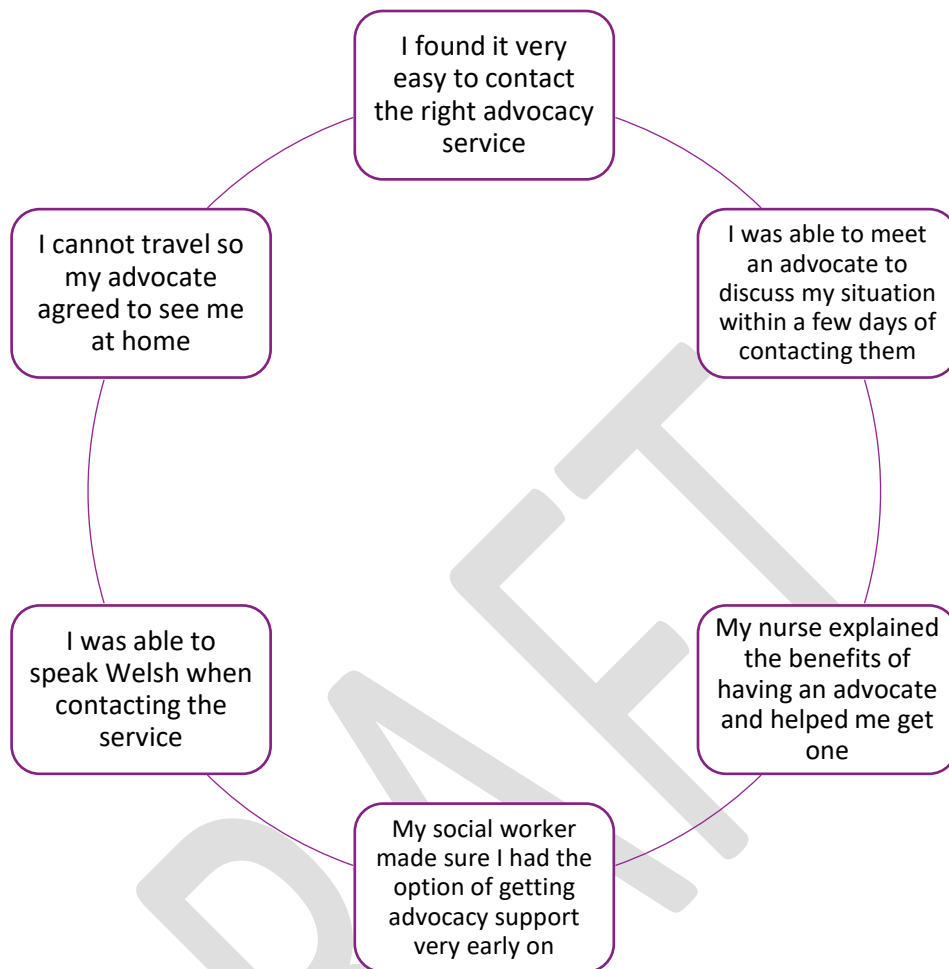
We will through a co-produced action plan:

1. Ensure improved access to advocacy provision and ensuring people who need it most can access it in a way suitable for them e.g. In Welsh, in person, online etc.
2. Develop an '[active offer](#)' approach to be employed by professionals which promotes and facilitates contact with an advocate so they can explain the support they can offer
3. Ensure that there will be equitable access to advocacy across our region taking into account the rurality and demography of our region
4. Evaluate the most effective referral '[gateways](#)' that facilitate ease of access

What will success look like?

- There will be easy ways by which people can access the form of advocacy that is right for them through the most effective referral '[gateway](#)' or '[gateways](#)'
- Advocacy will be made available at the earliest and most supportive time through the '[active offer](#)' approach
- People who prefer to access advocacy through the medium of Welsh can do so equitably
- People living in rural areas will have easy and equitable access to advocacy

People receiving advocacy will say?



Priority 4: Ensure Advocacy Is of a Consistently High Standard of Quality

Why is it important?

To achieve consistently positive outcomes for those receiving advocacy support there needs to be consistently high standards of quality in terms of governance and service delivery.

This priority was most significantly highlighted by organisations providing advocacy and other third sector organisations within the engagement process and is also key legal requirement on statutory bodies that commission advocacy services. A number of respondents felt that the quality of advocacy provision in the region was inconsistent and that all advocacy providers should have governance and delivery arrangements that met the highest standards.

Within the independent advocacy sector there has been a long-standing commitment to ensuring the quality of their advocacy. What has emerged over recent years has been the establishment of standards, as defined in the sector's own Advocacy Charter and Code of Practice and more recently the standards set out in the SSWBA Advocacy Code of Practice.

The key tool of quality assurance within independent advocacy is the [Quality Performance Mark\(QPM\)](#) which is independently assessed and awarded by the [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) (Advocacy) and this assurance is supported by the vocational [advocacy qualification](#) framework for advocates created by [Social Care Wales](#).

It is intended, in the near future, commissioned [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) will come within the [Regulation and Inspection of Social Care in Wales Act \(RISCA\)](#), once a framework can be agreed. When legally required this framework will need to be adopted within the strategy.

All forms of advocacy need to be able to evidence quality also need to evidence positive outcomes deriving directly, or indirectly, from their engagement. Outcome's frameworks and indicators vary across services and this does not always present an accurate comparative picture across services. There is scope for development and standardisation of [outcomes monitoring](#) and reporting in commissioned advocacy.

Quality in service delivery relies upon a reasonable period of service continuity. This allows for effective service delivery planning. Short term contractual arrangements do not support the development of quality in service delivery or accessibility. Contracts do need to be monitored and reviewed and periodically re-tendered. However, these processes should support the need to maintain quality in service delivery through a considered approach to appropriate continuity.

All advocacy services need to have systems that deal effectively with complaints and comments, as well as compliments. These systems, as a method of service improvement and learning from mistakes and successes, are a necessary aspect of quality.

The situation in West Wales

Most currently commissioned independent advocacy services in West Wales have either been awarded the [QPM](#) or are registered and working towards an award. Similarly, most also employ advocates who have achieved the appropriate independent [advocacy qualification](#) for their particular role, or, are registered and working towards the award. Support has been available through till Spring 2021, through the Advocacy Development Project, for those organisations that intend to register for both the [QPM](#) and their advocates for the relevant qualification.

[Outcomes monitoring](#) arrangements across commissioned advocacy services are inconsistent and there is scope for some degree of standardisation whilst

recognising that different services do meet different statutory functions and have different service specifications.

Some advocacy organisations have established arrangements for ongoing service improvement but there is some scope for the [WWCP](#) to support all advocacy organisations to focus on both quality assurance and service improvement.

There are issues of service continuity, especially in respect of non-statutory and specialist advocacy and there is scope for further consideration of how to balance tendering compliance and service continuity.

The [WWCP](#) is committed to ensure that all commissioned [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) along with other advocacy provisions in the region will be of a consistently high standard. This will ensure that all people receiving [Independent Professional Advocacy](#) support can expect a good quality service, wherever they live in the region

What will we do?

We will through co-productive action plans:

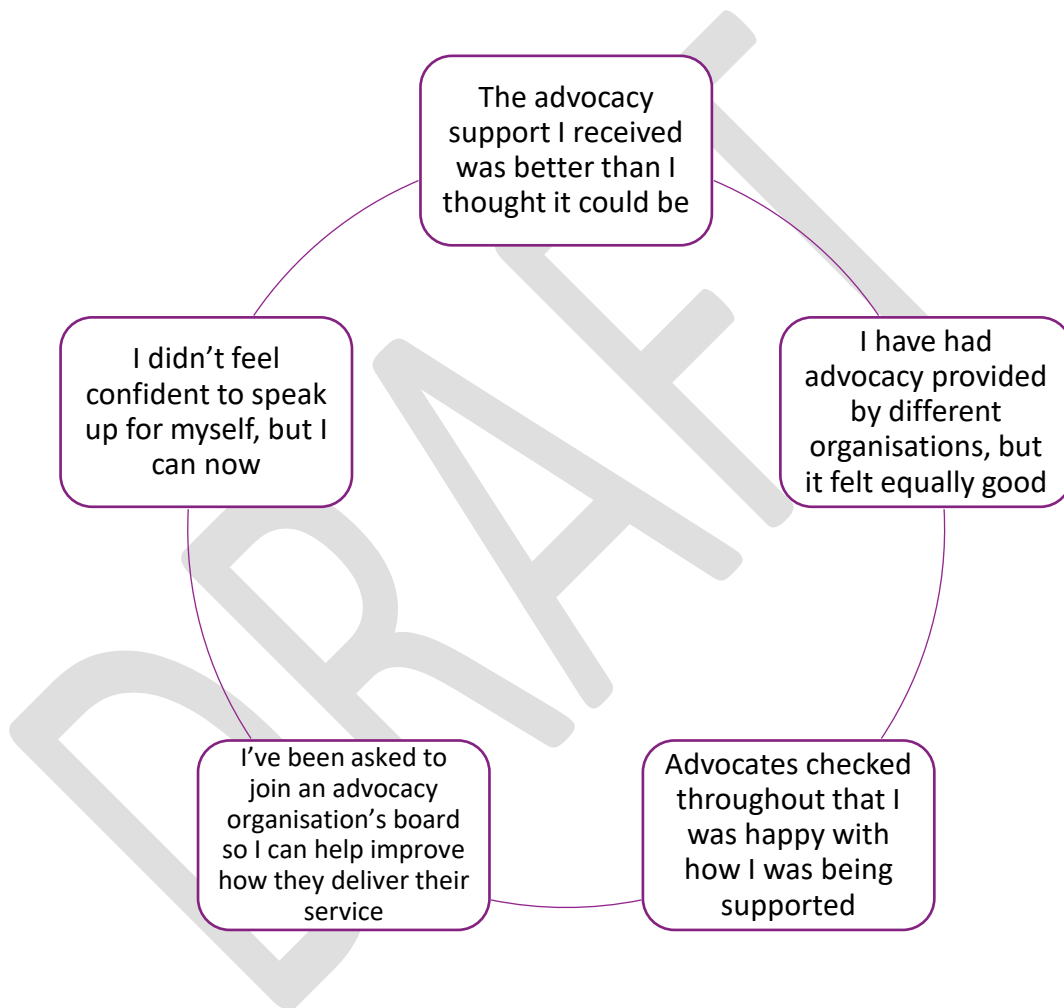
1. Commission sustainable independent advocacy services that can evidence and assure the quality of their governance and practice arrangements through recognised external quality assurance and practice competency systems.
2. Introduce the necessary quality assurance within commissioning arrangements required by any future [RISCA](#) advocacy framework
3. Support developments in the advocacy sector that progress service improvements in terms of quality and best practice, including in relation to learning from mistakes and complaints.
4. Introduce more standardisation in [outcomes monitoring](#) across the region and across comparable advocacy services

What will success look like?

- All commissioned independent advocacy will meet recognised quality assurance and practice competency standards.
- A culture of service improvement will be supported across all advocacy services
- Appropriate consideration will be given to service continuity in the tendering and contracting of commissioned advocacy services
- Any future requirements for advocacy commissioning under [RISCA](#) legislation will be fully introduced and embedded.

- A more robust and standardised approach to the [outcomes monitoring](#) and reporting of commissioned independent advocacy services will be introduced and embedded.
- All commissioned advocacy services will have effective systems for dealing with complaints and learning from mistakes.
- A high number of trained advocates to cope with high capacity and demand

People receiving advocacy will say?



This priority has been developed to encompass two issues raised throughout stakeholder engagement. Firstly, recognising the full spectrum of advocacy services and how we need to develop it equitably with partners. Secondly, the importance of collaboration between different providers on the advocacy spectrum to collectively share knowledge, skills, capacity and experience.

Why is this important?

There are a wide range of circumstances within which people need advocacy support and many of these are not addressed or best met through statutory advocacy provision. Similarly, many individuals and groups get the best outcomes when this is delivered through specialist provision. In delivering advocacy services we must ensure that individuals retain voice, choice and control over as many aspects of their lives as they can, for as long as they can. This can be achieved through a person-centred approach which understands each individual's personal circumstances, their history, future aspirations and what is important to them.

This strategy recognises there needs to be an appropriate balance between generic and specialist advocacy and similarly between statutory and non-statutory advocacy and that [service-users](#) should be able to have choice of which service provides their advocacy support.

Co-ordination and collaboration is needed to ensure that people receive the most appropriate form of advocacy to meet their particular needs and offer choice of provision.

Specialisms are particularly important in respect of [service-user](#) groups who have different communication needs, such as, people with learning disabilities, autistic people and people from the deaf signing community. Non-statutory mental health advocacy relies upon advocates having very specific knowledge of legal frameworks and services to be able to provide the best quality of advocacy support.

Non-statutory advocacy, both commissioned and grant-funded, is very important as it could provide advocacy support in the aspects of people's lives that statutory advocacy was not directly commissioned to address. It also allows issues to be addressed that prevent escalation in people's issues which then require statutory interventions. Non-statutory independent advocacy is also better placed to provide the enduring advocacy relationships that best facilitate empowerment and the capacity to self-advocate.

[Self-advocacy](#) groups, especially for people with learning disabilities, promote and facilitate the ability to self-advocate and as a result allows more participation in decisions impacting on their lives. This allows for more effective co-produced care planning and also promotes the prevention and [safeguarding](#) agendas.

Independent Advocacy often provides significant support to parents when engaged in child protection and legal hearing processes. As identified in the consultation exercise with advocates, this specialist work involves having knowledge of [safeguarding](#) and legal processes to be able to provide these parents the best possible support at these difficult times in their lives - “not forgetting the huge amount of work that I think all the advocate to do at the moment with child protection cases and parents going through child protection” (Stacey, Advocate)

What is the situation in West Wales?

The situation in West Wales offers both specialist and non-statutory advocacy for some [service-user](#) groups but not all. This seems to reflect the significant demands for these services from active community groups, such as, the learning disabilities and mental health communities.

The balance between statutory and non-statutory and between specialist and generic is felt by the learning disabilities and mental health communities to be appropriate.

Other [service-user](#) communities’ advocacy needs are addressed within generic and statutory services. Our engagement indicates that there needs to be further consideration of this balance, when considering how to shape advocacy services for other [service-user](#) groups. These groups are now starting to become more aware of the potential benefits of specialist and non-statutory advocacy. This was most notable amongst carers responses through our engagement, in particular carers of older people with dementia. Projections suggest a significant increase in the demand for dementia services, including advocacy in the lifetime of the strategy.

There are established learning disabilities [self-advocacy](#) groups operating in the region but this is not currently equitably available across the region.

Required advocacy support for parents in child protection processes is available but there is an indication that specialist provision would produce better outcomes.

What will we do?

We will through co-produced action plans:

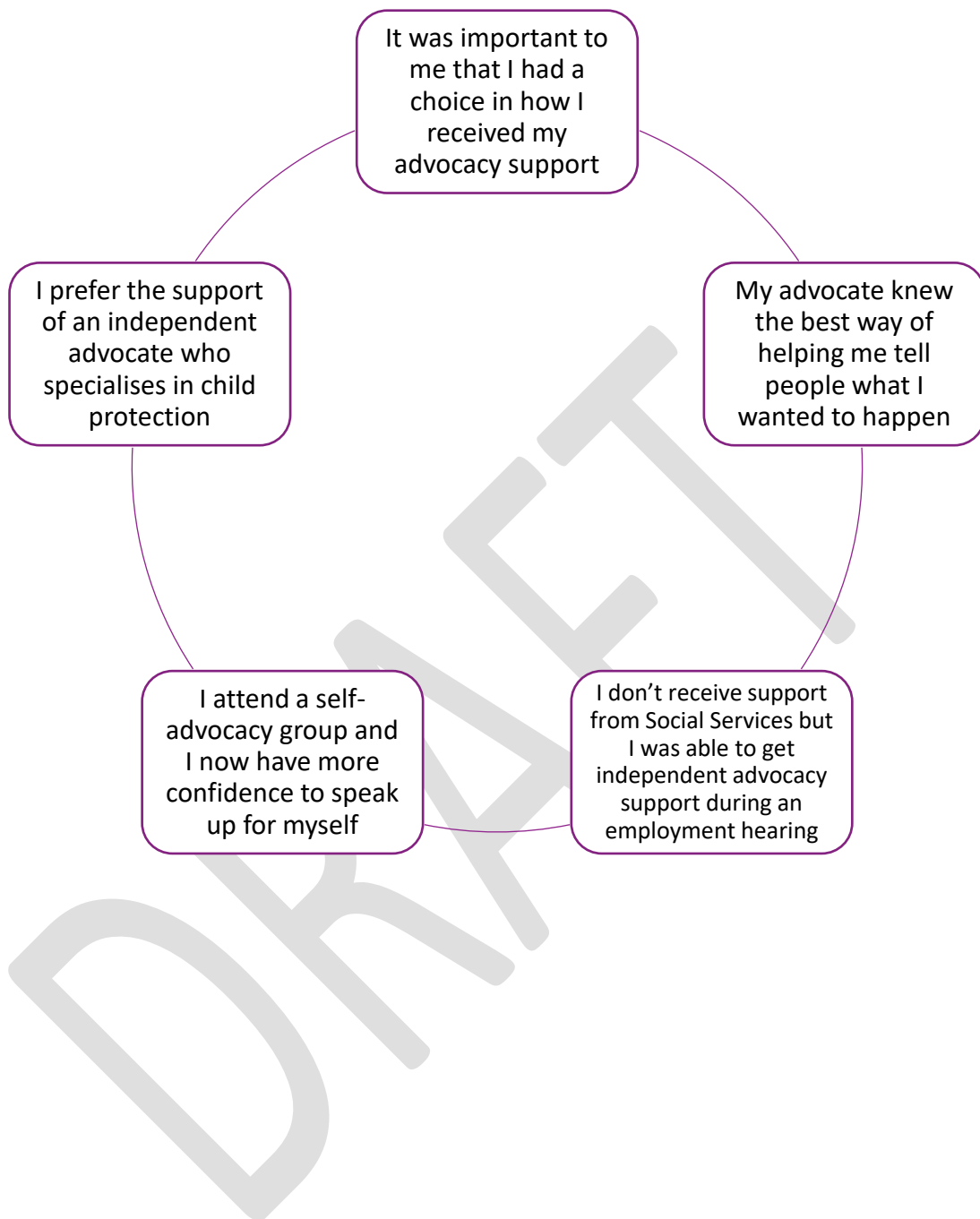
1. Ensure an appropriate balance between generic and specialist and statutory and non-statutory advocacy provision across all [service-user](#) groups in the region.
2. Ensure that people can access the most appropriate form of advocacy to meet their particular needs and offer choice.

3. Ensure that those with complex communication needs will be provided with the most appropriate form of independent advocacy support
4. Develop and support [self-advocacy](#) groups
5. Assess the need for a specialist independent advocacy service to support parents involved in child protection processes that have difficulties understanding key information

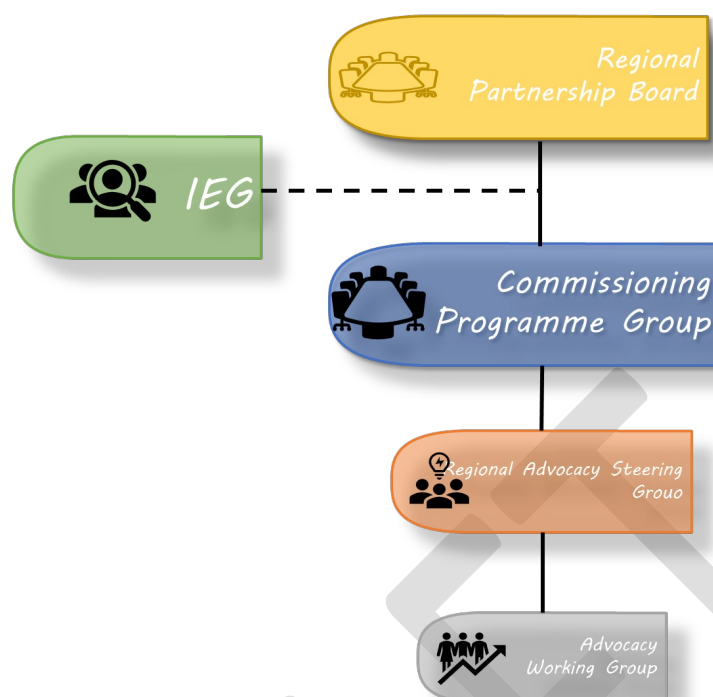
What will success look like?

- There will be a range of specialist and generic provision available to reflect differences in individual need and choice.
- Non-statutory advocacy will be maintained and developed as required to best meet community need
- Individuals with complex communication needs will have access to specialist advocacy services that can best meet their communication needs.
- Endeavour to support the full spectrum of advocacy services such as [Self-advocacy](#)
- If the needs analysis indicates the need for a specialist advocacy service for parents involved in child protection processes, who need support to understand key information, a service will be commissioned

People receiving advocacy will say?



Reporting Our Progress



In line with this strategy a new regional advocacy steering group will be set up to oversee and scrutinise the progress made against the regional adult advocacy strategy. The group is to design and deliver a comprehensive regional implementation plan with clear and measurable actions to shape and guide regional advocacy in West Wales. The plan should align with the National Outcomes Framework (Social Services), the Regional Outcomes Framework and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

This action plan will be regularly monitored and revised in the light of progress and new opportunities for improving outcomes for users of advocacy services - as part of an on-going commitment to working co-productively with users and providers.

The new regional advocacy steering group will be directly account to the Commissioning Programme Group who, on behalf of the West Wales Regional Partnership Board, will oversee the implementation of this strategy:

- Receiving and scrutinising regular progress reports from the Advocacy Working Group.
- Ensuring [WWCP](#) recognition of successes and issues for resolution.
- Ensuring co-productive contract monitoring arrangements are in place, where providers and users are active participants.
- Ensuring this strategy has the profile and resources for effective implementation.

Reports will be made to Hywel Dda University Health Board and the local authorities of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Glossary

Term	Acronym	Explanation
<i>the Act</i>		Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA)
<i>'Active offer'</i>		the process by which professionals facilitate a meeting between a person and an advocate allowing the advocate to fully explain their role and allow the person to decide if they would want advocacy support.
<i>Advocacy qualification</i>		the award given to independent advocates that evidences that they are appropriately trained and competent to practise independent advocacy, including any specialist areas, e.g. mental health
<i>the Code</i>		Part 10 of the Act, Code of Practice (Advocacy) updated 2019, which sets out the requirements on local authorities in relation to advocacy services
<i>Co-production</i>		the process of enabling citizens and professionals to work together in equal partnership, to share power and responsibility for decision-making and planning.
<i>Commissioning/commission</i>		the process by which Health Boards and Local Authorities identify needs then plan and review services they want other agencies to provide.
<i>Golden Thread Advocacy Programme</i>	GTAP	The Project funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by AgeCymru to support the commissioning of advocacy in Wales and in particular the Independent Professional Advocate services across Wales.
<i>Independent Professional Advocate</i>	IPA	a form of independent advocacy defined in the Code and delivered by qualified advocates working within quality assured organisations. There are certain circumstances when Local Authorities should instruct IPAs and others when they must, as set out in the Code.
<i>Information, Advice and Assistance</i>		services designed to identify the support people can access to prevent

		them needing a higher level of support in the future.
<i>Instructed Advocacy</i>		an advocate acts solely on the instruction and direction of the person being supported.
<i>National Development Team for Inclusion</i>	NDTi	an organisation that promotes best practice in terms of social inclusion. It administers the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark.
<i>Non-instructed Advocacy</i>		the person cannot provide instruction and the advocate strives to ensure decisions or actions taken on their behalf respect their rights and entitlements and take account of their known preferences and lifestyles.
<i>Outcomes monitoring</i>		the processes by which the intended benefits of an action are assessed and reviewed.
<i>Quality Performance Mark</i>	QPM	the process by which advocacy organisations evidence that their services operate to a high standard
<i>Referral ‘gateway’</i>		the way that people wanting to access a service are able to make first contact.
<i>Regional Advocacy Development Project</i>		a Project funded by the WWCP to support the development of advocacy in the region
<i>Regulation and Inspection of Social Care</i>	RISCA	the process by which organisations providing social care support are registered to ensure that they are providing quality services
<i>Self-advocacy</i>		the ability of a person to effectively share with others the things that are important to them and how they wish to receive services. Self-advocacy is promoted within all forms of advocacy but has a specific focus within self-advocacy groups.
<i>Service-user</i>		a person in receipt of, or eligible for, support or care services
<i>Safeguarding</i>		the process of protecting children and vulnerable adults from harm, abuse or neglect and an ongoing education process designed to facilitate the identification of the signs and risks relating to abuse.
<i>Social Inclusion</i>		the process of supporting people and communities to be able to participate in decisions and actions affecting their lives.

Social Care Wales		<i>the social care workforce regulator in Wales who has responsibility for building confidence in the workforce and leading and supporting improvement in social care.</i>
Stakeholder		Any person or organisation that have an interest or involvement with an issue, e.g. Carers Forums, Peoples First Groups, etc.
Statutory		Processes that are required under legal frameworks and arranged and/or delivered by Public Bodies, e.g. Local Authorities, Health Boards, etc.
Spectrum of advocacy provision		The different types of advocacy including advocacy provided by; family and friends, social care and health professionals, volunteer advocates, collective self-advocacy and paid independent advocates.
West Wales Care Partnership	WWCP	A regional collaboration between the three West Wales Local Authorities, Hywel Dda University Health Board and also third sector, independent sector, service-user and carer representatives. Its role is to implement the transformation and development of health and social care in line with the intentions of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014
West Wales Population Assessment		an overview of the population and demography of the region used to predict the future necessary service changes to meet the future needs of the population
West Wales		the three counties of Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire

References and Links

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>

Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Part 2 Code of Practice (General Functions

<part-2-code-of-practice-general-functions.pdf> (gov.wales)

Part 10 Advocacy Code of Practice

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/part-10-code-of-practice-advocacy.pdf>

Advocacy Charter

<https://qualityadvocacy.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Advocacy-Charter-A3.pdf>

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA)

<https://careinspectorate.wales/sites/default/files/2018-06/180606-risca-guide-en.pdf>

West Wales Population Needs Assessment www.wwcp-data.org.uk/population-needs-assessment

Welsh Language Measures

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents?lang=en><https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/1/contents?lang=en>

National Outcomes Framework <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-05/the-national-outcomes-framework-for-people-who-need-care-and-support-and-carers-who-need-support.pdf>

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

Statistical Focus in Rural Wales <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2018-12/080515-statistical-focus-rural-wales-08-en.pdf>

IMHA Code of Practice(incorporated into Mental Health(Wales) Act Code of Practice Chapter 6)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/mental-health-act-1983-code-of-practice-mental-health-act-1983-for-wales-review-revised-2016.pdf#:~:text=The%20Mental%20Health%20Act%201983%20Code%20of%20Practice,being%20laid%20before%20the%20National%20Assembly%20for%20Wales.>

Code of Practice (incorporated into the Mental Capacity (Wales)Act Code of Practice chapter 10) <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/Documents/744/Code%20of%20Practice%20E.pdf>

Planning, Commissioning and Co-production, Care Council for Wales

https://socialcare.wales/cms_assets/hub-downloads/Planning_and_Commissioning_Resource_Guide_-_January_17.pdf

GTAP Commissioning Independent Professional Advocacy for Adults under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-cymru/documents/golden-thread-advocacy-programme/programme-documents/commissioning-ipa-framework-english-oct-19.pdf>

West Wales Area Plan 2018-23

www.wwcp.org.uk > [west-wales-area-plan](#)

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



This **Integrated Impact Assessment tool** incorporates the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Sustainable Development Principles, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 (Welsh Language Standards requirements) and Risk Management in order to inform effective decision making and ensuring compliance with respective legislation.

1. PROPOSAL DETAILS: (Policy/Change Objective/Budget saving)

Proposal Title	Our West Wales Adult Advocacy Strategy				
Service Area	Through Age and Wellbeing	Corporate Lead Officer	Audrey Somerton-Edwards	Strategic Director	
Name of Officer completing the IIA	Rebecca Johnson on behalf of the Regional Working Group	E-mail	rebecca.johnson@ceredigion.gov.uk	Phone no	

Please give a brief description of the purpose of the proposal

To consider the new strategy regarding the regional approach to adult advocacy services in West Wales in line with legislative obligations.

Who will be directly affected by this proposal? (e.g. The general public, specific sections of the public such as youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits, staff members or those who fall under the protected characteristics groups as defined by the Equality Act and for whom the authority must have due regard).

General Public

VERSION CONTROL: The IIA should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development, Welsh language and equality considerations wherever possible.

Author	Decision making stage	Version number	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
	<i>e.g. Budget Process, LG, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc.</i>			<i>This will demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development throughout the evolution of a proposal. Have you considered and applied the sustainable development principle and Well-being Goals?</i>

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES: Which of the Council's Strategic Objectives does the proposal address and how?	
Boosting the Economy, supporting Business and enabling employment.	
Creating caring and healthy communities	Legislative requirement under SSWBA 2014
Providing the best start in life and enabling Learning at all ages	
Creating sustainable, greener and well-connected communities	

NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for **evidence to support your views**. These need to include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the judgement you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation will have a positive or negative effect. Data sources include for example:

- *Quantitative data - data that provides numerical information, e.g. population figures, number of users/non-users*
- *Qualitative data – data that furnishes evidence of people's perception/views of the service/policy, e.g. analysis of complaints, outcomes of focus groups, surveys*
- *Local population data from the census figures (such as Ceredigion Welsh language Profile and Ceredigion Demographic Equality data)*
- *National Household survey data*
- *Service User data*
- *Feedback from consultation and engagement campaigns*
- *Recommendations from Scrutiny*
- *Comparisons with similar policies in other authorities*
- *Academic publications, research reports, consultants' reports, and reports on any consultation with e.g. trade unions or the voluntary and community sectors, 'Is Wales Fairer' document.*
- *Welsh Language skills data for Council staff*



2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES: How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the five sustainable development principles, as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in its development?			
Sustainable Development Principle	Does the proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not, explain why.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the principle?
Long Term Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy is one for the next 5 years whilst also referencing short term issues to address 		
Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the strategy has been overseen by the Advocacy Working Group (Local Authority, 3rd sector and health board representation) 		
Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the strategy involved a period of co-production with stakeholders closest to advocacy services 		
Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy as a provision can support the preventative agenda 		
Integration Positively impacting on people, economy, environment and culture and trying to benefit all three.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The strategy promotes integrated work of health and social care to streamline advocacy provision 		

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



3. WELL-BEING GOALS: Does your proposal deliver any of the seven National Well-being Goals for Wales as outlined on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. We need to ensure that the steps we take to meet one of the goals aren't detrimental to meeting another.

Well-being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive or negative impacts:-	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to the goal?
3.1. A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs.			
3.2. A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change).			
3.3. A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and health impacts are understood.	Although the strategy itself is not a statutory requirement it will support obligations under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) are met in respect of adult advocacy provisions.		
3.4. A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected.			
3.5. A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental well-being.			

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<p>3.6. A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances.</p> <p><i>In this section you need to consider the impact on equality groups, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>You need to consider how might the proposal impact on equality protected groups in accordance with the Equality Act 2010?</i></p> <p><i>These include the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation.</i></p> <p>Please also consider the following guide:: Equality Human Rights - Assessing Impact & Equality Duty</p>	<p>Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.</p> <p><i>Using your evidence consider the impact for each of the protected groups. You will need to consider do these groups have equal access to the service, or do they need to receive the service in a different way from other people because of their protected characteristics. It is not acceptable to state simply that a proposal will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone. You should demonstrate that you have considered all the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed.</i></p>	<p>What evidence do you have to support this view?</p> <p><i>Gathering Equality data and evidence is vital for an IIA. You should consider who uses or is likely to use the service. Failure to use <u>data</u> or <u>engage</u> where change is planned can leave decisions open to legal challenge. Please link to involvement box within this template. Please also consider the general guidance.</i></p>	<p>What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p> <p><i>These actions can include a range of positive actions which allows the organisation to treat individuals according to their needs, even when that might mean treating some more favourably than others, in order for them to have a good outcome. You may also have actions to identify any gaps in data or an action to engage with those who will/likely to be effected by the proposal. These actions need to link to Section 4 of this template.</i></p>																					
<p>Age Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their age? (Please tick ✓)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Children and Young People up to 18</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Negative</td> <td>None/ Negligible</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">People 18-50</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Negative</td> <td>None/ Negligible</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Older People 50+</td> <td>Positive</td> <td>Negative</td> <td>None/ Negligible</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Children and Young People up to 18	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible		✓		People 18-50	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	✓			Older People 50+	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	✓			<p><i>The Strategy is relating to Advocacy provision for Adults</i></p>		
Children and Young People up to 18		Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																				
		✓																						
People 18-50	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																					
	✓																							
Older People 50+	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible																					
	✓																							

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



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Disability Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people because of their disability? (Please tick ✓)						
Hearing Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Physical Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Visual Impairment	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Learning Disability	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Long Standing Illness	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Mental Health	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					
Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
	✓					

Transgender Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on transgender people? (Please tick ✓)						
Transgender	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

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Marriage or Civil Partnership Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on marriage or Civil partnership? (Please tick ✓)						
Marriage	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Civil partnership	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Pregnancy or Maternity Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on pregnancy or maternity? (Please tick ✓)						
Pregnancy	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Maternity	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Race Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on race? (Please tick ✓)						
White	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Asian / Asian British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

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Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Other Ethnic Groups	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

Religion or non-beliefs
Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different religions, beliefs or non-beliefs? (Please tick ✓)

Christian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Buddhist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Hindu	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Humanist	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Jewish	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Muslim	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Sikh	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Non-belief	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			

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Other	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Sex Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on men and/or women? (Please tick ✓)						
Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Women	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Sexual Orientation Do you think this proposal will have a positive or a negative impact on people with different sexual orientation? (Please tick ✓)						
Bisexual	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Gay Men	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Gay Women / Lesbian	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Heterosexual / Straight	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

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Having due regards in relation to the three aims of the Equality Duty - determine whether the proposal will assist or inhibit your ability to eliminate discrimination; advance equality and foster good relations.

3.6.2. How could/does the proposal help advance/promote equality of opportunity?

You should consider whether the proposal will help you to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantage
- To meet the needs of people with certain characteristics
- Encourage increased participation of people with particular characteristics

The strategy clearly outlines Advocacy and the importance of it. The Strategy is to shape the commissioning arrangements in the region.

3.6.3. How could/does the proposal/decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, or victimisation?

You should consider whether there is evidence to indicate that:

- The proposal may result in less favourable treatment for people with certain characteristics
- The proposal may give rise to indirect discrimination
- The proposal is more likely to assist or impeded you in making reasonable adjustments

3.6.4. How could/does the proposal impact on advancing/promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

You should consider whether the proposal with help you to:

- Tackle prejudice
- Promote understanding

Having due regard of the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage is living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society.

As a listed public body, Ceredigion County Council is required to have due regard to the Socio-Economic Duty of the Equality Act 2010. Effectively this means carrying out a poverty impact assessment. The duty covers all people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage, including people with protected characteristics.

3.6.5 What evidence do you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to the proposal?

Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.

What evidence do you have to support this view?

What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

An integrated tool to inform effective decision making



3.7. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh Language are promoted and protected. <i>In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This in order to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language Measure 2011.</i>				Describe why it will have a positive/negative or negligible impact.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action (s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Will the proposal be delivered bilingually (Welsh & English)?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible	<i>Strategy is in both English and Welsh and Advocacy provision is available in both languages</i>		
	✓					
Will the proposal have an effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Will the proposal increase or reduce the opportunity for persons to access services through the medium of Welsh?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
How will the proposal treat the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			
Will it preserve promote and enhance local culture and heritage?	Positive	Negative	None/ Negligible			
			✓			

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4. STRENGTHENING THE PROPOSAL: If the proposal is likely to have a negative impact on any of the above (including any of the protected characteristics), what practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts as identified in sections 2 and 3?

4.1 Actions.

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?	Progress

4.2. If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative impacts please justify why.
(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination, immediate and potential, as a result of this proposal, the proposal must be changed or revised).

4.3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing.
How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

5. RISK: What is the risk associated with this proposal?

Impact Criteria	1 - Very low	2 - Low	3 - Medium	4 - High	5 - Very High
Likelihood Criteria	1 - Unlikely to occur	2 - Lower than average chance of occurrence	3 - Even chance of occurrence	4 - Higher than average chance of occurrence	5 - Expected to occur
Risk Description	Impact (severity)		Probability (deliverability)		Risk Score
					<i>Probability x Impact e.g. 3 x 5 = 15</i>



Does your proposal have a potential impact on another Service area?

6. SIGN OFF			
Position	Name	Signature	Date
Service Manager			
Corporate Lead Officer	Audrey Somerton-Edwards		
Strategic Director			
Portfolio Holder			

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 2 May 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid

TITLE: West Wales Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To provide feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 April 2023

Members of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the West Wales Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy.

The provision of Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) is a legislative requirement under Part 10 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWBA) 2014. This type of advocacy is provided in circumstances such as where a citizen's access to care and support services are in question. Advocacy itself can be seen on a continuum, and, while IPA provision is specifically mandated, other types are to be encouraged, building on individual and community capacity.

Following discussion, Members considered the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION (S):

1. To seek endorsement of the West Wales Regional Adult Advocacy Strategy

Following consideration, Committee Members recommend that Cabinet approve the West Wales Regional Advocacy Strategy.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

Although the strategy itself is not a statutory requirement it will support obligations under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) are met in respect of adult advocacy provisions.

Councillor Caryl Roberts
Chairman of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	2 May 2023
Title:	Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Reports for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022
Purpose of the report:	The purpose of this report is to share the information contained within the statutory annual reports ahead of progression through the governance process and publication.
For:	Information and oversight before publication
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alun Williams, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing

BACKGROUND:

The duty to compile the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services requirement is defined in Part 8 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 under the 'Code of Practice on the Role of Directors of Social Services'.

The completion of the reports has been delayed during the Covid-19 crisis.

There will be no reason for delay in producing and publishing the report for the current year.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The reports have now been compiled and are ready for approval.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why	<i>No, the reports will be accessible to all members of the public and do not involve policy or service change.</i>
	Summary:	
	Long term:	
	Collaboration:	
	Involvement:	
	Prevention:	
	Integration:	
Recommendation:	Cabinet recommends that the reports be presented to Council.	

Reasons for decision:	The publication of this information will ensure that Ceredigion County Council is compliant with their duty to compile and publish this information bilingually from the Statutory Director under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
Overview and Scrutiny:	The reports were presented to the Healthier Communities Scrutiny on 13 April 2023 where the content was noted, and agreement was reached to progress through the governance process in readiness for publication in line with legislative requirement.
Policy Framework:	Ceredigion for All
Corporate Well-being Objectives:	Creating Caring and Healthier Communities
Finance and Procurement implications:	None
Legal Implications:	Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 Publication will ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act
Staffing implications:	None
Property / asset implications:	None
Risk(s):	Failure to publish could result in none compliance with primary legislation.
Statutory Powers:	The Statutory Director has the power to publish an annual report containing information about the services.
Background Papers:	None
Appendices:	Appendix 1- Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Reports for 2020/2021 Appendix 2- Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Reports for 2021/2022
Corporate Lead Officer:	Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Interim Corporate Lead Officer, Porth Cynnal and Interim Statutory Director of Social Services
Reporting Officer:	Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Interim Corporate Lead Officer, Porth Cynnal and Interim Statutory Director of Social Services
Date:	14.04.23

Ceredigion County Council

Sian Howys

DRAFT



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Caru Love
Ceredigion

**Ceredigion Social
Services –
Statutory Director’s
Annual Report
2020/2021**

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1. Introduction

As the Director of Ceredigion Social Services between July 2020 and March 2021, I have the pleasure of presenting the 2020-2021 Annual Report. This has been an unprecedented year in so many ways due to the Covid 19 Global Pandemic and public health emergency. Promoting the safety and wellbeing of the residents of Ceredigion in the context of the far-reaching implications of Covid 19 has been extremely challenging.



From the outset, Ceredigion County Council has taken stringent measures to manage the risk of the spread of Covid 19 and we have throughout the year been proactive and robust in prioritizing the protection of and support for the residents of Ceredigion. I must at the outset acknowledge with gratitude the commitment and dedication of my colleagues and all staff for the way they

have responded to the Covid 19 crisis and made the necessary adjustments to ensure the continuity and safe delivery of key social care services during the periods of lockdown and the Covid restrictions.

With this annual report, the aim is to evaluate the performance of the Local Authority in relation to the delivery of its Social Services functions in respect of the 2020-2021 financial year. The impact of Covid-19 in relation to social care services has been very significant across all areas of the Council’s work. It has also affected our capacity to provide specific information for this report, I have however ensured to the best of my ability that the information available has been provided to set out how the agreed wellbeing outcomes in Ceredigion have been met.

The annual report content is defined in Part 8 of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) under the ‘Code of Practice on the Role of Directors of Social Services’, which provides a requirement for an annual report to detail how the Local Authority has been working towards achieving the quality standards of well-being outcomes.

The eight well-being outcomes are:

- Securing rights and entitlements
- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Education, training, and recreation
- Domestic, family, and personal relationships
- Contribution made to society
- Social and economic well-being
- Suitability of living accommodation

The six quality standards used to measure the Local Authority’s performance against the wellbeing outcomes are:

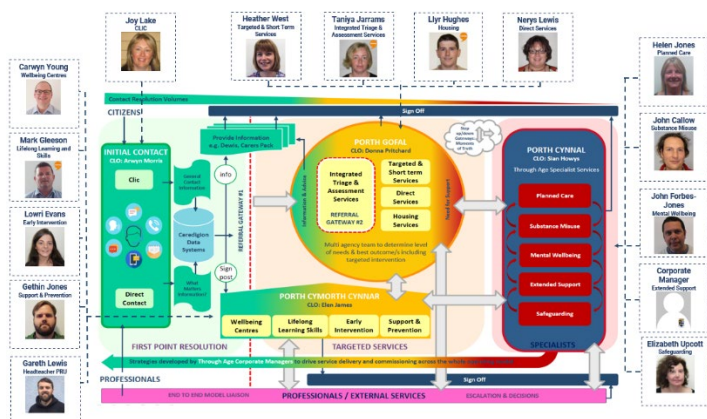
- Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
- Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being

- Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect, or harm
- Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
- Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family, and personal relationships
- Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

This report has been written for a wide audience, with the intention that it is made available to everyone. In compiling this report, I’ve considered specifically the following groups:

- Service users and carers and all those whose well-being is affected by what the local authority’s social services and related functions do, so that the impact of those services is explained
- The public who has an interest in what their local authority is doing, how it is performing and how their money is being spent
- Elected members and others involved in scrutiny processes
- The local authority’s partners including both formal partners and others in the public, private and third sectors who need to understand the local authority’s programme and priority objectives
- Regulators (including the Wales Audit Office, CIW, Social Care Wales, and the Statutory Commissioners)
- The Welsh Government

The Through Age and Well-being Integrated Service Delivery Model



During 2020-2021, the implementation of the Integrated Through Age and Well-being Service Model was delayed by the impact of the pandemic and the need to prioritise actions in relation to our Covid 19 response. However, the achievements of the previous year provided a sound basis for continued development of the strategic aims of the model. The model focuses on people’s strengths, enabling them and their families where they need help and developing resilience within our communities.

Phase 1 of the corporate restructure was completed in April 2018 with the recruitment of 2 Corporate Directors and 12 Corporate Lead Officers (CLOs) to cover the responsibilities of all service areas.

The implementation of the Integrated Through Age and Well-being Service Delivery Model changes the roles and responsibilities of some of the Corporate Lead Officer posts and the teams across the Local Authority, not only in Social Care. The 3 Corporate lead Officers, Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal have led the change management processes to support the development and delivery of the model.

The Corporate Manager roles have been operational since March 2020 and throughout 2020-2021 the team have collaborated well and have taken forward several key strategic developments across the Pyrth. The Corporate Managers have worked hard on defining functions and pathways between the various teams and services, the setting up of proposals in preparation for the second Phase of the restructuring of Team Management and the configuration of services whilst also implementing Covid 19 measures. The model is now named the Through Age and Wellbeing Programme and it has gained considerable momentum in all the four main service areas.

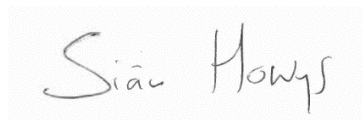
- Clic Customer Contact – Initial point of contact and referral
- Porth Cymorth Cynnar – Early intervention and Prevention
- Porth Gofal – Triage, Assessment, Targeted Intervention and Direct Services
- Porth Cymorth Cynnal – Specialist Care and Support Through Age Services

Ceredigion’s Covid 19 Response

From the outset of the pandemic, Ceredigion County Council identified a clear vision and framework of action to ensure Ceredigion succeeded in not only reducing predicted deaths through the first peak but also for any future predicted peaks. The defined phases of our response have been;

- Phase 1 - Preparedness – Closing down of all non-essential services
- Phase 2 - Implementation – Delivering services under lockdown and controlled conditions
- Phase 3 - Adjustment and long- term resilience
- Phase 4 - Recovery

A range of measures have been taken throughout 2020-2021 to protect the most vulnerable people in our care homes, schools and in the community. At the close of the period of this report, we currently have one of the lowest Covid 19 rates in Wales and are at Phase 3 of our response in planning for further adjustments with the aim of doing all we can to maintain this low rate and to build longer term resilience and recovery in our communities.



Sian Howys
Statutory Director of Social Services
Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Cynnal

2. Summary of Performance

As laid out under section 145 of the Social Services and Wellbeing act, the Performance Measurement framework is used as a gauge of performance of local authorities’ social services functions. This section will illustrate how the service has performed over the past year. It must be noted that following Welsh Government direction minimal reporting was completed due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the report reflects this.

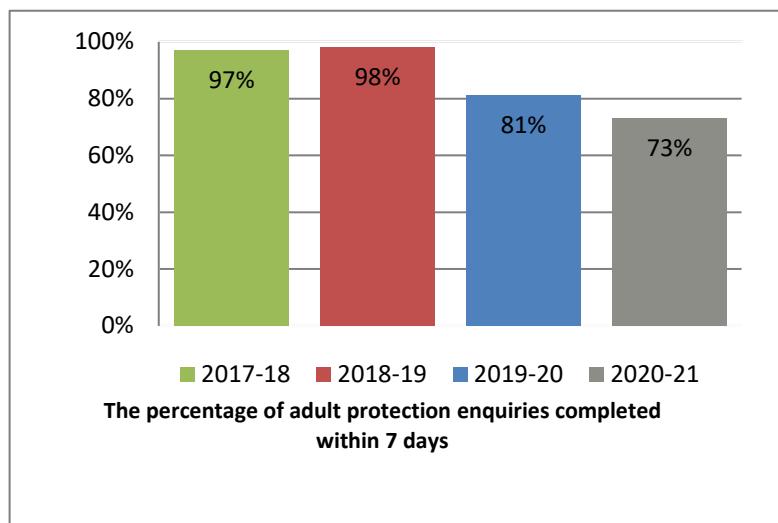
Adult and Commissioning Services Summary

The performance of services for adults is satisfactory with priority given to adhering to local, regional, and national Covid 19 regulations, guidance and protocols in collaboration with partner agency whilst participating fully in all multi -agency forums dealing with the pandemic.

The continued development of key service areas such as Clic for initial contact and signposting to Porth Gofal for advice and assistance, triage and proportionate assessment forms the basis of our future model. Opportunities for developing and enhancing prevention services within Porth Cymorth Cynnar continues as another key element with Covid 19 adjustments such as Community Connectors providing online support and welfare phone calls.

Adult Safeguarding

Ceredigion Adult Safeguarding Service complied with the regionally and nationally agreed protocols



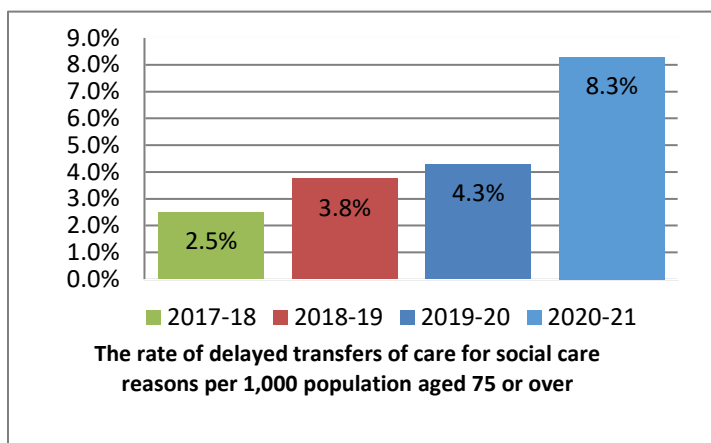
for carrying out safeguarding duties to adults at risk during the pandemic. Risk assessments were completed for all necessary visits and virtual working was implemented whenever possible. This measure shows the percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days. There has been a reduction in 2020/2021 which relates to the impact of Covid on staff sickness and absence rates and the need to prioritise high risk cases. An enquiry should normally be completed within seven working days of the report. This of course would not prevent

immediate action being taken when necessary to protect an adult at risk.

Delayed Transfers of Care

This year, the delayed transfers of care measure has significantly increased due to the impact that COVID has had on services such as the availability of residential placement and domiciliary care with lockdown and infection outbreak control measures. A delayed transfer of care is experienced by an inpatient in a hospital, who is ready to move on to the next stage of care but is prevented from doing so for one or more reasons such as service provision due to the need for care and support. Ceredigion County Council made the decision in April 2020 to adopt the COVID-19 Hospital

Discharge Service Requirements (Wales). However, it also decided that by adhering to the Guidance in its entirety it would potentially expose the residential care homes to risks of infection that could have catastrophic consequences. In order to mitigate this risk and protect the service users and staff within the homes, the decision was made that new admissions to residential care homes would only be accepted following a negative Covid 19 test result, proof of testing and the result will need to be provided prior to accepting the admission. For service users who needed to return to the home following a period of acute care the same arrangement was applied.



Porth Gofal has strong connections with 3rd Sector Services which have been utilized whenever possible to support those who have low level needs for support following discharge from hospital. Porth Gofal’s ethos is one of integrated working with our Health colleagues with triage being the main hub for coordination of hospital discharges. This has ensured that the person has the right support at the right time by the right professional, building on the person’s strengths and network and promoting self-resilience to regain their

independence. Hospital discharges continue to be a priority within the Porth Gofal service and for that to happen safely within the confines of nationally and locally agreed Covid protocols.

Enablement

Enablement is ordinarily a short and intensive service, usually delivered in the home, which is offered to people with disabilities and those who are frail or recovering from an illness or injury.

2020-2021 Referrals received actioned and closed by Enablement

2020/21	Total Referrals	Enablement	Long Term	Closed	Started
Apr-20	28	23	5	7	21
May-20	55	45	10	14	41
June-20	42	28	14	9	33
Jul-20	41	31	10	11	30
Aug-20	34	23	11	13	21
Sep-20	33	19	14	16	17
Oct-20	59	33	26	32	27
Nov-20	52	27	25	22	30

Dec-20	53	34	19	7	46
Jan-21	43	27	16	21	22
Feb-21	52	31	21	24	28
Mar-21	60	49	11	32	28
TOTAL	552	370	182	208	344

Totals per month of individuals in receipt of Enablement and hours delivered

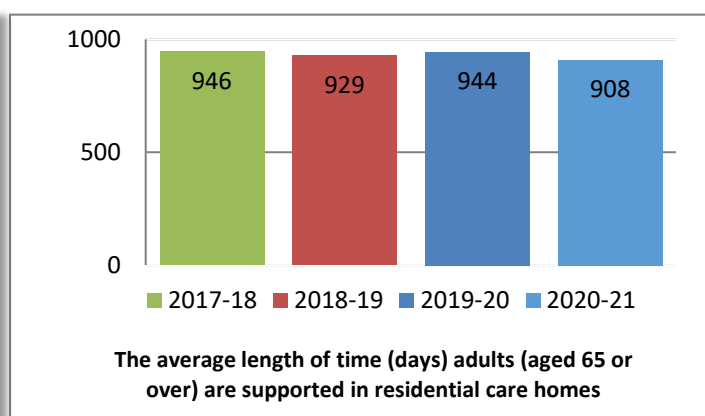
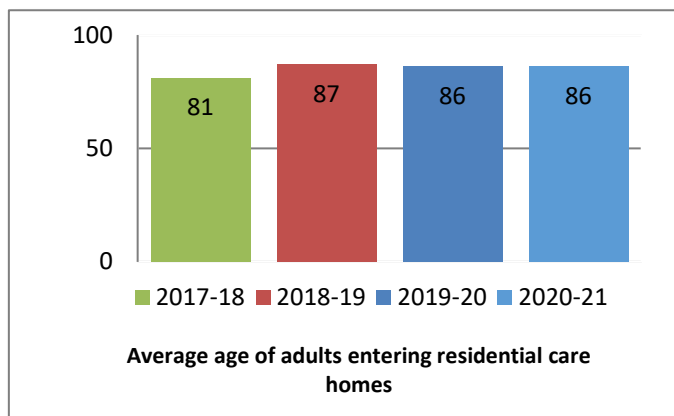
A total of 4072.38 hours of Enablement service was provided in 2020/21. A total of 336 individuals were re-abled and discharged from the service.

In January 21 – March 21 of the 24 long term care bridging cases that were accepted, 8 were reduced by Enablement intervention by 45.75 hours. This has reinforced our new model of development to assess long term needs through the lens of an enablement focus.

The service has continued to deliver an important service in promoting early discharge from hospital and promoting independence within the Covid control protocols. The service has been able to deliver positive outcomes for individuals despite significant pressures in our commissioned domiciliary care services. The in-house enablement service has continued to help hundreds of people regain their independence and live at home with little or no need for support from statutory services. The underlying principles of early intervention, de-escalation and reablement continue to be part of the golden thread of our transformation of social care services.

During 2020-2021, the service also expanded its staffing capacity to include the provision of support for longer term domiciliary support utilizing specific Covid 19 funding and in order to address the impact of increased pressures on the independent providers of domiciliary care in the county

Adults supported in residential care homes



Residential care provides a range of options for individuals who require 24hour care. These include short term, temporary and permanent placements. There are various residential care options available, depending on the needs of the individual. Ceredigion operates five residential care homes itself and commissions with several private companies both in Ceredigion and further afield.

This year there has been a decrease in the average amount of time spent in residential homes and that could well be attributed to the Pandemic and the impact of the infection outbreaks. Very early on, the Local Authority developed an Infection, Prevention and Control Protocol. This ensured that the workforce and health colleagues had clear guidance to follow in relation to minimizing the opportunity for the transmission of the virus within the care homes.

A protocol was also developed to ensure that key communication could be shared with the social care independent sector.

Throughout this service during Covid 19 we have ensured multi-professional and clinical support via technology to support communication with professionals or safe visits from GP’s, mental health, dementia, OT/allied health professions

A Regional Escalation Policy was developed with local arrangements agreed and this was shared across the sector.

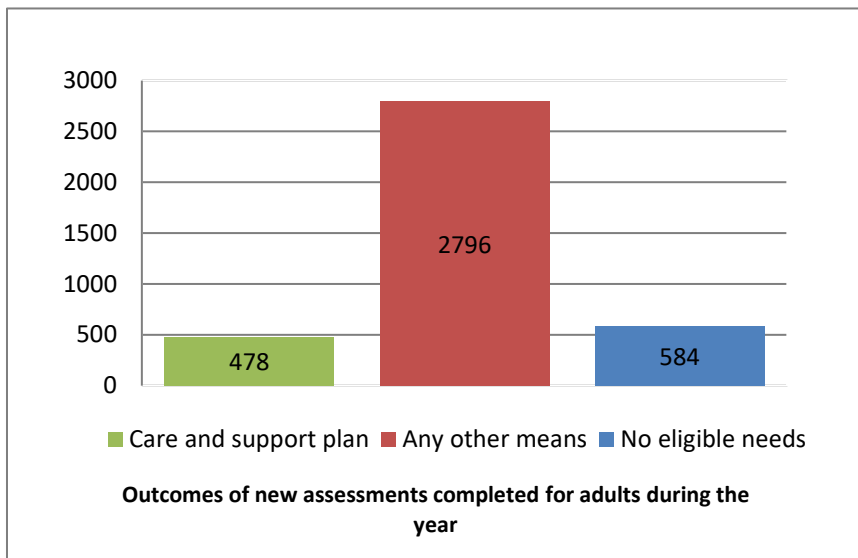
Daily SitRep across all care homes have been completed 7 days a week in order to identify potential issues or concerns so that issues were actioned quickly.

The local authority invested at a very early point in conferencing facilities to ensure that families could have access technology to maintain contact whilst face to face visiting was suspended. Later in the year, the Council supported the planning and development of outdoor visiting facilities when alert levels were reduced. This also progressed with the Independent Sector through the assistance of the Wales Co-operative Centre who have provided equipment, training, and support to enable technology to be accessed and used. This programme of work received national press coverage.

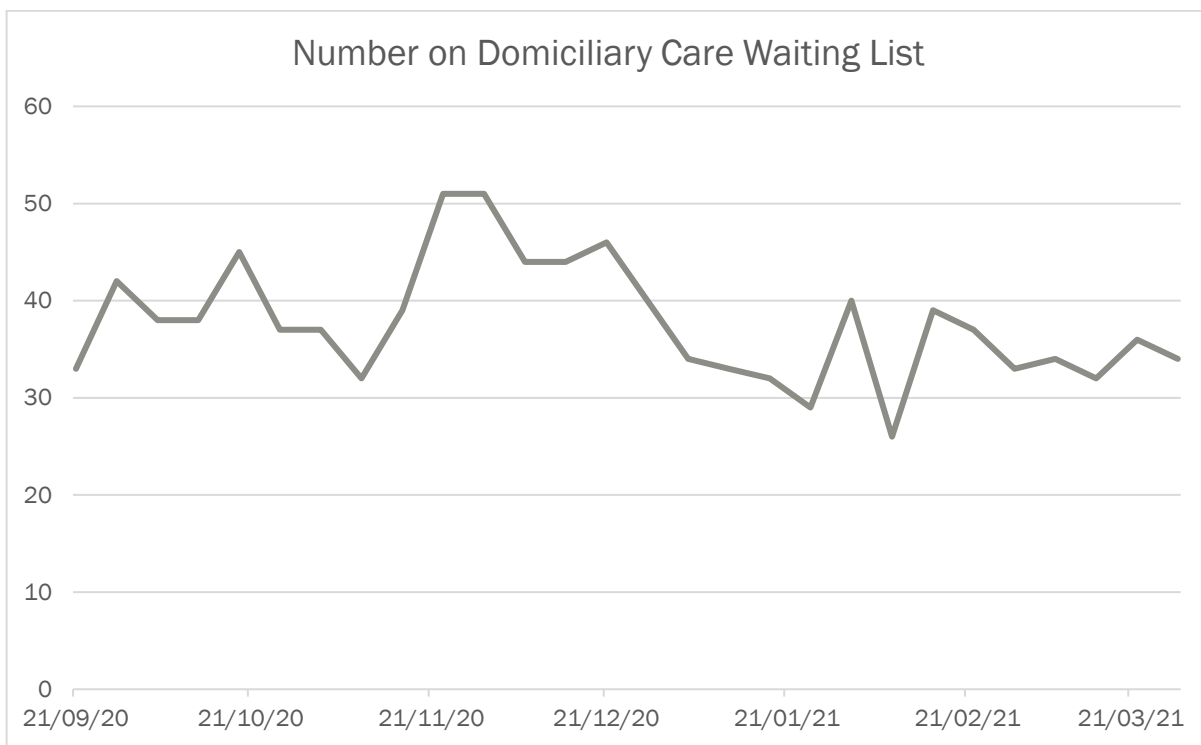
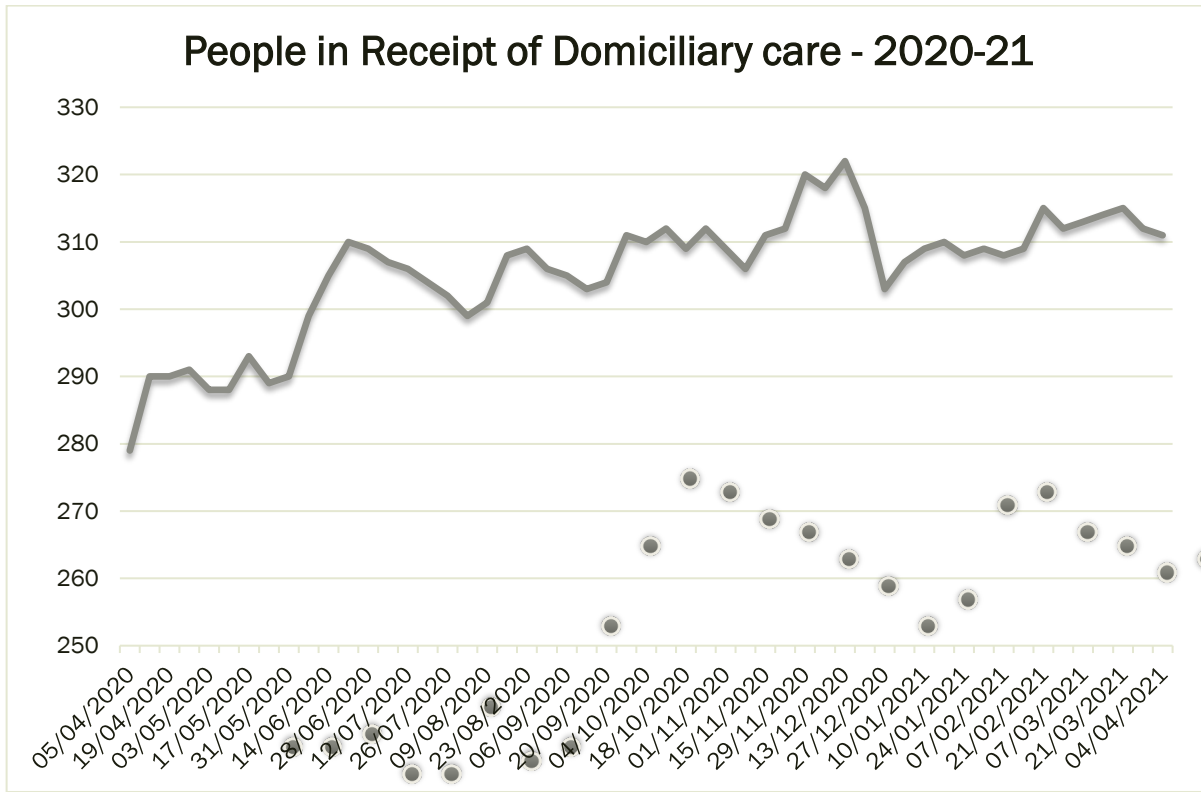
Advice and Assistance for adults

Section 17 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to secure the provision of an information, advice, and assistance (IAA) service. The Porth Gofal team are trained and have a high knowledge of preventative 3rd sector services within the local area. The team also works closely with Porth Cymorth Cynnar to address and de-escalate those with low level needs at the first point of contact in collaboration with the person.

All referrals that are not deescalated by information only are passed through to the integrated triage team for a proportionate assessment. The Multi -Disciplinary Team (MDT) will provide a holistic assessment using SOS to identify what advice and assistance is required to support and deescalate the situation further. The MDT can provide specialist professional knowledge which includes OT, Physiotherapy, Nursing and Social work. The MDT will also refer on to other professionals within the Health Board for support if required. With the Covid 19 restrictions, the team have been working virtually with risk assessments completed for all face-to-face contact.



Provision of Domiciliary Care



During the period 2020-09-21 to 2021-03-21, the number of people waiting for domiciliary care fluctuated between a low of 26 and a high of 51 but has been between 30 and 40 since December 2020.

We continued to enjoy good working relationships with most providers which gives us a good basis on which to build, allowing us to work closely with the market through the peaks and troughs and in the face of all the challenges of the impact of Covid 19. Providers continue to feedback that their regular meetings with Ceredigion County Council have been beneficial and informative in terms of implementing local and national Covid protocols on the safe delivery of personal care and infection control and the distribution of PPE. Providers can raise important issue and trends can be identified and escalated when necessary, ensuring their voices are heard regionally.

We have several remote, isolated areas in which it is very difficult to procure care, and this became even more of a challenge during Covid 19 with providers facing significant staffing challenges. In order to facilitate the release of pressure in certain areas and to aide hospital discharges we during the pandemic utilized our in-house Enablement team to support with the demand for services.

	Total hours of home care purchased from independent sector	Comments
2017/18	239470.73	551 individuals received commissioned dom care
2018/19	241300.18	571 individuals received commissioned dom care
2019/20	234499.18	540 individuals received commissioned dom care
2020/21	209780.61	487 individuals received commissioned dom care

A number of our providers offer care services to Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Powys and are able to fill the gaps in their rotas across county lines. There are currently 14 main providers operating within the main domiciliary care market in Ceredigion at 31st March 2021.

Day Services

The Day Centers were closed during this period and the Centre based services to Disabled Adults and Older Adults were suspended. Service Adjustments were made with Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Teams, Social Care and Health and Safety Risk Assessments were completed and Infection Control Measures adhered to in order to ensure safe respite and support arrangements for the most vulnerable supplemented with regular virtual and keep in touch calls.

Mental Wellbeing Services

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed by the Porth Cynnal teams staff and infection control measures adhered to with continuation of Mental Health Act assessment and statutory support for people experiencing mental health difficulties and illness and their carers.

Substance Misuse Service

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and

statutory care and support for people experiencing difficulties and dependency with substance misuse and their carers.

Extended Support

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for people with disabilities and their carers.

Planned Care

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for adults with longer term care and support needs.

Children and Families Services

During this year, Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar teams collaborated closely with schools service and key partner agencies to safeguard and support Children and Young people in Ceredigion and continue to meet statutory duties within the requirements of regionally and nationally agreed Covid 19 protocols and guidance, The significant impact of Covid 19 on children and families has been evident in terms of the reduced visibility of children and lack of access to community support and an increase in support needs for children and young people’s mental and emotional wellbeing .

During the lockdown periods and closure of schools, services worked closely with Schools Service to ensure that children at risk of harm and in need of care and support were able to attend the School Hubs for support.

Respite and support arrangements were prioritised for disabled children and families and looked after children within the confines of the Covid 19 restrictions

With the easing of restrictions during the summer, children in receipt of care and support or of preventative services were able to access summer of fun activities arranged by Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar services in collaboration with partners whilst adhering to Covid 19 safety measures.

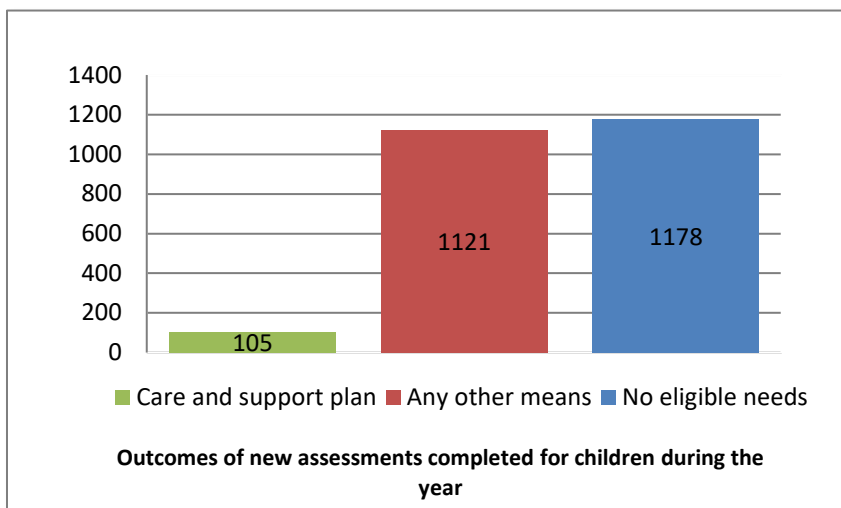
The Child Protection Register has fluctuated during 2020/21, the Child Protection Register with 29 children as at March 31st. This is a reduction on the end of year figure for 2019/2020.

The number of Ceredigion Looked After Children has increased to 86 as at the 31 March 2021. This increase is being closely monitored and the impact of Covid 19 on the ability to keep children safe within their homes and in the community has been evident.

The availability of Early intervention and Prevention activities have been affected greatly by Covid 19. Wherever possible support services have been offered virtually.

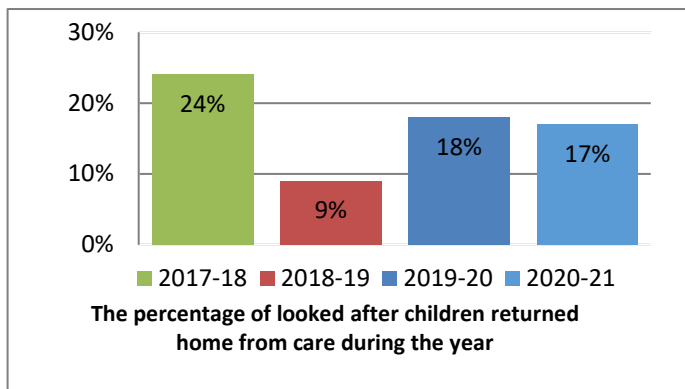
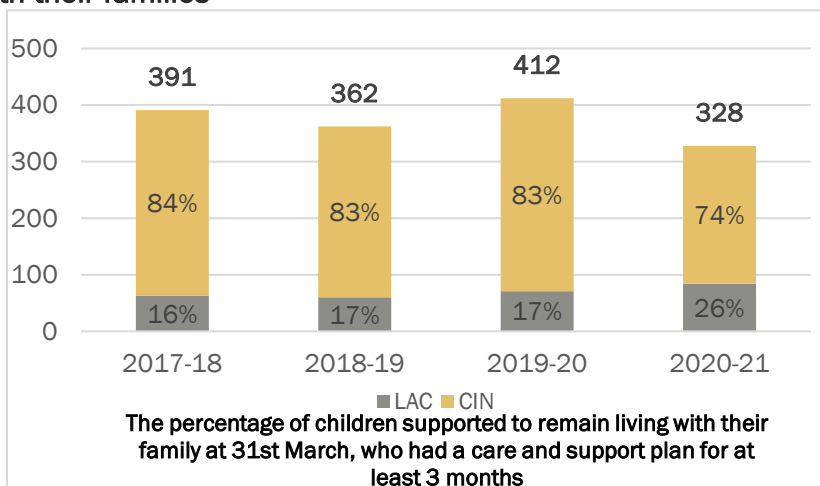
Outcome of Assessments

Risk assessments were completed for all necessary home or face to face visits. Virtual working was implemented for multi -agency meetings with support provided for families to participate. Cases were prioritized with regard to risk of harm from abuse or neglect. Staff worked within the risk and practice framework developed by Welsh Government and with other local and regional protocols.



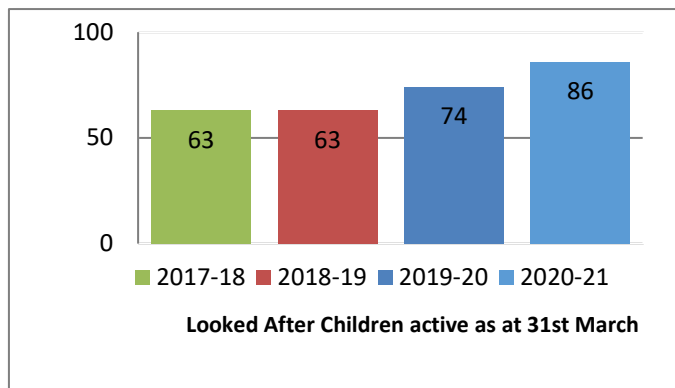
Supporting Children to remain living with their families

Supporting children to live with their families is one of the main goals of the Porth Cynnal services. Wherever possible, it is considered the best outcome for children. This measure compares the number of children supported as Looked After Children (a child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours) to the number of children who are supported outside of these types of arrangements.



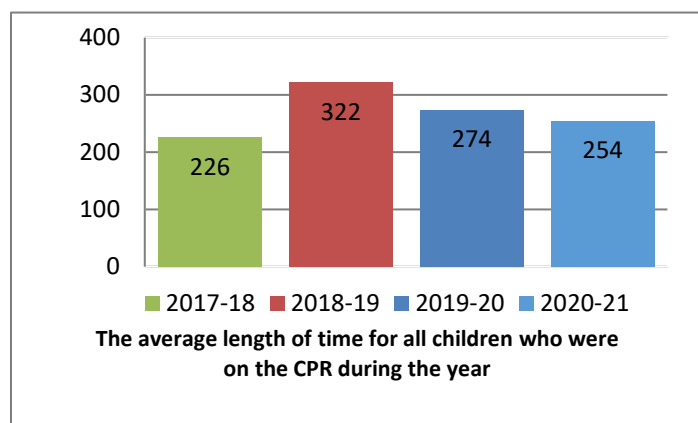
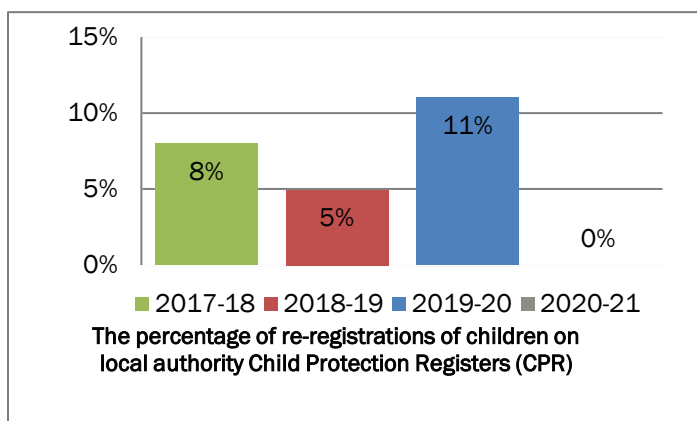
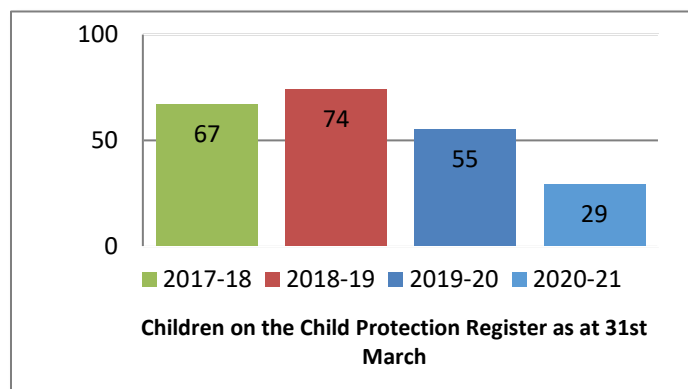
In 2020-21 we saw a further increase in the number of Looked After Children generally and a slight decrease in those returned home from care which reflects the increase in complex cases that are having to be managed and Covid 10 impact. The Edge of Care service continues to provide a key service with practical support for safer parenting. However, this area of work has been impacted by the Pandemic with less easy access to support in the community and greater difficulty to manage risk of harm

in the child’s home or in the community.



The Child Protection Register (CPR)

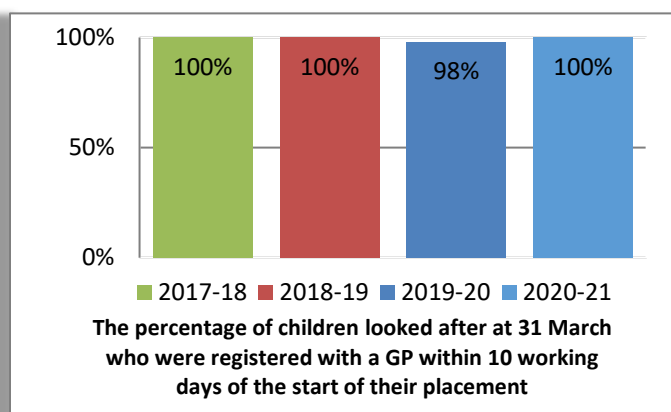
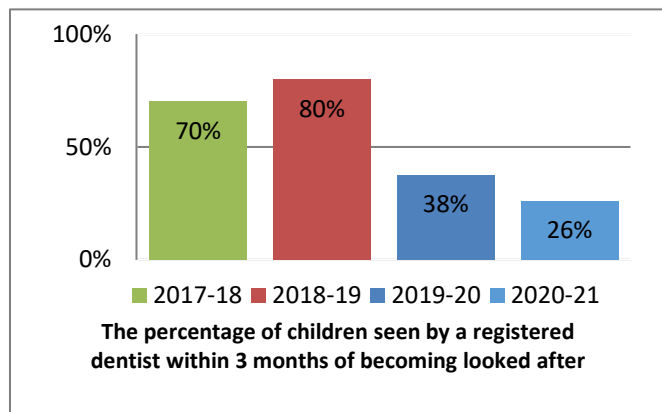
The child protection register provides a record of all children in the area with unresolved safeguarding issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency safeguarding plan. The number of children on the child protection register at the end of the year has decreased, with a reduction in the time that the child remains on the register and there were no re-registrations during this year.



During this year, the Safeguarding Service have worked closely with Police to ensure the safe completion of child protection enquires and investigations within Covid 19 requirements.

Health of our Looked after children

The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that the responsible authority must ensure that a looked after child is under the care of a registered dental practitioner as soon as practicable and in any event not later than 20 working days after the placement is made.

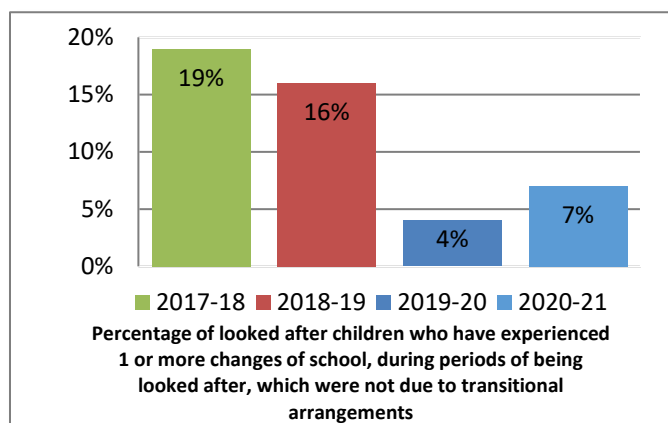


NICE Clinical Guideline [CG19] – ‘Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews’ sets out the guidance on the frequency of dental checks. This is based on the individual patient’s risk factors for dental disease. Looked After Children are generally considered to be at increased risk of dental disease and it is, therefore, expected that most Looked After Children would be put on recall for either three months or six months. In 2020-21 we saw a further drop in the percentage of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after and this is an issue that is being considered and addressed by Hywel Dda University Health Board as there have been difficulties due to Covid and staffing of dental practices.

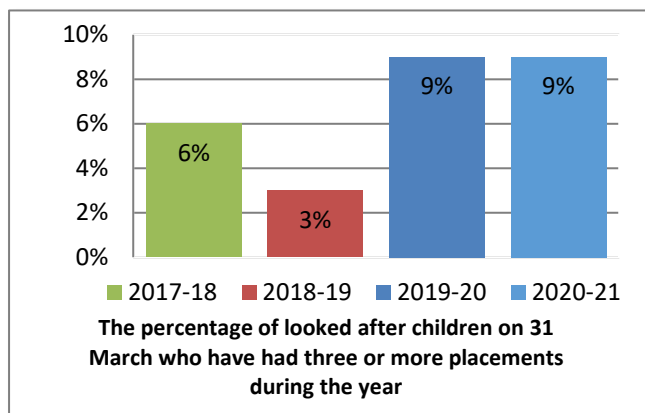
These regulations also state that responsible authorities must ensure that a looked after child is registered with a GP as soon as is practicable and in any event not later than ten working days after the placement is made. As you can see from the graph in 2020-21 we met our target of 100% of Looked After Children being registered with a GP.

Looked after children – stability of placements

Research has shown that frequent moves can negatively affect children. Breakdowns, or unplanned moves, are much less likely in younger children. In comparison, ‘teenage’ placements have a higher chance of breaking down.



It is not fully understood whether placement moves themselves produce poor outcomes for children or whether this is due to children’s previous experiences and difficulties. There are two main measures which try to illustrate placement stability. The first looks at the number of times a child has had to change school (not including where a child moves from primary to secondary school) and the second looks at how many times a child has had more than two changes of placement. These measures are long-standing and can give an insight into the long-term performance of a service. The downside of both measures is that they are particularly susceptible to change due to the low numbers of children included in them. The increase evidenced in 2019-20 and remaining at that percentage in 2020-21 regarding children having 3 or more placement moves is what we believe to be a

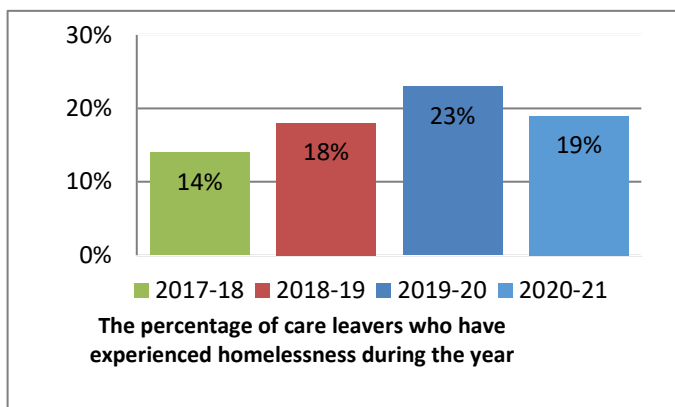
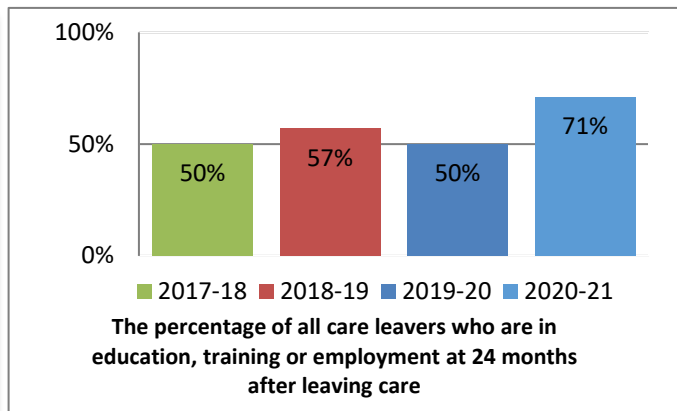
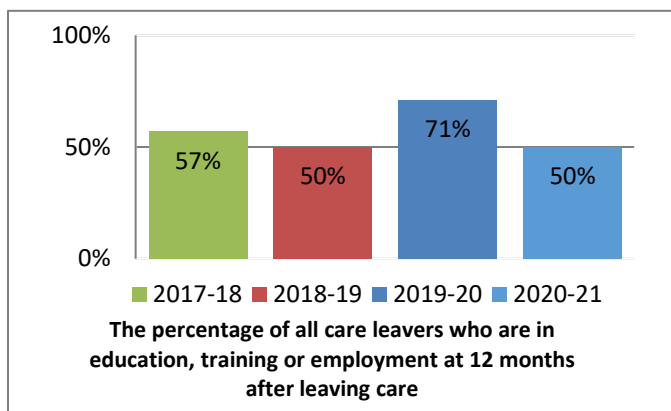


consequence of Covid and the difficulty of trying to place the children with different carers when the children have complex needs and due to restrictions only being able to offer limited/online support as well as the carers having the children at home even on school days. With regards to the low percentage of children having 1 or more changes of school as a service we continue to work closely with our education colleagues and try to ensure that a school move is only ever considered when appropriate for the child i.e. moving to their local school having stabilised in placement, or where we have been unable to successfully identify a placement where it is manageable to support the child continuing to attend their school. However the low measure taking into consideration the increase in the number of Looked After Children is again illustrative of the success of the work being undertaken within our Planned Care Service.

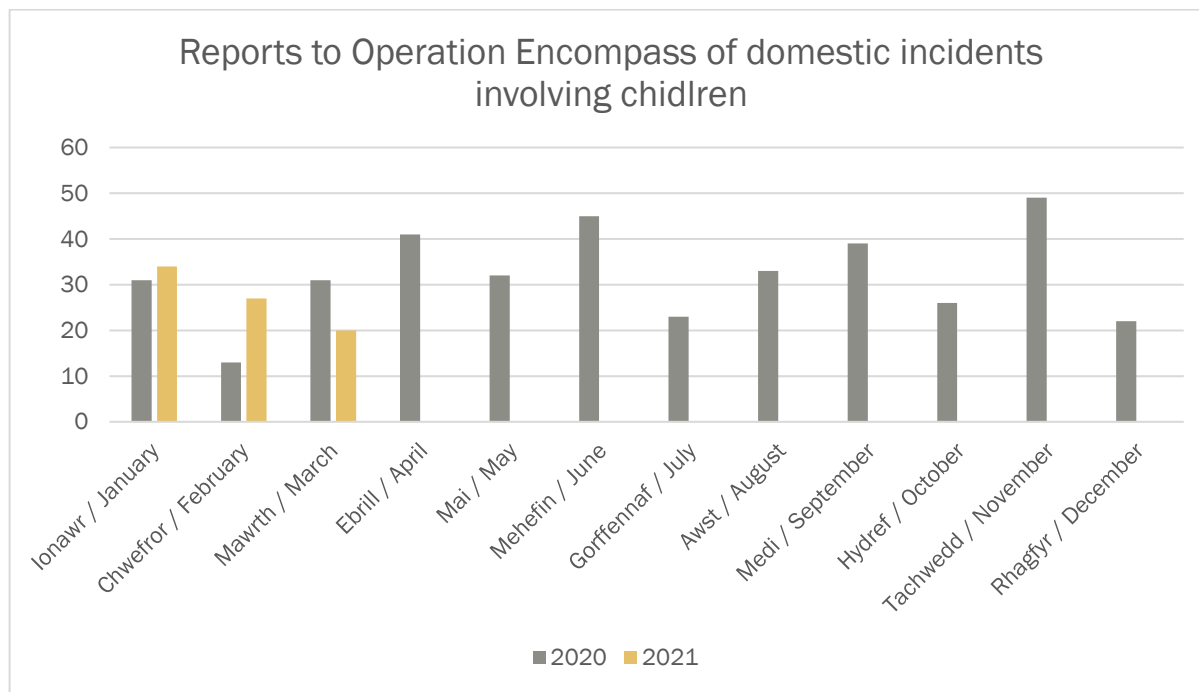
Young People Leaving Care

Leaving care is a term used to reference a group of children who are between 16 and 18 yrs old and have previously been in care but are no longer legally “looked after” by the Local Authority. When children leave care, we still have a duty to support these people until the age of 21, or 25 if they are in full time education or have a disability.

For this cohort of young people Covid has been a particularly difficult period with challenges for some with loosing employment, accommodation, and increased isolation during lockdown. It is disappointing to see a drop in the percentage of young people within 12 months of becoming care leavers who are in employment education or training. However, it is positive that there was a significant increase in those accessing some form of education/employment who have accessed the leaving care service for 24 months. It is also pleasing to note a decrease in the percentage of young people presenting as homeless in 2020-21. The Local Authority continue to work on their projects and strategies to address the need for appropriate accommodation for care leavers and work closely with registered social landlords and external agencies in our area to look at ways of addressing the situation. The Local Authority will continue to prioritise this issue and raise its profile accordingly. The personal Advisers continued to support Care Leavers well during this difficult period of time.



Operation Encompass



Operational Encompass became live in Ceredigion in November 2019. It has been working consistently well since its launch, with sharing of information daily with Schools (or as notifications are received). There have been a few notifications received from time to time regarding families from neighboring authorities on the border of Ceredigion, however this information is also forwarded accordingly. Since lockdown, the sharing of information changed from telephone calls to emails, and the Information Sharing Protocol was then amended to accommodate this. It is noted however that the full email notification is not shared with Schools in its entirety, each report is edited to include only the victim/alleged offender details. Children details, whether they were present, time/date and summary of the incident. Schools are fully briefed on the support services available for children who have been exposed to incidents either within their homes, or within their own relationships, these include Spectrum (Hafan Cymru) and West Wales Domestic Abuse Service. To ensure that Schools remain fully sighted on their pupil’s safety and wellbeing, the School’s Safeguarding Service continue to share notifications also throughout the school holidays, therefore is not limited to term time only. The figures within the above table reflect the number of referrals received, which were noticeably higher during lockdown periods.

3. How Are People Shaping Our Services?

Ceredigion County Council, Social Care Services ordinarily engages with citizens and stakeholders through various methods. We take “call back” type feedback within Clic and Porth Gofal services. We ordinarily engage with various boards and groups, for example, Safe Stars Junior Safeguarding Board, LAC Group, Disability Forum, 50+ Forum, Mental Health Transformation Boards, where we share future and promote feedback regarding the redesign of service delivery. We also learn from CIW inspections, Welsh Audit Office inspections and Child and Adult Practice Reviews as they occur. We meet with Town and Community Councils to share our plans for future developments and to take feedback on these plans

During 2020-2021, with the impact of Covid 19 face to face and other routine engagement exercises with service users have been severely restricted.

Nonetheless, feedback from the public in receipt of support services has been regularly collated and considered with key groups such as Safe Stars creating a whole programme of engagement and support for children and young people online.

Summary of Examples of ensuring service user voice and control during 2020-2021;

- Roll out of person - centred practice in assessment, care planning and reviewing; use of Signs of Safety and Well-being, work on developing forms and pathways informed by practitioners and managers
- Flexible use of direct payments; in lieu of residential care and day care
- Use of technology to ensure virtual service user feedback
- Respite questionnaire to inform support during Covid 19 for disabled children and families
- Development of feedback questionnaire for those involved with adult safeguarding
- School counselling service; listening to children's views re virtual methods
- LAC reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Care and Support Reviews held virtually
- Use of commissioned virtual advocacy services for children and adults
- All recipients of Domiciliary care/Enablement given opportunity to stand down/reduce provision to limit risk
- Learning from outbreaks within specific areas has enabled policies and procedures to be reviewed and revised (specifically in care homes i.e. use of PPE, safe zones, IPC etc)
- Transformation programme 1 – Connect programme roll out
- Youth Satisfaction Survey and Sessional feedback forms
- Feedback from children and young people’s play activities
- Feedback from Ceredigion Youth Council and Safe Stars Group

Learning Disability Strategy 2018-2023 and Improvement Action Plan

Ceredigion is an active participant in the Regional Lives Improvement Group (RLIP). This group ordinarily alternates bi-monthly between a business meeting and a meeting led and chaired by the Dream Team. The Dream Team is a group of service users, supported by Pembrokeshire Peoples First, who actively support the regional group, particularly with use of Integrated Care Funding.

Services for Disabled Children, Prevention and Transition were inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales in the 4th quarter of 2019-2020. The Action Plan created in response to issues raised has been implemented albeit that progress on certain aspects has been hindered by Covid 19 and adjustments made.

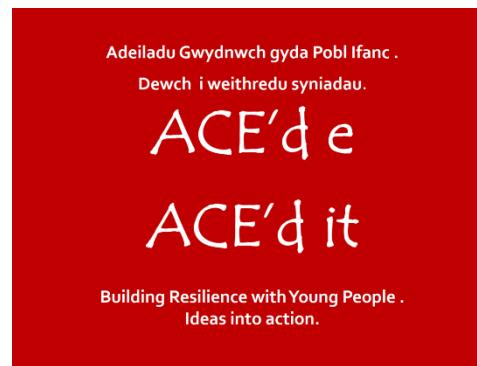
Progress on the Action plan

- 1.1 Ensure that children and their families can be clear about what support they can access, how and when and where.
- Service specification and revised working agreement with Health has been implemented
 - Client strategy has been drafted with levels of service regarding offer of support
 - Staffing structure for the TAW has been agreed with planning for next phase
 - Communication information re new offer of care and support and preventative services from LA and Health has been circulated and discussion on any queries from families
- 1.2 Equip and support staff to complete and record good quality assessments and care plans that meet all statutory requirements including the child’s communication needs
- Staff have completed outcome and assessment focused training and Covid 10 risk assessment has been implemented
 - Monthly staff supervision is in place to quality assure live cases.
 - Use of 1-page profiles for children on their WCCIS record.
 - Mapping of staff’s communication skills has been completed and training needs has been identified. Some staff can use Makaton where needed
- 1.2 Equip and support staff to identify assess and provide support when required for carers in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Staff have identified carers and offered carers support needs assessment
 - Staff training re carers assessments has been completed.
 - Staff will record reason for refusal of carers assessment if this is the case.
- 2.1 Establish the Disability Register in compliance with SSWBA requirements and use it to inform future service development and strategic commissioning.
- The Register is ready to go live, and this will initially sit in Porth Gofal, but moving to Clic once they are set up.

- 2.2 Improved service delivery and range of support services available for disabled children and their families in accordance with their needs.
- Multi agency reviews held with families to identify needs using virtual means due to Covid 19
 - Local complex needs panel will discuss care and support packages and joint commissioning monthly.
 - Service requests forms are completed for each new service such and Direct payments are now supported in house
 - Camu Mlaen will consider all year 9 students who might be eligible for the service and work with them and their families to ensure a smooth transition into the scheme when deemed appropriate to meeting their educational need post 18
 - DASH have been provided with the contract to offer respite weekends to some of the young people identified as in need of this provision. Respite provision has been affected by Covid 19 restrictions.
- 2.3 The Local Authority and the Health Board work effectively together in the provision of support and review and develop existing commissioning arrangements for disabled children and their families.
- Service specification is implemented.
 - Regional action plan and regional children’s outcomes group has recently been established.
 - Weekly tracking meeting are held between Extended Support and health colleagues to discuss cases and identify the most suitable person to work with the young person.
- 2.4 Children and young people can receive greater support for independence and enhance outcomes through the use of assistive technology
- The local authority has put in a bid for RIF funding to be able to progress this service.
- 3.1 Develop an effective quality assurance framework, underpinned by effective managerial oversight of its core functions and processes.
- SOS template and methods are being used in staff supervision.
 - QA framework to be developed as an audit tool for managers to undertake random audit checks on cases.
 - Managers have had training on supervision skills.
 - IPC Programme of support for managers in Extended Support.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that affect children. These could happen whilst growing up, being abused, or living in a household affected by domestic violence, substance misuse or mental illness



Early Life Experience and The Brain

Childhood

- First 2 years - baby's brain grows from 25% to 80% of adult size
- Critical restructuring continues through childhood for *empathy, trust, community*

Health

At Rest → Threat → Fight or Run Away → Exhausted → Recovery → At Rest

Fixed Allostatic load

↑↑↑↑ ACEs

Chronic Stress from ACEs

- Violence - over-develop 'life-preserving' brain
- NEUTRAL CUES LOOK THREATENING**
- School - anxious, disengaged, poor learner

Tau et al, 2010; Mercy, Butchart, Bellis et al, 2014

In 2019-2020 all frontline staff in Ceredigion were made ACE aware (a total of 1829) following a training needs analysis across services.

During the last year, 2020-2021, other training sessions have been offered to staff to ensure that we are able to provide earlier interventions and help our professionals care for and support children, young people, and their families.

COVID had a huge impact on training during 2020-2021 due to the restrictions in place. However, we have achieved the following key developments,

- 12 new members of staff complete ACES awareness training to ensure a consistent approach to the understanding of trauma and the effects on children and young people.
- Face to face training in Team Teach was able to take place in May and June 2021 for a number of Support and Prevention Staff.
- 5 members of the Support and Prevention staff were trained in the STAR programme which covers domestic abuse and respectful relationships.
- 13 members of Support and Prevention staff received training in Drawing and Talking therapy to be able to support children, young people and adults who may be suffering from trauma or poor mental health.
- Staff within Support and Prevention have also received training in ‘Self Harm and Suicide Awareness’ due to the nature of the referrals being sent in for support for children and young people both in the community and in school.
- 9 members of staff have completed a ‘Creative Counselling’ course.
- Trauma Recovery Model training was delivered to 6 members of staff with TRM being adapted to an online provision and booked for February 2022.
- A 3-day Trauma Recovery Model practitioner training was given to 43 staff within Support and Prevention including PRU staff. TRM was developed in a response to the complex needs of children and young people with multiple adverse childhood experiences.
- Due to COVID and certain restrictions the planned sessions of Team Teach had to take place when restrictions had been lifted for face-to-face. Team Teach introduction sessions

were offered to Head Teachers, School Leadership Team and Service Managers within the Local Authority in February 2022. There were 62 representatives from Schools both primary and secondary and PRU, with another 24 from sectors including Families and Children’s Services, Housing and Wellbeing Centres.

- Following on from that Schools were able to sign up to training their staff with sessions tailored to their needs. 147 school-based staff went onto arrange and receive training with a further 39 booked for Spring 2022.

Also a few members of staff having taken it upon themselves to study areas of personal interest to them which they are able to utilise within their work:

A Children’s and Young People’s Skills Mentor recently completed her master’s with a merit in ‘The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences: Educational Progress and Attainment’; and a Youth Worker has recently completed ‘Advanced Counsellor & Psychotherapist’ course Level 4.

Ceredigion Safe Stars children and young people safeguarding group -facilitated by TGP

The online report of 2020-2021 activity demonstrates the valuable development of safe support and safeguarding with children and young people via social media in response to the pandemic:

[Safe Stars - YouTube](#)

Carer Support and Engagement

During 2021-2021, we saw a rise of 267 registered unpaid Carers, taking them from 825 Carers to 1092.

At the beginning of the lockdown, in April 2020, the Carer’s service established a ‘welfare check’ service. We contacted all members of the Carers Information Service by email, letter or phone to provide reassurance and information, identify issues and offer support. Carers who wanted more support were offered repeated contact at regular intervals.

While face to face contact was not permitted, we produced supplementary Covid-19 'Infobursts' newsletters for carers. They distributed to members of the Carers Information Service and information was also made available to the public via the Ceredigion County Council website. In order to continue to support carer wellbeing under pandemic restrictions, we developed new innovative ways to deliver training, activities and events for carers that did not need face to face contact.

To celebrate Carers Week in June 2020 and Carers Rights Day in November 2020, a wide range of activities were delivered virtually over Zoom. Carers without internet access were able to access the activities by normal telephone so digitally inactive carers were not excluded. Instructions on how to join and access zoom were published in the Carer Magazine along with other support on developing digital skills.

In recognition of all that carers do and to show our appreciation, carer wellbeing bags were delivered to carers in June 2020 and Welsh Afternoon Tea 'a break in a box' were delivered in March 2021. A significant number of carers took the time to contact us to express their gratitude and appreciation for the gifts.

During lockdown, some Carers were experiencing difficulties accessing essential shopping. In response, the Ceredigion Carers Unit developed an Adult Carers Card which was recognized by all major supermarkets when offering preferential shopping and delivery slots. Work is now progressing to implement this regionally.

As part of Young Carers action day, Ceredigion launched their first young Carers Newsletter, distributed to those young Carers registered with the information service as well as those receiving support from Action for Children, the commissioned service for Young Carers in Ceredigion.

Of note is that Ceredigion County Council has been leading on a regional project to roll-out the Carers Resilience & Well-Being (CR&WB) Programme. Previously this was delivered in a traditional face-to-face setting, but during the year this has been rewritten to be delivered interactively online also.

A range of modules have been developed including Young Carers 8-13, Young Carers 14–17, Adult Carers in the community, Train the Facilitator and Resilience and Wellbeing Taster sessions

Ceredigion Family Support and Early Help Services

Ceredigion Family Support Services –Team Around the Family (TAF), Tim Teulu & Penparcau Family Centre provide early help to the most vulnerable families & children to prevent problems occurring or to tackle them head on before they escalate. These services work with the whole family network rather than focussing on one individual. TAF work with the family to identify the issues and help the family to address them by developing and strengthening their connections, relationships, and skills to build and create resilience, self-reliance and support their wellbeing.

Team Around the Family

In 2020-21 Team Around Family (TAF) completed 143 JAFF assessments, of which 20 had indication of a child with a specific additional learning requirement or disability.

Annually, around 31% (approx. 44) of the requests were regarding referrals (often years later) when families are reaching a different life stage and considered TAF effective in the previous assistance and ask for our support again.

In 2020-2021, 76% of families with a TAF Action Plan recorded a positive outcome at case closure.

43 of the referrals received were noted to have concerns with regards to Substance Misuse with a proportion of these also displaying other factors that would contribute to Adverse Childhood Experiences.

There was a decline from 64% to 57% in the number of requests being processed within 5 working which days reflects the additional planning required to address the increasing complex

requirements of families who require TAF alongside the challenges of engaging families virtually during periods of lockdown.

In adjusting service delivery to the Covid 19 pandemic, Ceredigion’s Team around the Family in partnership with Ceredigion Carers Unit developed a suite of virtual training sessions for parents of children with additional or emerging needs. The programme is based around the parent and family and focuses on topics identified by the participants. Sessions include a digital ‘Have Your Say’ button to collect instant feedback. The collaboration also ensures that parent-carers are informed about the Carers Information Service and the Carers & Young Carers ID Card that is available.

The team have introduced bespoke virtual multi-agency workshops to address particular issues e.g., Building Emotionally Resilient Teenagers (BERT) to address escalating self-harm. One parent reported that she now feels “confident that I am able to sit down with my son and talk to him about drugs as I have the knowledge now”.

Tim Teulu

Tim Teulu is a small cohort of family support workers who assist families to make the identified changes with a focus on parenting and behaviour change. This service was severely restricted due to the impact of the lockdown periods and Covid 19 restrictions

This year Tim Teulu had 137 referrals. Of the 137 referrals received, only 4 were not allocated – 2 were signposted to more appropriate support, 1 family moved out of the area and 1 family declined intervention.

These 133 referrals were in addition to the Welfare Checks undertaken by staff to support school pupils whilst education was provided virtually and at home.

It is noteworthy that 71% of those worked with noted an improvement across the relevant national performance measures, with 88% noting an improvement in their individual resilience and 79% with improved emotional health.

The team adapted resources and interventions in order to delivery virtually during lockdown, continuing to deliver: Blame It On The Brain; Online Gaming and Internet Safety Workshop; Family Links; One-to-One Parenting Support; Rhannu a Rhif and Stori a Sbri sessions to young parents / parents of toddlers.

In the Spring of 2021, Walks and Wellies activities were organised as a socially distanced, outside activity for young parents’ groups.

One-to-One, risk assessed, face-to-face visits were carried out for a small number of vulnerable families and children during the lockdown periods.

Also, during the lockdown period, in partnership with some Primary Schools, sessions of emotional wellbeing work was trialled, to help support children and families who would normally have attended nurture groups in school.

Team Teulu also supports the distribution of reading materials, from the Welsh Books Council to vulnerable families, during 2020-2021.

Penparcau Family Centre

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and the accompanying lockdown, Penparcau Family Centre had very limited use during the 2020-2021 period. Hosting face to face supervised contact between LAC children and their parents resumed at Penparcau late in quarter 4 of 2020-2021.

Ceredigion Support and Prevention Services

The Support and Prevention Service is made up of multi-disciplined teams, with the overall aim of providing child, youth, and family-led approaches to enable children, young people, families, and wider communities to be empowered, to achieve, to develop personally, emotionally, socially and be the best that they can be. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Signs of Safety underpin everything that we do. Our teams provide universal and focussed support that include:

- **Youth Work and Engagement;** Youth work in schools, education progression, accredited learning, and participation

School based Youth Workers engage with young people aged 11 – 18 both in universal and focussed contexts. Youth Workers strive to build and maintain meaningful relationships with all school pupils; that include referred pupils who are deemed at risk of disengagement from mainstream education, due to one or a host of reasons.

Youth Workers form relationships based on voluntary engagement. Through participation with individuals, Youth Workers can design a tailored plan that offer support in the form of personal, social, emotional, and behavioural needs of the individual. This can be delivered both within and outside the school environment and be both targeted and universal.

- **Support and Attainment;** Primary/ secondary mentoring, transition, emotional wellbeing, nurture, and outreach

The Children and Young People’s Skills (CYP) Mentors support children and young people who may show challenging behaviour because of their social and emotional experiences. Mentors provide support for children and young people in Primary and Secondary Schools, and other education settings.

Mentors promote a holistic and strengths-based approach to better understand the deeper reasons as to why children are finding their current environment challenging in both focussed one-to-one and small group-based settings. This is to help manage their emotions, channelling their energy positively by focussing on attainment, both educationally and personally.

- **Community Youth Work and Prevention;** 16-24 support, community outreach, youth centres, focussed and universal provisions

Our Community Youth Work and Prevention team provide targeted and universal interventions with the aim of tackling and alleviating potential risk factors or underlying issues such as family, social, individual, educational, or mental and emotional health related issues, that may arise that put them at an increased risk of offending and re-offending, but also preventing them from needing

further statutory intervention such as professional mental health services, further medical intervention and even housing support as an example.

Provisions range from outreach, mobile and detached activities, youth centres and clubs, and collaborative targeted programmes and projects.

- **Support Pathways;** Through-age interventions, allocations, screening, quality assurance, data and performance analysis, resource support

The Support Pathways team is the gateway for all referrals to Porth Cymorth Cynnar and its services whether they are received from Clic or triaged by Porth Gofal. The team provides direct support to each service within Porth Cymorth Cynnar to identify, allocate, monitor, and evaluate interventions or support.

The team supports the ‘step up and step down’ protocols by working with Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal to ensure timely and effective support for children/young people, adults and for families/carers.

The team also helps oversee the data and quality assurance processes of Porth Cymorth Cynnar services, ensuring that we can meet the needs of citizens as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Outcomes 2021-2022 aligned to the key themes of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014

Lines of enquiry	Service Evidence
<p>1. People - voice and control How well are local authorities ensuring people, carers and practitioners are having their voices heard, making informed choices, and maintaining control over their lives? How is this balanced with the recommendations and requirements made by Public Health Wales and Welsh Government? Can the local authority demonstrate learning is used to inform new ways of working?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gold Quality Mark for Youth Work - Children in Wales KiteMark (CYP Participation standards) - CYP-Led approaches to curriculum delivery - Satisfaction Survey - Feedback sessions, questionnaires online surveys - Distance Travel practice - CYP Forums i.e., DEWIS - Youth Council - SOS & UNCRC Embedded in Intervention Planning and Referral process – parent/guardian consent - SOS Supervision - School Bubble meetings (integrated teams) – RAG processes – early intervention - Team Teach – positive handling plans, de-escalation strategies, Triggers, restorative practice - Social Media – content, polls, interactive tools/sessions - Peer-mentoring support - Participation Strategy

<p>2. Prevention To what extent are local authorities successful in promoting prevention and reducing need for increased or formal support from statutory agencies? Including taking all necessary steps to support the upbringing of the child by the child’s family and supporting people with mental health issues before they reach crisis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and community-based youth workers, Mentors and Prevention and Diversionary Workers • One-to-one and group interventions • Structured activities • Youth clubs, drop-ins, workshops • After-school provisions • School-holiday activity programmes • Outreach, detached and mobile provision • Alternative curriculum, vocational engagement and EOTAS support • Nurture and wellbeing • Open access opportunities • Virtual Activities • Graduated response process for early intervention and prevention • Transition processes and modelling good practice • Out of court disposals and preventative pathways • Support and Prevention Professional Panel • YEPF and Youth Homelessness • Thematic projects and pilots • Collaboration and signposting • Trauma Informed Practice and Team Teach • Whole School Approach to mental wellbeing • • YJB Pathfinder for Prevention YOT
<p>3. Well-being To what extent are local authorities promoting well-being, ensuring people maintain their safety and achieve positive outcomes that matter to them? Including timely step down of children from local authority care, supporting older people to return home from hospital.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing is a standing agenda item – SOS embedded • Wellbeing champions and activities • Supervision • Weekly bubble meetings that focus on early intervention and tracking those most vulnerable and at risk of escalation • PSHE and thematic workshops/ content that is needs-led • Pilot projects such as youth boost • Restorative approaches to exclusions and challenging behaviour • Collaboration with schools service and external partners to promote wellbeing activities and initiatives • Training for staff, partners, young people, and volunteers • Distance Travelled – self-efficacy, wellbeing, and self-esteem/ confidence

	<p>Interim Youth Work Board - Young people tell us that the benefits of their engagement with youth support services provide them with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe spaces and trusted adults • Opportunities to build confidence, self-esteem, identity, self-respect, and respect for others • Learning new ways to develop new skills and abilities • Opportunity to be creative and expressive • Ways to maintain or work towards positive mental health • Ways to develop a better understanding of social relationships promoting inclusion and diversity • Opportunity to Increase their participation in decision making • Opportunities for fun and play.
<p>4. Partnerships To what extent are local authorities able to assure themselves the step change in opportunities for partnership working are positively exploited to maximize person-centred planning, ensure integrated service delivery and service sustainability. Opportunities include recent learning from digital advances, partnership working and ability of the health and social care system to advance at scale and pace and work towards a Healthier Wales.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional panel that focuses on early intervention and prevention both within schools and wider community settings - EPC/ YEPF pre and post 16 NEET practitioners - Service Level Agreements with voluntary sector - Training access - Thematic and community-led projects i.e., youth homelessness, graffiti project - YJB Prevention Pathfinder - PYOG and Regional Youth Support Services - Guidance, resources, and good practice sharing

Foster Carers’ Engagement and Support:

Covid-19 brought a number of new challenges to all service areas, and we developed new methods of engaging, communicating and supporting our foster and kinship carers.

Very early on in the Spring of 2020 the Fostering services identified that there was a need to maintain regular, good quality communication, supervision and support whilst also maintaining the ‘Stay at Home’ message and promoting the health and wellbeing of all foster carers, staff, and children. The additional pressure to adapt and provide home education was also quickly recognized and subsequently the journey towards HWB and Microsoft Teams began.

This ‘new’ software and suite of functions to chat, meet and collaborate provided an opportunity to keep in touch and have the visual video contact, which provided a substitute to the physical, face to face meetings. As the awareness of the software increased, the Fostering Service evolved and recognized that this was a valuable resource not only to maintain contact, but to facilitate the various meetings such as LAC Reviews, Conferences, Annual reviews, support groups and Foster Panel.

Initially there was some apprehension from both staff and Foster Carers regarding arranging virtual opportunities, however by working in partnership with the Learning and Development Team a bespoke training package was developed, and all Foster Carers and staff have had the opportunity to access training on how to use Teams. In addition, a number of conversations and learning experiences have highlighted the social etiquette and provided reminders you are visible on screen!

Ceredigion’s Foster Carers have embraced the changes and have grown in confidence to access the education HWB, also via Teams, in order to support the engagement of the children and young people in the virtual learning environment. The versatility and flexibility of the training has also identified the accessibility of the software, not only on the lap -top, but tablets, phones, and gaming devices such as Xbox and PlayStation.

The training and frequent use of the software and the resources within have also led to a number of aspects of the work becoming paperless. Foster Carers have access to their own specific, private, channel where they have been encouraged to upload their documents such as, weekly logs, complete their mileage forms, and access their annual review documents. This facility is gaining momentum and is quickly replacing the need for heavy filling cabinets groaning under the weight of the records we keep. It’s also ensured that relevant departments, including finance, get the information quicker, leading to payments processed quicker, rather than the traditional snail mail and the risk of documents going missing.

Teams has also supported the virtual ‘social’ aspect of the work, with a number of quizzes, game sessions and bingo which has enabled the peer interaction and informal support to be utilized as much as possible in what’s been a challenging year.

Working in a rural area and the challenges of securing a reliable and consistent connection, remains a challenge, alongside the constant reminder of “You’re on mute!” However, the resilience and commitment to adapting to change has been a great testament to all.

Care Inspectorate Wales Activity

In March 2020, as infection rates increased and Wales entered the first lockdown, CIW suspended their programme of routine performance review activity to enable local authorities to focus fully on responding to the challenging circumstances. Instead, they developed new ways of working which reflected the need to engage in more supportive relationships with local authorities.

Throughout 2020-2021, The Statutory Director and the Corporate Lead Officers for Porth Gofal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar met regularly with the Link Inspector and the 6 monthly performance review meetings were held during September 2020 and February 2021. During these meetings Ceredigion’s Covid 19 Recovery / Adjustment Plans were shared and fully discussed.

Complaints and Compliments

Introduction

This report will refer specifically to all Social Services complaints and compliments received during 2020 – 2021. However, this data was included within the Council’s Annual Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Report for 2020 - 2021, which was accompanied by the Annual Letter from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) relating to the same reporting period. The aforementioned documents were presented to the following committees during 2021 (provided as hyperlinks to the relevant pages on the Council’s website, should further information be required):

- [Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting \(27/10/21\)](#)
- [Council Committee Meeting \(09/12/21\)](#)

The Council fully implemented the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, and this document is the guidance that underpins the Council’s own Social Services Complaints Policy. The Policy was approved by the Council’s Cabinet committee on 17 March 2020 and sets out the requirements placed upon staff within the Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Services, and the Council’s Complaints and FOI Team. This promotes accountability and ensures that effective arrangements are in place deal with complaints in accordance with the Council’s statutory duties, as well as ensuring the process is accessible, fair, and transparent.

It must be noted that this is the first reporting period which reflects the organizational restructures which took place as part of the Council’s Through-Age and Wellbeing model, as the recording systems in the Complaints and FOI Service were amended at the start of 2020.

Social Services Complaints Activity

Every effort will be made to resolve a complaint at the earliest available opportunity, and, in the majority of cases, this is successful, and the matter is recorded as an ‘enquiry/concern’. In the event that the matter cannot be resolved at an early stage, or if the issues being raised are of a serious or complex nature, concerns will be addressed in accordance with the formal complaints’ procedures referred to above.

The Council operates a two-stage complaints process and the Complaints and FOI Team liaise with the relevant Corporate Managers to ensure the appropriate level of accountability is held and correct process is followed at each stage.

During 2020-2021 59 enquiries/concerns were received and the majority of these were resolved satisfactorily without needing to be progressed under the complaints’ procedures.

The data provided overleaf relates to all complaints that were addressed under Stage 1 and Stage 2 during the reporting year. Stage 2 is the final stage under the Council’s own complaints procedure; however, complainants have the right to refer their concerns to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) if they remain dissatisfied after Stage 2.

Total number of complaints received in 2020 – 2021

Service Area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Porth Cynnal	9	4	13
Porth Gofal	9	2	11
	18	6	24

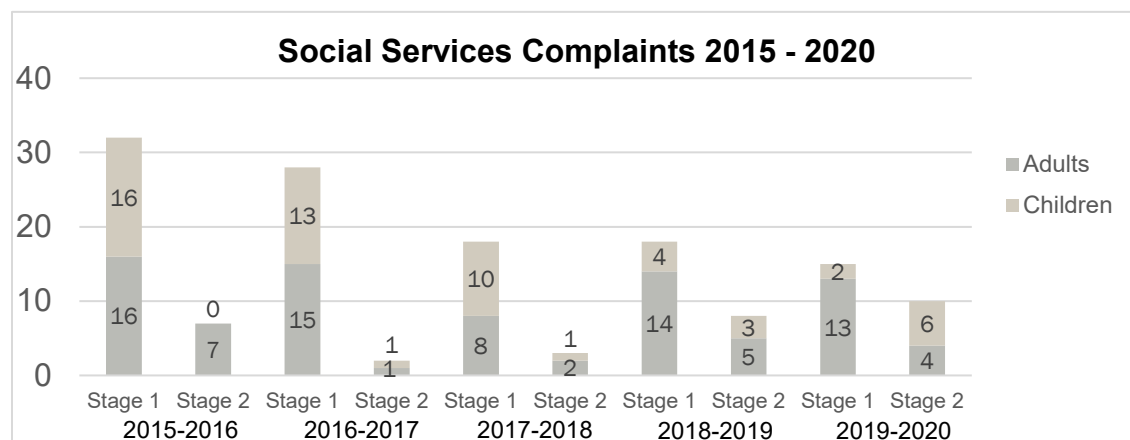
A total of 24 complaints were received in relation to Social Care Services in 2020-2021. In comparison, 25 complaints were received across Social Services in 2019-2020, which demonstrates a slight decrease in the number of complaints received during this reporting period.

Social Services staff continue to work closely with the Complaints and FOI Team by adopting an early-resolution approach to incoming concerns and queries, which is proving to be an effective strategy. This can be demonstrated when comparing the number of enquiries/concerns against the number of cases which required consideration under the formal complaints’ procedure (i.e., 40% of all contacts received by the Complaints and FOI Team in relation to Porth Cynnal or Porth Gofal were closed without escalation).

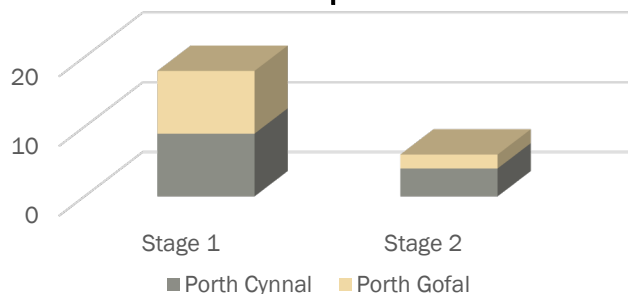
Comparative data

As referred to in the Introduction, the Complaints and FOI recording systems were only aligned with the service structures implemented as part of the Council’s Through-Age and Wellbeing Strategy at the start of 2020. It is therefore not possible to make a direct comparison between the performances of Adult and Childrens’ Services, with the Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Services, in relation to complaints activity.

Consequently, the data included in previous reports compiled for the Statutory Director of Social Services, is provided below. A visual representation of the complaints’ activity for the current service structures (i.e., for 2020-2021) is also provided, and this will be updated in future reports



Social Services Complaints 2020 - 2021



Complaint Outcomes by Service

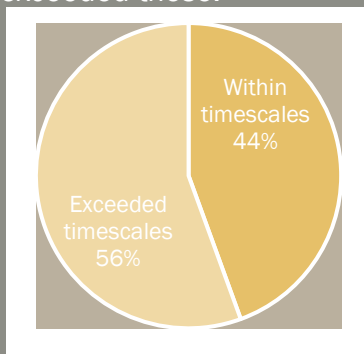
A breakdown of the number of complaints and their outcomes is provided below, in accordance with the relevant service areas:

Porth Cynnal	Not Upheld	Upheld (Whole or in part)	Ongoing / Suspended
Mental Wellbeing (4)	1	2	1
Adult Team (1)			1
Children & Family Assessment (2)		2	
Quality & Service Improvement (1)		1	
Adult Protection (3)	1	2	
Camu Mlaen (1)		1	
Community Team Learning Disabilities (1)		1	
Total	2	9	2

Porth Gofal	Not Upheld	Upheld (Whole or in part)	Ongoing / Suspended / Discontinued
Fostering Service (1)		1	
Direct Services (2)		2	
Porth Gofal Triage (3)	2	1	
Occupational Therapy Services (1)		1	
Homelessness / Housing (4)	4		
Total	6	5	

Stage 1 Timescales

Of the 18 complaints which were considered under Stage 1; 8 were responded to within the prescribed timescales (i.e. 15 working days) and the remaining ten cases, exceeded these.



Stage 2 Timescales

All 6 complaints investigated under Stage 2 of the Social Services complaints procedure took longer than prescribed timescale (i.e. within 25-working-days of the complaint having been agreed by all parties).

However, all cases were investigated independently, as stipulated by the statutory guidance and each formal response was issued at the earliest possible opportunity.

Analysis

The number of complaints considered under the statutory Social Services complaints procedure during this reporting period (2020-2021) were not dissimilar to the levels of activity observed during the previous year, despite the profound impact caused by the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there were fewer complaints considered under Stage 2 in 2020-2021 and the number of enquiries/concerns were almost halved, compared with 2019 – 2020.

Response times at both stages of the complaints process also remained consistent with the previous year, though it is acknowledged that all Stage 2 complaints investigated during this period were responded to outside of the stipulated timescale. This, in itself, is not of great concern because the priority must be to ensure that complaints are investigated thoroughly, and careful consideration is given to the findings and recommendations which emerge from such investigations.

Porth Cynnal received slightly more complaints by service, but this is largely due to the nature of those services and the complexity of the cases they deal with.

Of the 24 complaints received across Social Services, 14 were upheld following investigation, which equates to 58% of all complaints received during the reporting period. This is a more positive outcome when compared to the data available for 2019 – 2020, which concluded that 70% of all complaints were upheld (i.e., justified).

Themes and Trends

Poor communication remains a consistent factor in most complaints, and, in most cases, these can be addressed promptly at service-level to prevent unnecessary escalation of the issues being reported. This was evidently the case in respect of the 59 enquiries/concerns reported above, which far outnumbers the number of cases which subsequently progressed under the formal complaints process.

Timescales

As identified in 2019-2020, improvements need to be made with regard to the response times at Stage 1 of the complaints process. There is a requirement at Stage 1 to offer a ‘discussion’ between the complainant and the relevant Corporate Manager. Therefore, securing the availability of managers during the height of the pandemic was challenging, as well as attempting to then co-ordinate their availability with that of the complainant. Failing to meet prescribed timescales under these circumstances is therefore understandable. However, this will continue to be monitored in future reporting periods.

Lessons Learned

In all cases whereby a complaint is deemed to be upheld (either in its entirety or specific elements) it is crucial that recommendations are put in place to learn lessons and prevent any recurrence in the future. Examples are provided on Page 5 of some of the lessons learned from complaints received during 2020 – 2021.

- *Documentation was improved within the service to ensure that the communication needs of the service-user is considered. Staff were also reminded to maintain communication with other professionals involved with the service-user, particularly when co-ordinating care, making arrangements for discharge from hospital and to follow up on any referrals for specialist assessments and/or intervention.*

- *It was agreed that that further development of the current information pack for service users would take place to include details of the range and types of assessments that will be undertaken. Consideration will also be given to introducing a ‘matching process’ for housing services users together.*
- *All Social Work Teams to be reminded that they have a duty to promote contact and that, where case circumstances allow, this be arranged as soon as practicable. For Social Workers to be reminded that the opening of the LAC review document is their responsibility to ensure the process of sharing the minutes is not unnecessarily delayed.*

Complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

During 2020 – 2021 the Council received eight new contacts from the office of the PSOW relating to Social Services complaints. These were categorized by the PSOW as follows:

- Adult Social Services (5)
- Children’s Social Services (3)

This represents a reduction in complaints about Children’s Social Services (5 received during 2019 – 2020) and an increase (by one case) with regard to Adult Social Services.

None of the complaints referred to the PSOW were referred for formal investigation, though there were two cases which were resolved via Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement:

Service & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Porth Cynnal (202005090)	Complaint regarding access to equipment and services.	The Council agreed to undertake a reassessment of the individual’s needs within 8 weeks of them confirming their location.
Complaints Handling / Porth Cynnal (201907197)	Failure by Council to implement agreed actions following an earlier complaint about the provision of social care and support. This had a significant impact on the service-user at the centre of the case.	The Council agreed to undertake several actions to ensure that the actions it promised it would take, would be completed.

The remaining 6 cases were concluded as follows:

- 2 cases were closed due to the complainants’ failure to respond to the PSOW’s request for additional information.
- 3 cases were closed after initial consideration by the PSOW (e.g., they were either satisfied that there was no maladministration on the part of the Council or there would be very little achieved from the PSOW investigating the complaint).
- 1 case was premature (e.g., it had not yet been considered under the Council’s own complaints procedure).

Compliments

Statutory Social Services received the second-highest number of compliments compared with other services across the Council. A total of **241 compliments** were received in relation to care and support provided.

Service Area	Compliments received
Porth Cynnal	72
Porth Gofal	169
Total	241

Examples of the compliments received in Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal are provided below:

“We wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for the amazing care you are providing for our closest friend. We are so grateful that you took faith and feelings into consideration today and respect beliefs. We are truly grateful for all you are doing.”

“So grateful for the wonderful care given, the constant updates on her wellbeing. What a wonderful home and staff”

“You are all doing such a fantastic job in such difficult times and we’re sending our love and support”

“I would like to thank you for all the support I've received. I feel very lucky to be working with you. Thank you again for your continued support I'm extremely grateful.”

Examples of Compliments received by Porth Cymorth Cynnar Services

“Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone involved with this scheme in Ceredigion. I am so immensely grateful for this service provided by Ceredigion County Council, having not been able to leave the house for over two months. Last week’s food parcel far exceeded any expectations. The quality and variety of produce has clearly been carefully selected to ensure the health and wellbeing of us as shielded residents. I am very proud to call Ceredigion my home”

“Thank you so much for the ‘Carer’s break in a box’ which we received this morning, it was a lovely surprise. My wife had an operation in November and is only just getting a small amount of mobility back now, so it has been a very difficult few months for us. This gift really cheered us both up!
Thank you once again and for all the excellent carer’s support that you give, it is much

Feedback from Looked After Children’s Supported Play Activities at Llangrannog, Summer 2021

‘Child A told his mum when getting off the bus he had the ‘best day ever’

‘Child B is listening better than on previous projects and enjoys all activities, Her foster carer, told me how she talked about the activities all evening after going home’

‘Child C had made a Thank You card for the Urdd staff member who helped her with the horses’

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

The six quality standards used to measure the Local Authority’s performance against the wellbeing outcomes are:

1. Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
2. Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being
3. Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm
4. Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
5. Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships
6. Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

What did we plan to do last year?

Since a number of our services are linked and strategies aligned, our children and families services objectives overlap with adults services therefore the objectives are focused on a through age approach

Improvement Objective 1

- To ensure that the transformation of social services is achieved during 2020/21 in partnership with other corporate departments and partner agencies.
- Work in partnership on the corporate restructure plan, enabling an efficient whole-council approach
- Ensure the Statutory requirements for Social Care are clearly defined within the structure
- Ensure robust services are in place to enable citizens to achieve their personal outcomes

Improvement Objective 2

- Ensure the Local Authority has a strong voice in the Region
- Ensure regular committed involvement at all regional partnership events by relevant staff
- Ensure that Ceredigion takes full advantage of the resources available to us from the Regional Partnership Board
- Influence the developments through the region and nationally

Improvement Objective 3

- Ensuring that the Local Authority is effective, along with partners in securing and utilising Transformation Funds to drive better outcomes for people in Ceredigion
- Develop the regional Technology Enabled Care Project in conjunction with Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire and Hywel Dda
- Work in partnership with Hywel Dda to scale up a Fast Access Community Team
- Work in conjunction with Health and 3rd Sector to develop community hubs and resources

How far did we succeed in working towards those priorities?

Improvement Objective 1 – Transformation of Social Services

Our vision of the Through Age & wellbeing Programme is: To ensure every child, young person and adult in Ceredigion will be able to reach their full potential. To ensure fair access for all to excellent universal and targeted services that supports the health and wellbeing of all citizens. To develop skills and resilience that will last a lifetime and enable individuals to cope well with the challenges and pressures that they may face.

We will:

- support those at a disadvantage and those who encounter challenges
- further develop strengths-based, outcome focused services for citizens
- Safeguard and nurture the most vulnerable.
- aim to be the benchmark standard for excellence and innovation in Wales and beyond
- Upskill our workforce to work collaboratively to improve the guidance and support available to individuals and families in Ceredigion.

Welsh Government has introduced a range of legislation focused on maximizing the health and wellbeing of its citizens, including:

- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Ceredigion County Council is committed to ensuring that the key principles of the legislative framework are embedded within all its activities and developments.

With the event of Covid 19 the planned implementation of several key activities to progress the Through Age and well-being Programme was suspended and the programme and working groups were re-established in September 2020 with the following work programme.

Implementation Workstreams

Range of workstreams to progress the changes and implementation:

- Strategy Development
- Systems & Processes
- Review of commissioned services
- Signs of Safety
- HR Processes
- Finance & Procurement

Other developments

- Comprehensive programme of support, developed with IPC, to support CLO's, Corporate Managers and Team Managers
- Quality Assurance framework
- Supervision Policy

The Council is committed to embedding the Signs of Safety Practice and work continued to develop the use of the framework as central to the Through Age & wellbeing Programme. At the front door and in assessment we do this by ensuring that the information we collect from citizens directly or via other agencies is appropriately used to deliver a person-centered approach based around the

fundamental questions of ‘What’s worrying you?’ and ‘What’s working well?’ As a result of these we are seeking to further develop strengths-based, outcome focused services for citizens which respond in a timely creative manner, and which always focus on what is important to the individual.

Improvement Objective 2 - Partnerships

- Ensure the Local Authority has a strong voice in the Region
- Ensure regular committed involvement at all regional partnership events by relevant staff
- Ensure that Ceredigion takes full advantage of the resources available to us from the Regional Partnership Board
- Influence the developments through the region and nationally

Ceredigion County Council has continued to actively engage with the West Wales Care Partnership and the Regional Partnership Board and other key partnership forums. This provides a mechanism for driving regional improvements across social care whilst maintaining the focus on Ceredigion specific priorities and areas of need.

There are a number of regional fora that Ceredigion County Council support and are effectively engaged with. Opportunities for regional funding are maximised through regional partnerships and initiatives, including the Healthier Wales Transformation Programme and Integrated Care Funding.

Full participation in all regional Covid 19 planning fora has also been a major priority for us during this year.

Improvement Objective 3 – Healthier Wales Transformation Programme

- Ensuring that the LA is effective, along with partners in securing and utilising Transformation Funds to drive better outcomes for people in Ceredigion
- Develop the regional Technology Enabled Care Project in conjunction with Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire and Hywel Dda
- Work in partnership with Hywel Dda to scale up a Fast Access Community Team
- Work in conjunction with Health and 3rd Sector to develop community hubs and resources

As part of the West Wales Care Partnership Our original submission for A Healthier West Wales programme of work included:

Improving lives through technology

- Proactive technology enabled care
- Shared digital framework

Strengthening integrated localities

- Fast tracked consistent integration
- Proactive supported self-management

Supporting change together

- Continuous citizen engagement
- Behaviour change for good

Connecting people... kind communities

- Creating connections for all
- Building the infrastructure to deliver differently



A total of £11.89 million was provided by Welsh Government to the WWCP to support the delivery of the 3 agreed programmes highlighted below:

Programme 1: Proactive, technology-enabled care

- Proactive approach to keeping people well in communities
- Based on proven approach in Bilbao, Spain
- Evidence from Spain of significant impact on system demand and wellbeing
- Bespoke and individualised TEC
- In-depth wellbeing assessment and supported wellbeing plans
- Proactive calls using existing Delta Wellbeing platform providing built-in benefits
- Multi-agency rapid response with enhanced, local community support
- Digital inclusion project to support informal networks

Programme 3: Fast-tracked, consistent integration

- Fast Access Community Team providing 24/7, professional crisis response
- Model to be implemented in each locality, shaped to ensure that arrangements meet local needs and build on existing arrangements
- Additional programme capacity to support further integration at locality level

Programme 7: Creating connections for all

- Consistent community connectors model across West Wales creating community links and building resilience
- Active citizens – promoting and supporting volunteering
- Intergenerational buddying programme to develop IT and other skills
- West Wales is Kind programme
- Embedding Dewis and Info-engine
- Accelerated skills programme for staff providing community support

All 3 programmes were initiated in 2019/2020 with programme 1 being led regionally, programme 3 led locally and programme 7 led by the 3rd Sector and continued during 2020/21.

The positive progress of this Objective, our engagement with the West Wales Care Partnership and the adjustments made in view of Covid 19 priorities can be viewed within the comprehensive report to the Ceredigion Cabinet meeting presented on 1st September 2020.

[9iv. INFO West Wales Regional Partnership Board.pdf \(ceredigion.gov.uk\)](#)

Ceredigion’s Covid 19 Response

From the outset, Ceredigion County Council’s priority has been to protect its citizens and to minimise the number of the population who will contract the Covid 19 and the number of deaths from it. At the beginning, Public Health Wales projections indicated a reasonable worst-case scenario of 600 deaths in the County and this was not acceptable to us.

Ceredigion County Council identified a clear vision that every single person, business, and service could understand and agree upon to ensure Ceredigion succeeded in not only reducing predicted deaths through the first peak but more importantly for any future predicted peaks.

- Phase 1 - Preparedness – Closing down of all non-essential services
- Phase 2 - Implementation – Delivering essential key services under lockdown conditions
- Phase 3 - Adjustment and long term resilience
- Phase 4 - Recovery

We recognise that our geographical location and sparse population have provided us with distinct advantages in relation to the control of the virus. Within this context have put in place a number of strategies which seek to consolidate our advantages and actively try to suppress the virus, rather than simply limit, and manage its proliferation through the county. It is important to acknowledge the 72,000 residents of Ceredigion who have bravely adhered to the challenges set by lockdown. We thank the residents of the county for following guidance so rigidly and diligently, ensuring that the number who have been infected by Covid 19 has been kept relatively low; 84, which is 115.6 per 100,000 population as of 8th September 2020 and 1771 confirmed cases as of 26/4/21. The cases and our infection rates throughout 2020-2021 compare very favourably with the rest of Wales. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that each death from Covid 19 has been a very sad loss and in our communities staff and public alike have been greatly affected by the impact of the Pandemic on physical and mental wellbeing as well as financially and economically.

Strategy and decision-making during the pandemic

Ceredigion CC’s’ Strategic Priorities:

- Protection of the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable, including care services for the elderly and those whose medical conditions make them particularly at risk from COVID-19.
- Protection of the education provision within schools, colleges, and universities.
- Enable the local economy to survive.

Gold Command structure and decisions

The Gold Command structure and process put in place from the outset of the Pandemic has enabled the following key decisions to be made and implemented:

- Support for the most vulnerable -from the offset, the medically vulnerable and those shielding in Ceredigion were contacted by telephone to ensure food and medication was delivered and to ensure their safety. The Council provided weekly food boxes sourced locally to over 950 of our most vulnerable citizens and Council staff contact over 2,500 individuals that are shielding on a regular basis. The Council has received 159 compliments in relation to the food boxes and for the regular contact as of September 2020. Following Welsh Government announcement, the shielding scheme came to an end on 16th August 2020 and food boxes were longer systematically provided. However, food vouchers via school services and practical support including food parcels for the most vulnerable continued.
- Contact tracing –an in-house contact tracing system was developed by the Council at the beginning of April 2020 bringing together a team of staff with skillsets in environmental health tracing, data protection, human resources, and ICT data systems. Built around a questionnaire, the data management system was informed by our Environmental Health Officers who have experience of tracking and tracing other outbreaks such as legionella and food poisoning and research based upon was happening elsewhere internationally. At the time, numbers of cases

were low, and as a result we have been able to follow up on all cases notified since its implementation. The Council is now part of the national Test, Trace, Protect scheme.

- PPE - A central PPE hub was put in place at the end of March 2020 in response to the need to have a coordinated approach to PPE provision both within the local authority and for the independent sector. Ceredigion County Council were able to source a variety of equipment from many sources. Of note was that approximately 3,000 specialist face visors were made by local schools to support the PPE provision locally.
- Staff redeployment – staff were redeployed to set up the PPE hub, contact tracing team and to support with Care Homes staffing and other key essential front line. These staff remain in place and will be reintroduced back to substantive roles in a phased programme.
- Safeguarding reports to Gold Command whilst emergency powers in place
- Care homes – negative test on discharge, face to face visiting suspended in March 2020 progressing to outdoor visits, no mixing of staff, restricted visits by professionals
- Risk assessments and guidance on social care visits, client contact and on virtual working with full Health and Safety support
- Extensive local guidance and protocols produced for the residential care homes and domiciliary care providers
- Financial and Hardship support - Business grants/funding - prevention of hardship and the development of a Tackling Hardship Strategy
- Silver command groups set up specifically, Residential care, Contact tracing/TTP, Economic Adjustment, Vaccination/Testing,
- Senior representation at local and regional IMT’s
- Senior representation on Covid specific local and regional forums including the Ceredigion Covid Response Group, Regional Safeguarding Covid Group, Sub-groups of the RPB/PSB,

Adjustment and Recovery planning

It must be recognized that all essential front -line services have been maintained throughout the Pandemic albeit with an element of restriction to minimize risk of infection and to keep the public, service users and staff safe and minimize risk of spread of the infection.

A 3 Phase recovery plan approach has been adopted across all service areas. Each plan is presented to Gold Command for discussion and approval and is then provided to Leadership Group/Cabinet meetings for information.

The Council has a public facing road map which outlines the key milestones in relation to service changes and the phased reinstatement of services.

Recovery plans presented to date have included areas such as:

- Residential care homes (staff sustainability and reviewing visiting arrangements to enable outdoor visits and continue with multi-professional and clinical support via technology to support communication with professionals or safe visits from GP’s, mental health, dementia, OT/allied health professions
- Learning Disability and Older Peoples Day Services adjustments
- Respite care adjustments
- A wide range of Early Intervention/Prevention services including organized outdoor vocational, learning and work, Employment Support Team to restart paid Work and Volunteering Opportunities, Organized and approved outdoor children/young people’s group activity, Outdoor Health Intervention Classes / Exercise Classes for Adults

- Mental Wellbeing Service
- and School Counselling Service adjustment

Workforce Challenges

A redeployment programme of staff was implemented in the early stages of the pandemic to assist key services including care homes and school hubs caring for vulnerable children. There has been a continued focus on recruitment with several campaigns both internally but also supporting external providers with campaigns.

Some of the current challenges include the recruitment and retention of key staff specifically Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, however it is acknowledged that this is a national trend and opportunities around regional working has been explored. The Council has a strategy for meeting this challenge including the following approaches:

- Social Work traineeships
- Offering qualification opportunities and learning pathways for the current staff
- student placements
- Reviewing job roles and evaluations
- Refreshing advertising - intensive campaign to join Ceredigion

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

We are committed to providing responsive, accessible, and inclusive support to staff throughout the Pandemic, this has included:

- Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Employee Assistance Package
- Occupational Health
- Responsive approach including, wellbeing surveys/questionnaires, discussions with managers & teams, streamlined appraisal process, drop in sessions
- Organization wide activity and support including, information on intranet, Wellbeing Wednesdays, Activities, Wellbeing Webinars, Shielding staff
- Dedicated health and wellbeing webinars, regular meetings with Corporate Manager/Registered Managers,
- Individual staff support within care homes

New ways of future working

The last 12 months has meant a significant change in the way that the Council and its staff has had to work and meet the daily demand of the services it provides. With all staff working from home (unless their role requires them to be front facing i.e., residential care home staff, enablement etc.) there has been a reliance on digital technology and remote working. A silver command group was agreed to consider how the Council could work in the future with the learning from the pandemic considered. The vision is to provide a modern, flexible work environment that supports agility and encourages collaborative activity. The aim to create workplaces that are not only cost effective, but strengthen our corporate culture, increase engagement with our Ceredigion community and improve service delivery. A staff survey and focus groups have been held to determine what the ‘new ways of working’ will be, and this will then inform an estates strategy for the future. It is proposed that this will promote the health and

wellbeing of the workforce, encourage, and support agile and flexible working, increase public facing spaces whilst also reducing the carbon footprint and promoting environmental resilience.

Financial and business recovery

The Council has enabled and empowered a range of services and initiatives via various funding streams from Welsh Government during the Pandemic. These have included the Hardship Fund that has specifically provided support for residential and front-line care services. This Fund has allowed internal and commissioned services to focus on their recovery plans. There has been grant funding for businesses and support for the reopening of the visitor economy which is very important to the general economic recovery within Ceredigion.

Tacking Hardship Strategy

On July 7th 2020, Ceredigion Cabinet members approved the Tacking Hardship Strategy in the face of the potential negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the social and economic well-being of the residents of Ceredigion, and an increased risk that individuals and families will experience hardship, it is timely to introduce the Tackling Hardship Strategy. The aim of the Strategy is to tackle hardship by providing a robust framework that will enable a shared understanding of the situation, consolidate and develop a range of initiatives to mitigate risk, and implement early and preventative action. The Strategy will provide a single document to ensure that Council Leaders, our partners and the public are regularly updated on progress.

Ceredigion Local Authority Housing Services

Under the Homelessness interventions in 2020-2021, 479 cases were opened where there had been approaches due to households believing to be at risk of homelessness or presenting as homeless on the day. Of the 479 cases opened, some were provided with advice and assistance, and 435 assessments carried out under s62 Housing Act requirements. As a result of these assessments, 216 cases were successfully prevented and / or relieved.

24 clients were assisted with Rent Advance and Bonds in 2020-2021. This figure does not include those who the Housing Options Team supported and sign-posted to other agencies such as Vicars Relief Fund (VRF), budgeting loans and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) applications for those upfront costs.

The Housing Options services had to react to Welsh Government’s ‘Everyone In’ approach leading to increased demand on the service following the removal of ‘Priority Need’. In turn, having to accommodate those who previously wouldn’t have been assisted with Emergency Accommodation, leading to increased need for more unit. During this year, the service had to take on re-vamp with the support of various partner agencies 13 more shared accommodation units and 4 more self-contained units.

These increased challenges were faced even with Welsh Government’s response to the Pandemic, of which one was the suspension of evictions.

Under the adaptations service, 52 Disabled Facilities Grants were delivered, and 427 Safe, Warm and Secure Grant delivered. This delivery was hampered due to the impact of the pandemic, ie. restriction on home visits etc.

Under Housing Register work, for the year 2020-2021, 1251 Housing Register applications were received across all 4 registers (affordable, general, older persons and accessible).

What difference has the service made?

For homelessness prevention duties, 24 households secured private rented sector accommodation with landlord incentive scheme.

Disabled Facilities and Safe Warm and Secure grants have assisted clients to live independently within their own homes.

A total of 272 applicants secured housing from the Housing Register. 55 (20%) allocations were made to people owed a homeless duty. Even with the restrictions posed by the pandemic, the Housing Register and Housing Options service worked proactively with the partner Housing Associations to allocate accommodation as swiftly as possible, to enable move on from Emergency Accommodation were appropriate.

How well have we done?

Housing - Homelessness

Total prevention outcomes: 144 (this includes successful prevention, unsuccessful prevention, non-cooperation, assistance refused, withdrawn, and withdrawn due to loss of contact)
Successful prevention outcomes: 109. Therefore 75% of households threatened with homelessness were successfully prevented. However, only 16 (11%) of the 144 were unsuccessfully resolved as 19 (13%) clients withdrew from the service (including 1 household who refused assistance and 1 household who did not cooperate) and therefore Housing Options were unable to assist or establish an outcome.

Housing - Adaptations

Provided a safe home for 479 disabled and vulnerable applicants to remain living independently leading to improved quality of life.

Energy Efficiency

During the year a total of 224 clients received either improvements to their homes through EE initiatives and/or EE advice to improve their financial position and outgoings.

Housing – Register

1100 Housing Applications were activated on to the Housing Register enabling consideration for social housing allocations. In addition to this, amendments were made to applications and application renewals ensuring correct and up to date information for our RSL partners.

Delivery of affordable housing across all tenure

The SHG programme is part of a 3-year rolling development programme made up of a number of funding streams from Welsh Government.

The development programme is based on regularly updated needs analysis of the Housing Registers with the aim of delivering a mix of social and intermediate housing across Ceredigion.

What difference has the objective made?

The number of Social Rented units being delivered is likely to increase year on year over the next 3 years and so contribute to Welsh Governments 20,000 Target. Developments are being targeted to help meet the identified local need in the County. The range of affordable tenure options is also being increased to help address the different housing needs within the County.

The Authority is improving the targeting of all new social housebuilding as a result of the Housing Register database system. Specialised and adapted housing such as wheelchair accessible/mobility impaired units are also being delivered to try and address the need for specific applicants/clients.

Contribute towards the development of care and support:

During 2019-20 revised guidance for Housing Support Grant (HSG) programme (Supporting People) was issued by Welsh Government. This revised guidance served to highlight the strong inter-linkages between housing support and homelessness prevention. In recognition of these linkages, the responsibility for the strategic planning and delivery of the HSG services was moved to within Housing services. During 2020-21 plans were underway to implement the new HSG Gateway Service as a central point for submitting all requests for Housing Support, ensuring all cases would be allocated the appropriate interventions in a timely manner. This entailed devising new roles and employing into these positions. Further developments were planned for 2020-21 including the preparations for the development of the HSG Programme Strategy.

Furthermore, with the location of Housing Services within the Porth Gofal integrated, through age service model, many opportunities have been identified for building on opportunities and links across the service model from prevention, early intervention through to crisis intervention.

Ensure that the accommodation needs of residents are met

The Housing service continues to work towards ensuring that the accommodation needs of residents are being met. Throughout the year 36 inspections of licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (private rented accommodation) were undertaken to ensure safety standards were being met, 10 cases of harassment and illegal eviction were investigated, and 254 service complaints related to poor housing standards were followed up.

Property Acquisitions

Use of capital integrated care grants have enabled key new housing acquisitions. One being a scheme in conjunction with the West Wales Domestic Abuse Service for the Council to acquire two properties in County to lease for the use of victims of domestic abuse. The second being the acquisition of a property for the use of Porth Cynnal care and support services to support parent and baby as step down or prevention of children coming into local authority care.

Summary of Wellbeing Outcomes 2020-2021:

Porth Cymorth Cynorthwyo
Our keeping in touch service
March 30 - April 17

- 1159 food boxes delivered
- 1727 'shielded' residents contacted for food boxes
- 533 children, young people and families contacted
- 43 staff redeployed to support other services
- 825 carers supported by phone, letter or magazine
- 602 NERS clients contacted
- 290 calls to 'Clic' responded to and actioned
- 5000 calls made to Ceredigion residents
- 16,259 views of the online local resource & services list
- 3 locations transformed into temporary hospitals (2 Leisure Centres, 1 School)

Stay apart to play your part

Follow us:

17 April - 31 May

Residents

- 4600 Children, young people and families contacted
- 3044 Food boxes delivered
- 3240 'Shielded' residents contacted for food boxes
- 3240 Calls made to Ceredigion residents

Vocational Learning

- 84 Apprentices being supported by HCT
- 544 Learners being supported by the Lifelong Learning & Skills Team

Wellbeing

- 800 Wellbeing packs prepared for isolated adults
- 850 Wellbeing packs prepared for carers
- 50 Active family packs delivered to families

Support & Intervention

- 10,843 People have engaged with our Youth Service Facebook page
- 40 Young people registered for Youth Service virtual activities

2020 - 2021

1650 Wellbeing packs produced for Unpaid Carers & Isolated Adults

195 Active family bags distributed with Flying Start & Families First

600 Young people & families supported through 3000 calls

22 Week pre-school activity programme created

15,000+ Food parcels delivered to medically vulnerable residents

100+ Adult carer & 10+ young carer ID cards produced

£30,000 Carers Fund distributed

Over 50,000 Social Media Engagements

250 Young people have received support in school

50+ Parenting groups & programmes delivered virtually

Ceredigion County Council

Outcomes

64 homeless households in temporary accommodation

June 20 – April 21
Average 32 service users on Dom Care waiting list (highest 51 lowest 12)

8,602,591 items of PPE distributed across the county, with a 12-week rolling stock programme

265 Planning Meetings taken place in response to 55 incidents/outbreaks in Ceredigion care homes

67 Afternoon tea boxes were hand delivered by the Fostering Team staff to all Foster and Kinship Carers in December 2020

Socially distanced doorstep visits were undertaken to thank the carers and to wish them all a happy Christmas

Daily sit rep calls to care home providers - a total of 7,546 telephone calls have been made and 343 Sit Rep reports

Increase in community beds provided 19/20 - 208, 20/21 - 286

Ceredigion County Council

What are our priorities for next year and why?

This coming year will see the continuation of a number of whole-system transformation projects along with continuing to deal with the challenges of the Covid 19 Pandemic and its aftermath.

Covid 19 Objective

- Continue to work closely with partner agencies to reduce the risk of spread of the infection
- Effectively implement adjustment plans
- Recovery

Improvement Objective 1

To ensure that the transformation of social services is achieved during 2021/22 in partnership with other corporate services and partner agencies.

- Work in partnership on the corporate restructure plan, enabling an efficient whole-council approach
- Ensure the Statutory requirements for Social Care are clearly defined within the structure
- Ensure robust services are in place to enable citizens to achieve their personal outcomes

Improvement Objective 2

Ensure the Local Authority continues to have a strong voice in the Region

- Ensure regular committed involvement at all regional partnership events by relevant staff
- Ensure that Ceredigion takes full advantage of the resources available to us from the Regional Partnership Board
- Influence the developments through the region and nationally

Improvement Objective 3

Ensuring that the LA is effective, along with partners in securing and utilising Transformation Funds to drive better outcomes for people in Ceredigion

- Continue to enhance the regional Technology Enabled Care Project in conjunction with Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire and Hywel Dda
- Work in partnership with Hywel Dda to drive forward the Integrated working agenda including the Fast Access Community Team
- Work in conjunction with Health and 3rd Sector to develop community hubs and resource

Service Areas for Further Development:

Porth Cymorth Cynnar

- Wellbeing Centres’ - to develop facilities that enhance the core physical activity and leisure offer with meeting, consultation, and treatment spaces. The Wellbeing Centre will incorporate services that consider and improve the physical, social emotional and mental aspects of an individual’s wellbeing and contribute to them enabling individuals to achieve their full potential.
- Further develop and deliver blended universal and focussed through-age community activities and interventions to enable empowerment, resilience, and independence.
- Work collaboratively with key stakeholders and voluntary sector organisations to develop a range of services to meet the evolving needs within our communities to support and enable individuals and families in Ceredigion to cope well with the challenges and pressures that they may face.

Porth Gofal:

- Direct Payments support service developed in house
- Domiciliary Care – progression with hybrid model of service delivery with Enablement
- Implementation of the Health and Social Care Support Workers as part of Transformation programme 3
- Fostering – service development plan including recruitment and training of new foster carers
- Day Services Review – focus on community and individual resilience, prevention and empowerment strategies and respite opportunities

Porth Cynnal:

- Develop preventative and recovery approaches across Porth Cynnal Services and the TAW model and with partner agencies focusing on mental wellbeing, domestic abuse, substance misuse
- Safe Looked After Children Reduction initiatives
- Regional and local projects: develop trauma informed safe accommodation for children and local parent and baby accommodation
- Embed Signs of Safety practice

5. How We Do What We Do

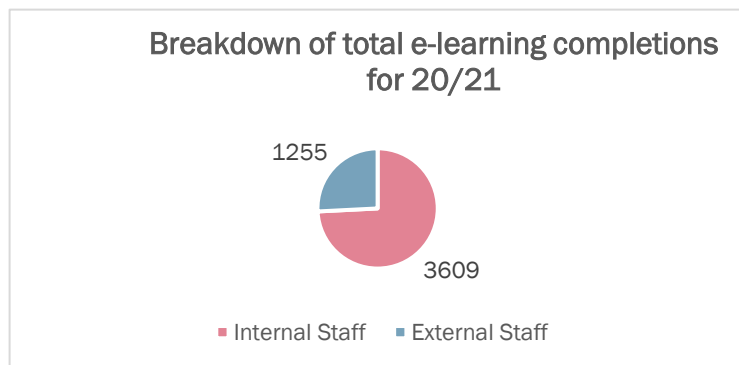
How we have supported the professional development of the Social Care Workforce

Ceredigion County Council highly values the services provided by the Social Care sector for the citizens of Ceredigion. Through the provision of learning and development opportunities we seek to attract, recruit, and retain a highly skilled and competent workforce able to make a positive difference to the lives of the people they work with.

Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) grant funding is utilized to provide a range of training and development opportunities which are made available to the sector. These opportunities support the induction, continuous professional development, and the regulatory qualification requirements of those involved in service delivery.

To ensure the needs of the whole sector are met, the Council’s Learning and Development Team conduct an internal and external annual training needs analysis and host events where external Social Care providers are invited to identify their training priorities.

COVID-19 impacted upon the delivery of learning and development opportunities in March 2020 and resulted in the cancellation of all face-to-face training. To enable continued support for the sector, all trainers upskilled in developing on-line content and in on-line delivery methods. Five new e-learning modules were launched covering: Introduction to Care and Personal Care, Manual Handling – People, Manual Handling – Objects, Infection Prevention & Control including donning and doffing of PPE, Safe Administration of Medicines and Return Safely to Work. Staff who were working at home also received Health & Safety guidance on home working.



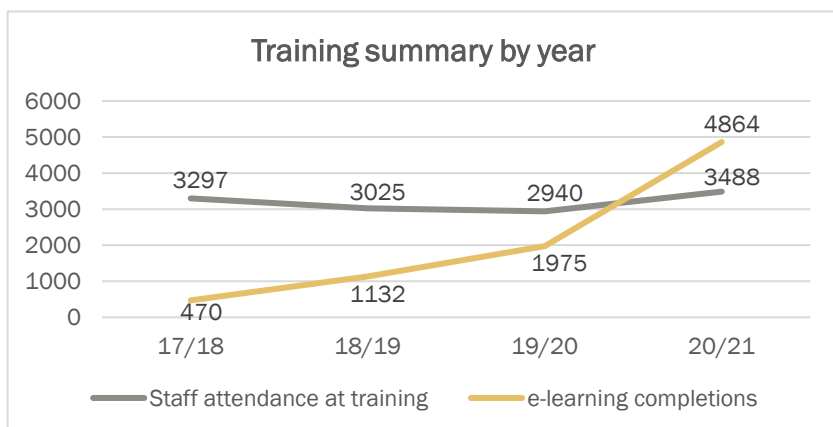
E-learning completions increased by a remarkable 59% on the previous year, with a total of 4864 completions. The opposite graph shows the breakdown of internal and external social care completions:

As the year progressed, essential face-to-face training for Social Care staff such as Manual Handling and First Aid was re-instated and delivered to staff groups of reduced numbers in adherence to COVID

and risk assessment restrictions.

417 events covering core social care / social work practice and health and safety training have been made available to the sector enabling 3488 staff completions, this is an increase of 548 on the previous year, which is significant given the impact of COVID, staff sickness, recruitment, and operational challenges on the sector during this time.

In order to support the Council’s transformational Through Age & Wellbeing project, a bespoke management development programme commenced and will continue on into the next year.



The opposite graph shows staff training attendance figures by year and evidences the increasing demand for and completion of e-learning.

Workforce succession planning has been supported through the Council’s Trainee Social Worker Scheme and the provision of 16 social work placements. The offer of a Level 2 Health and Social Care

Apprenticeship within a residential care home continues to develop and has resulted in 2 permanent members of staff with a further recently commenced on this career pathway.

Promoting and supporting delivery through the medium of Welsh continues to be a priority. To support the ‘Active Offer’, bespoke Welsh Language support sessions have been delivered to social work students and the Carers Team, 21 social care staff have been supported to undertake Welsh Language lessons and 124 across the sector have completed a Welsh Language Awareness e-learning module.

Summary of staff supported to attain qualification:

Programme	Numbers on programme 1 st April 2020	Numbers enrolled during 2020/2021	Numbers achieving during 2020/2021	Numbers withdrawn	Numbers carrying forward to 2021/2022
AWIF	22	0	0	6	16
Level 2 Approved Qual	9	4	5	0	8
Level 3 Approved Qual	10	4	10	2	2
QCF L3 – CYP	0	0	0	0	0
Level 4 Approved Qual	0	0	0	0	0
Level 5 Approved Qual	3	1	1	0	3
TAQA Award – Level 3	0	0	0	0	0
TAQA Award – Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Social Services Practitioner Programme – these figures relate to Cert HE	3	3	2	1	3
Social Work Degree Level 4 – sponsored	0	0	0	0	0
Social Work Degree Level 5 – sponsored	0	2	0	0	2
Social Work Degree Level 6 – sponsored	0	0	0	0	0

Social Work Degree Level 4 – other	0	0	0	0	0
Social Work Degree Level 5 – other	3	6	3	0	6
Social Work Degree Level 6 – other	1	3	1	0	3
Master Social Work Degree – Year 1 – sponsored	0	0	0	0	0
Master Social Work Degree – Year 2 – sponsored	0	0	0	0	0
Master Social Work Degree – Year 1 – other	2	3	2	1	2
Master Social Work Degree – Year 2 – other	0	2	0	0	2
NQSW Programme	8	1	8	0	1
Graduate Certificate in consolidation of social work practice	6	10	6	0	10
Experienced Practice in Social Work	0	0	0	0	0
Senior Practice in Social Work	0	0	0	0	0
Consultant Social Work	0	0	0	0	0
Enabling Practice 6/7 (Practice Assessor Awards)	1	6	0	0	7
Best Interest Assessor	0	12	0	1	11
Approved Mental Health Practitioner	2	1	2	0	1
Team Manager Development Programme	1	1	0	1	1
Middle Manager Development Programme	0	0	0	0	0
Working with Deaf Blind People	0	0	0	0	0
Certificate in Dementia Care Level 3	0	20	0	1	19
Trusted Assessor Level 3	0	0	0	0	0
Assessing Decision Making Capacity Level 6	3	0	3	0	0
Strategic Manager Leadership Programme	0	0	0	0	0

Language profile of our Through Age Workforce:

Porth Cymorth Cynnar:

OVERVIEW	No of People	% of People
ALTE 0, 1 & 2	51	20.48%
ALTE 3, 4 & 5	198	79.52%
TOTAL	249	100.00%

GAP	No of People	% of People
GAP IN ALTE REQUIREMENTS	96	37.94%
Meets ALTE Requirements	157	62.06%
TOTAL	249	100.00%

PERSON - SPEAKING & LISTENING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	3	21	27	34	60	104	249
% of People	1.20%	8.43%	10.84%	13.65%	24.10%	41.77%	100.00%
PERSON - WRITING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	10	27	32	37	65	78	249
% of People	4.02%	10.84%	12.85%	14.86%	26.10%	31.33%	100.00%
PERSON - READING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	10	23	30	35	61	90	249
% of People	4.02%	9.24%	12.05%	14.06%	24.50%	36.14%	100.00%

Porth Cynnal:

OVERVIEW	No of People	% of People
ALTE 0, 1 & 2	58	48.33%
ALTE 3, 4 & 5	62	51.67%
TOTAL	120	100.00%

GAP	No of People	% of People
GAP IN ALTE REQUIREMENTS	61	50.83%
Meets ALTE Requirement	59	49.17%
TOTAL	120	100.00%

PERSON - SPEAKING & LISTENING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	4	33	21	18	11	33	120
% of People	3.33%	27.50%	17.50%	15.00%	9.17%	27.50%	100.00%
PERSON - WRITING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	15	31	20	12	15	27	120
% of People	#####	25.83%	16.67%	10.00%	12.50%	22.50%	100.00%
PERSON - READING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	12	32	21	9	17	29	120
% of People	#####	26.67%	17.50%	7.50%	14.17%	24.17%	100.00%

Porth Gofal:

OVERVIEW	No of People	% of People
ALTE 0, 1 & 2	168	47.06%
ALTE 3, 4 & 5	189	52.94%
TOTAL	357	100.00%

GAP	No of People	% of People
GAP IN ALTE REQUIREMENTS	188	52.66%
Meets ALTE Requirement	169	47.34%
TOTAL	357	100.00%

PERSON - SPEAKING & LISTENING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	27	74	67	72	32	85	357
% of People	7.56%	20.73%	18.77%	20.17%	8.96%	23.81%	100.00%
PERSON - WRITING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	67	76	70	59	22	63	357
% of People	#####	21.29%	19.61%	16.53%	6.16%	17.65%	100.00%
PERSON - READING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	58	67	71	46	42	73	357
% of People	#####	18.77%	19.89%	12.89%	11.76%	20.45%	100.00%

Our Financial Resources and How We Plan for the Future

For the first time in over 10 years, the Council’s financial settlement was considered a positive one. The Council’s overall WG funding settlement for 2020/2021 of £107.6m was a 4% increase on the previous year and meant that Services did not have to find any significant level of savings.

2020/2021 also marked the year where the Council started aligning its budgets to the new targeted operating model for Social Care, which saw Early Intervention and Wellbeing related services become far more integrated alongside the more traditional Social Care Services. As a result, the Council’s new Pyrth operating structure was reflected in budgets which totaled £35.2m now being over 23% of the 2020/2021 Council budget of £151.2m.

The Social Care related budgets still faced considerable cost pressures of £3.5m. However, these were mainly mitigated by the benefit from the positive WG settlement, and a targeted corporate approach being taken to address the Social Care budget pressures.

Whilst there was a £0.6m overspend for the 2020/2021 financial year, this is a significant improvement from previous year’s and reflects the impact starting to be seen from the alignment of services to the new Through Age Model. The model though remains in its infancy and continues to develop.

2020/2021 can’t be concluded without mentioning COVID19 and the significant financial impact this has had. The Social Care sector has been at the forefront of the pandemic with the impact being felt both by the Local Authority and the wide range of Private Providers whom services are commissioned from. Through the WG Hardship Fund, significant additional funding has been made available to the Social Care sector in the form of funding and payments for Voids, Temporary Enhanced Premium Payments for placements and funding for Exceptional Costs arising from COVID19 incidents. This fund has been critical to ensure the continuity of services during these challenging times.

Looking forwards the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan sets out the financial strategy for future planning purposes and to meet the Council’s Corporate priorities which are:

- Boosting the Economy
- Investing in People’s Future
- Enabling Individual and Family Resilience
- Promoting Environmental and Community Resilience

Part of the transformational aspect of the Medium-Term plan focusses on the move from a more traditional Children’s and Adult Social Care services to a wider Through Age model with Early Intervention through the introduction of a new targeted operating model to be known as Porth Gofal, Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar.

Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

On 25th March 2020, the Council Leader and Deputy Leader granted temporary delegated powers to the Council’s Chief Executive and Leadership Group to make decisions relating to the Council’s COVID-19 response. The decision was made in accordance with the Council’s Constitution. Supporting Gold Command are 5 Silver Command Groups, which report weekly to Gold Command.

In addition, the Chief Executive and the Leader has met at least once a week with representatives from Hywel Dda University Health Board, the WLGA and other Leaders and Chief Executives, the Member of Parliament and Member of the Senedd as well as providing briefings to the Cabinet

Gold Command, which is made up of the Council’s Senior Management Team has met daily since mid-March 2020 to deal with the Council’s response to COVID-19.

The record of Gold Command’s decisions and actions during the year can be found on the Council website and include a number of key decisions in relation to care and support services.

Weekly safeguarding reports regarding activity in relation to children and adults were presented to Gold Command by the Statutory Director for information and quality assurance.

Healthier Communities Scrutiny Committee

The Committee met virtually on 19th of November 2020 and considered The Ceredigion Carers Unit Annual Report 2019/20, the Regional Carers Group Annual report 2019-2020, the published CIW Inspection Report on Early Help and Care and Support and Transition for Disabled Children, the IRO Service Performance Monitoring Report Q2 2019-2020. Committee Members noted the inspection report and approved the progress as reported in the Action Plan from 2019/20.

The Committee met virtually on 18th February 2021 and considered the reports on the draft budget for 2021/22, the Cost Reduction / Budget Savings and proposed changes to the Council’s Fees and Charges 2021/22. Committee members approved the recommendations made and recorded concern with increasing Looked after Children costs and noted the increased demand for Direct Payments and that it is intended that the service will come in house during 2021.

Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

The Committee met virtually on 16 September 2020 and considered the Annual Report of CYSUR and CWMPAS 2019-2020. Committee members also considered a comprehensive report outlining the Council’s response to date in managing the Covid 19 pandemic.

The West Wales Care Partnership

Section 14A of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to produce Area Plans setting out the range and level of services that will be provided in their area in response to regional Population Assessments. These Plans must be produced every 5 years and initial plans must be published by 1 April 2019.



The West Wales Area Plan for 2019-23, ‘Delivering Change Together’, has been agreed by the Regional Partnership Board and endorsed by Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire County Councils and Hywel Dda University Health Board. It includes a series of strategic commitments which the Partnership will take forward over the next five years to support the transformation and integration of care and support in the Region.

The Plan is available [here](#). It is also available via the new [West Wales Data Portal](#), which has been developed in partnership with Data Unit Cymru. This provides access to a wide range of

population and service data for the region and allows our Plan to be updated regularly to reflect local and national developments and report on progress against the commitments within our Plan.

In August 2020 the RPB commissioned an independent evaluation of the Healthier West Wales programmes. This noted progress across the board and recommended a number of enhancements including improving data sets to assess impact of programmes; evidencing the impact of different delivery arrangements in different parts of the region; strengthening engagement with users, carers and other stakeholders and using resulting intelligence to inform programme development; and closer alignment of programmes to enable staff involved in their delivery to recognise their contribution to the wider transformation landscape.

An action plan has been developed to address each of the recommendations. In view of the positive evidence presented within the report, Welsh Government confirmed an allocation of just under £6m for 2021-22 to continue the programmes for a further, transitional year. Alongside the Healthier West Wales programmes, the Transformation Fund also provided ring-fenced resources to the Partnership in support of performance management and reporting and continuous engagement. As a result, in 2020-21 we were able to appoint a Performance and Evaluation Officer to lead on the development of metrics to assess impact of transformation and other regional programmes. We also contributed to the costs of the ‘Engagement HQ’ digital platform which has been acquired by the RPB alongside Public Services Boards and several individual organizations in the region. This software will provide a tool for engaging with different communities (both geographical and of interest), using a range of mechanisms including virtual forums, on-line message boards, place-based 14 conversations, interactive stories, question and answer facilities and polls and surveys.

Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board:

CYSUR is the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Children Board.

CYSUR is an acronym for Child and Youth Safeguarding: Unifying the Region and is also the Welsh word for reassurance.

CYSUR is an amalgamation of the former Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Powys.

CWMPAS is the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Adults Board.

CWMPAS is an acronym for Collaborative Working and Maintaining Partnership in Adult Safeguarding and is also the Welsh word for scope or remit.

The CWMPAS remit also stretches across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Powys

The regional arrangements were established to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

During 2020-2021, The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board continued to operate in accordance with its statutory obligations in light of the national emergency and pandemic. Although some non-essential Board work was stood down temporarily, all the Board’s mandatory sub-groups i.e., Training, Policies and Procedures and Practice Review Subgroups continued to meet and function, and Ceredigion County Council officers took a full part in all activities. The completion and development of ongoing regional policies, procedures, and strategies as well as ongoing Child and Adult Practice Reviews were prioritized.

Executive Board meetings continued to take place at regular intervals, and an interim COVID-19 Regional Operational Group was set up to oversee, monitor and respond to any identified areas of increased risk that have emerged as a result of the pandemic. This multi-agency group consists of heads of service and senior service managers from across the region and their equivalent from agency partner organizations.

In addition to this, multi-agency safeguarding leads meetings for children and adult services with representatives from the four local authorities, regional health boards and Dyfed Powys Police have taken place weekly. The focus of these meetings is to lead the development of interim COVID-19 regional policies, establish consistent professional practice across the region where appropriate and to share ideas and offer peer support. The Regional Safeguarding Board Manager and Business Unit Staff’s roles have been realigned to priorities supporting these new regional groups, and any actions that emerge, as well as continuing to progress the Board’s key subgroups.

The Board has produced specific regional guidance and policies to help guide partner agencies’ regional and local safeguarding activity during the Pandemic.

6. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Title	Location
West Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2020-21	West-Wales-RPB-Annual-Report-2020-21-ENGLISH.pdf (wwcp.org.uk)
Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board	Cysur Our Annual Reports
Ceredigion CC Carers Unit Annual Report	 Annual Report 2020-21 (Carers).pdf
West Wales Regional Carer’s group Annual Report 2020-21	WWCDG-Annual-Report-2021-21-FINAL.pdf (wwcp.org.uk)
West Wales Area Plan for 2019-23, ‘Delivering Change Together’	http://www.wwcp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/West-Wales-Area-Plan-English-Final-Version-29-03-18.pdf
Ceredigion Gold Command Decision Making Records	Governance Structure for decision making - Ceredigion County Council
Director Annual report 2019-2020	Ceredigion Social Services – Statutory Director’s Annual Report 2019-2020

Ceredigion County Council

Sian Howys

DRAFT



**Ceredigion Social
Services –
Statutory Director’s
Annual Report
2021/2022**

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1. Introduction

As the Director of Ceredigion Social Services between April 2021 and March 2022, I have the pleasure of presenting the 2021-2022 Annual Report. Once again, this has been a year of major challenges in view of the Covid 19 Global Pandemic. Promoting the safety and wellbeing of the residents of Ceredigion in the context of the far-reaching implications of Covid 19 has continued to be extremely challenging.



Ceredigion County Council’s robust measures to try and suppress and manage the risk of the spread of Covid 19 have helped keep infection rates comparatively low within the County. Nonetheless, staff and the public alike have been greatly affected by the Pandemic in very many ways.

The pressures on public services during this year have been immense and on the delivery of social care services to those in need of care and support. Once again, I must highlight my deep gratitude and admiration of the commitment, dedication and professionalism of colleagues and staff throughout this difficult year. Staff recruitment and retention to ensure sufficient capacity in the workforce has been an increasing focus during this year and this will continue into next year.

With the annual report, the aim is to evaluate the performance of the Local Authority in relation to the delivery of its Social Services functions in respect of the 2021-2022 financial year. The impact of Covid-19 in relation to social care services has been very significant across all areas of the Council’s work. It has also affected our capacity to provide specific information for this report, I have however ensured to the best of my ability that the information available has been provided to set out how the agreed wellbeing outcomes in Ceredigion have been met.

The annual report content is defined in Part 8 of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) under the ‘Code of Practice on the Role of Directors of Social Services’, which provides a requirement for an annual report to detail how the Local Authority has been working towards achieving the quality standards of well-being outcomes.

The eight well-being outcomes are:

- Securing rights and entitlements
- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Education, training, and recreation
- Domestic, family, and personal relationships
- Contribution made to society
- Social and economic well-being
- Suitability of living accommodation

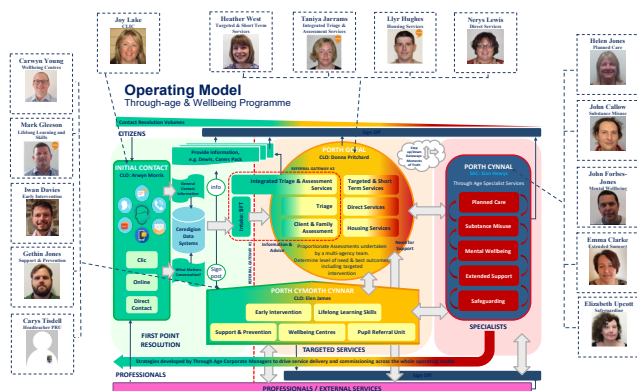
The six quality standards used to measure the Local Authority’s performance against the wellbeing outcomes are:

- Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
- Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being
- Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect, or harm
- Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
- Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family, and personal relationships
- Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

This report has been written for a wide audience, with the intention that it is made available to everyone. In compiling this report, I’ve considered specifically the following groups:

- Service users and carers and all those whose well-being is affected by what the local authority’s social services and related functions do, so that the impact of those services is explained
- The public who has an interest in what their local authority is doing, how it is performing and how their money is being spent
- Elected members and others involved in scrutiny processes
- The local authority’s partners including both formal partners and others in the public, private and third sectors who need to understand the local authority’s programme and priority objectives
- Regulators (including the Wales Audit Office, CIW, Social Care Wales, and the Statutory Commissioners)
- The Welsh Government

The Through Age and Well-being Integrated Service Delivery Model



During 2021-2022, significant progress has been made in implementing our Integrated Through Age and Well-being Service Model.

In October 2021, the Through Age and Well-Being Strategy 2021-2027 and Action Plan were approved by full Council. At the outset of the Programme, a vision was created that reflected an ambitious programme of change: “To ensure every child, young person and adult in Ceredigion will be able to reach their full potential. To ensure fair access for all to excellent universal and targeted services that supports the health and wellbeing of all citizens. To develop skills and resilience that will last a lifetime and enable individuals to cope well with the challenges and pressures that they may face.” The Through-age & Wellbeing Strategy clarifies the vision, sets out the case for change and describes the associated approaches that we intend to take to transform how the wellbeing and safety of the people of Ceredigion will be supported. A timeline of 2021-2027 has been agreed in order to achieve the changes.

Phase 1 of the corporate restructure was completed in April 2018 with the recruitment of 2 Corporate Directors and 12 Corporate Lead Officers (CLOs) to cover the responsibilities of all service areas.

The implementation of the Integrated Through Age and Well-being Service Delivery Model changes the roles and responsibilities of some of the Corporate Lead Officer posts and the teams across the Local Authority, not only in Social Care. The 3 Corporate lead Officers, Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal have led the change management processes to support the development and delivery of the model.

With the completion of Phase 2, the Corporate Manager Roles have been operational since March 2020, and they have worked hard to progress key strategic developments across the Porth. The four main service areas are.

- Clic Customer Contact – Initial point of contact and referral
- Porth Cymorth Cynnar – Early intervention and Prevention
- Porth Gofal – Triage, Assessment, Targeted Intervention and Direct Services
- Porth Cynnal – Specialist Care and Support Through Age Services

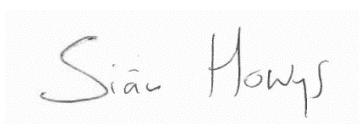
In April 2021, Phase 3 of the consultation got under way and by June 2021, Team Managers were appointed and commenced in post in most services across the Pwrth. December 2021 saw the commencement of a significant staff consultation on the redesign of teams and roles across the Pwrth’s services except for Residential Care Services and Day Services. The overriding purpose of the redesign is to ensure a skilled and flexible workforce along with an effective operating model in line with the Programme’s strategic aims and objectives so that we can meet the needs of the people of Ceredigion with sustainable and outcome focused services. The redesign process concluded in March 2022.

Ceredigion’s Covid 19 Response

From the outset of the Pandemic, Ceredigion County Council identified a clear vision and framework of action to ensure Ceredigion succeeded in not only reducing predicted deaths through the first peak but also for any future predicted peaks. The defined phases of our response are;

- Phase 1 - Preparedness – Closing down of all non-essential services
- Phase 2 - Implementation – Delivering services under lockdown and controlled conditions
- Phase 3 - Adjustment and long-term resilience
- Phase 4 - Recovery

In April and May 2021, Covid 10 Adjustment and Recovery Plans were put in place enabling all services to implement the necessary steps to ensure the delivery of safe services. These plans were regularly revisited and revised throughout the year as the level of risk fluctuated and with the changes in national, regional, and local control measures. In addition, new ways of working have continued to develop throughout the year with a focus on a hybrid approach. The overriding aim of the Council has been to do all we can to maintain Ceredigion’s comparatively low rate of infection and to build longer term resilience and recovery in our communities.



Sian Howys
Statutory Director of Social Services
Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Cynnal

2. Summary of Performance

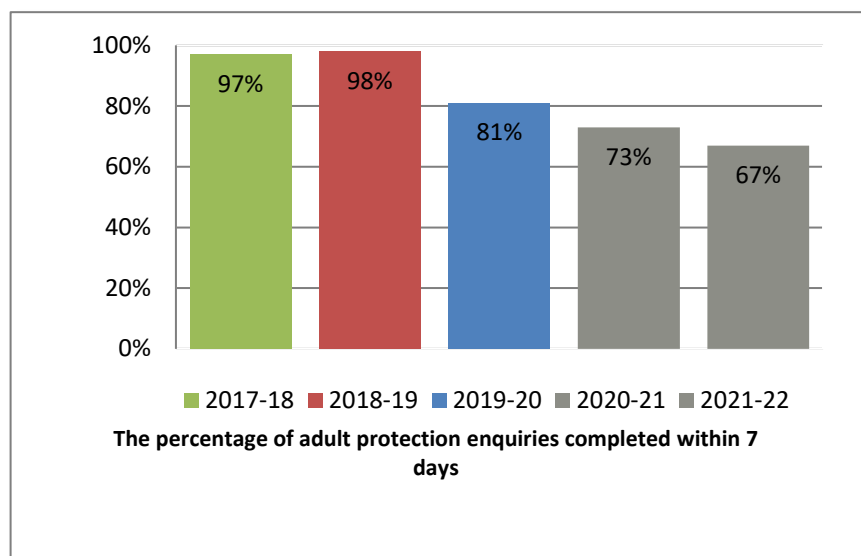
As laid out under section 145 of the Social Services and Wellbeing act, the Performance Measurement framework is used as a gauge of performance of local authorities’ social services functions. This section will illustrate how the service has performed over the past year. It must be noted that following Welsh Government direction minimal reporting was completed due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the report reflects this.

Adult and Commissioning Services Summary

The performance of services for adults is satisfactory with priority given to adhering to local, regional, and national Covid 19 regulations, guidance, and protocols in collaboration with partner agency whilst participating fully in all multi -agency forums dealing with the pandemic.

The continued development of key service areas such as Clic for initial contact and signposting to Porth Gofal for advice and assistance, triage and proportionate assessment forms the basis of our future model. Opportunities for developing and enhancing prevention services within Porth Cymorth Cynnar continues as another key element with Covid 19 adjustments such as Community Connectors providing online support and welfare phone calls.

Adult Safeguarding



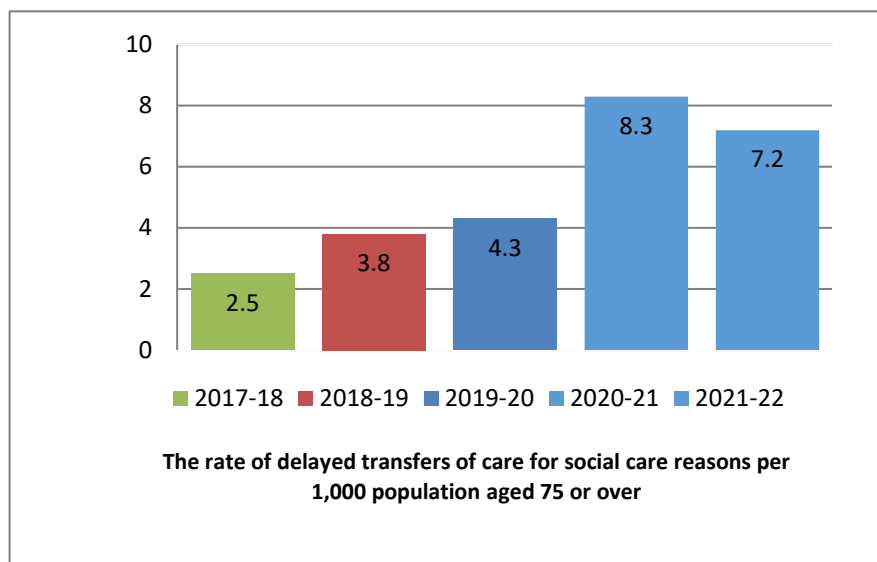
There has been a decrease in the percentage of Adult Protection enquiries completed within seven working days during 2021-2022.

The main reason for this has been that during this period, there was considerable service pressures and challenge with workforce capacity.

Nonetheless, high risk cases have been prioritized and timely action taken when required to ensure people’s safety.

Delayed Transfers of Care

This year, the “delayed transfers of care” measure has slightly decreased from 2020 -21. A Delayed Transfer of Care is experienced by an inpatient in a hospital, who is ready to move on to



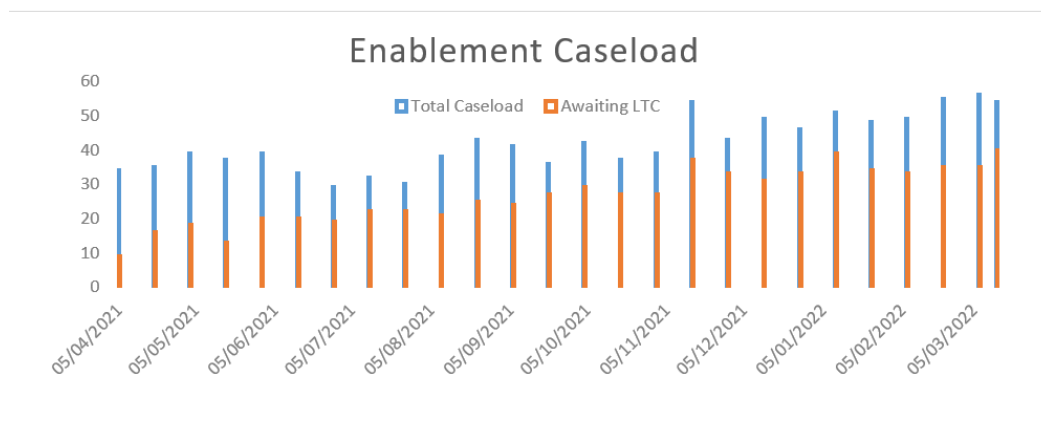
the next stage of care but is prevented from doing so for one or more reasons such as service provision due to the need for care and support. Hospital discharges continue to be a high Priority for Porth Gofal Integrated Triage who work in close collaboration with health colleagues to coordinate and facilitate all hospital discharges for Ceredigion Citizens. Discharge 2 Recover and Assess remains a priority, but provision can be challenging due to the impact of Covid 19

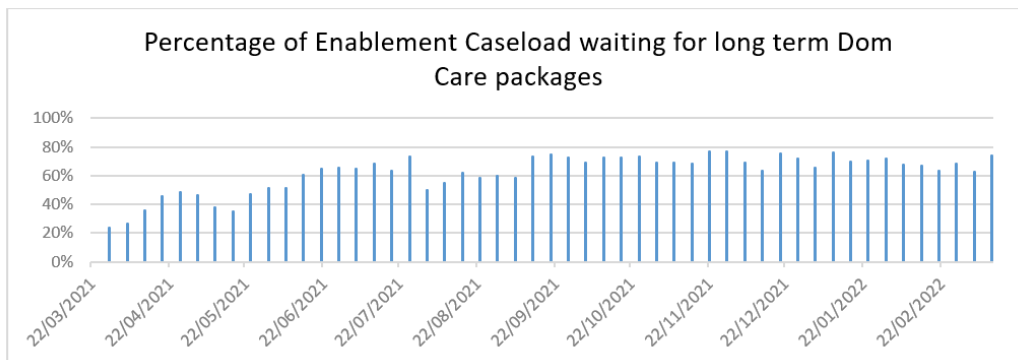
and the Enablement service bridging long-term care packages in the community. The Domiciliary care market has had reduced and limited capacity with the impact of Covid 19 as a contributory factor especially for those who have complex needs who require high level of support such as double-handed care. This has contributed to the delay in the provision of care, Porth Gofal is working collaboratively and pro-actively with Health to facilitate short-term Health funded placement whilst waiting care packages which has contributed to the reduction of delayed transfers of care. Porth Gofal works closely with third Sector support service to expedite discharges for Citizens who have low-level needs.

Enablement

The enablement team have supported an increasing number of service users awaiting long term care to provide additional capacity to the provision of domiciliary care packages.

In March 2021, the enablement team were providing a bridging service to around 20% of their caseload. By March 2022, this had increased significantly to almost 80%





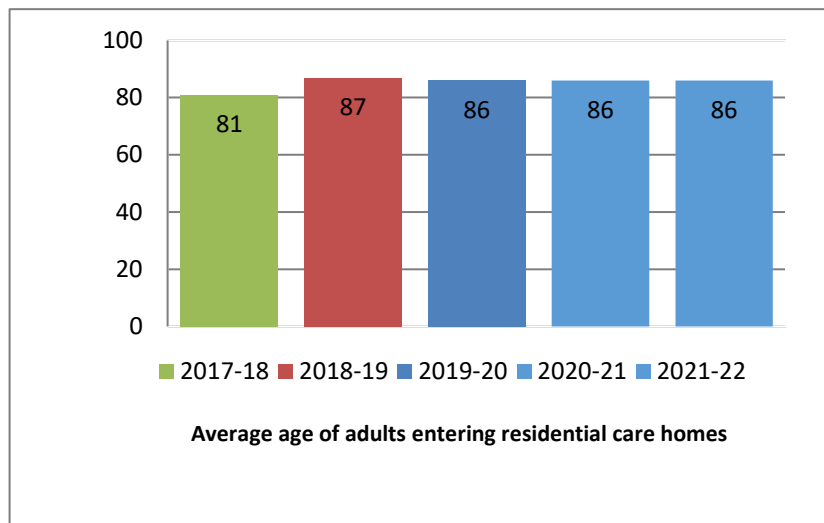
The Enablement team were bridging 34 clients who were awaiting long term care at the end of March 2022. This was over 80% of their total caseload

As the chart shows, 42% of the people waiting for domiciliary care were being supported by the enablement team.

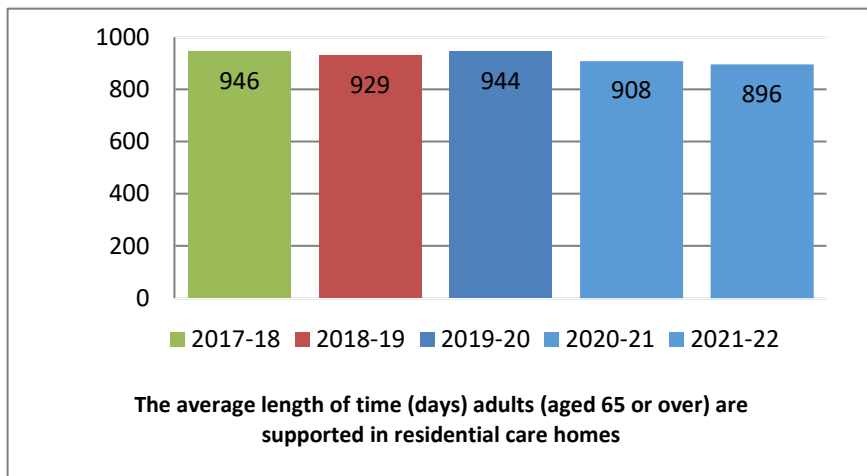
35% of people were waiting whilst living in their own homes.

Some individuals had support from family/friends, support from the 3rd sector. The social work team closely monitored all cases and kept in contact with the individuals concerned.

Adults supported in residential care homes



Residential care provides a range of options for individuals who require 24hour care. These include short term, temporary and permanent placements. There are various residential care options available, depending on the needs of the individual. Ceredigion operates five residential care homes itself and commissions with several private companies both in Ceredigion and further afield.



This year there has been a further decrease in the average amount of time spent in residential homes and that could well be attributed to the Pandemic and the impact of the infection outbreaks with less people choosing residential care unless it is unavoidable. Very early on, the Local Authority developed an Infection, Prevention and Control Protocol. This ensured that the workforce and health

colleagues had clear guidance to follow in relation to minimizing the opportunity for the transmission of the virus within the care homes. These protocols have been regularly updated in line with the changes in circumstances and national, regional, and local guidance.

Forums and methods for regular key communication have continued throughout the year with the social care independent sector.

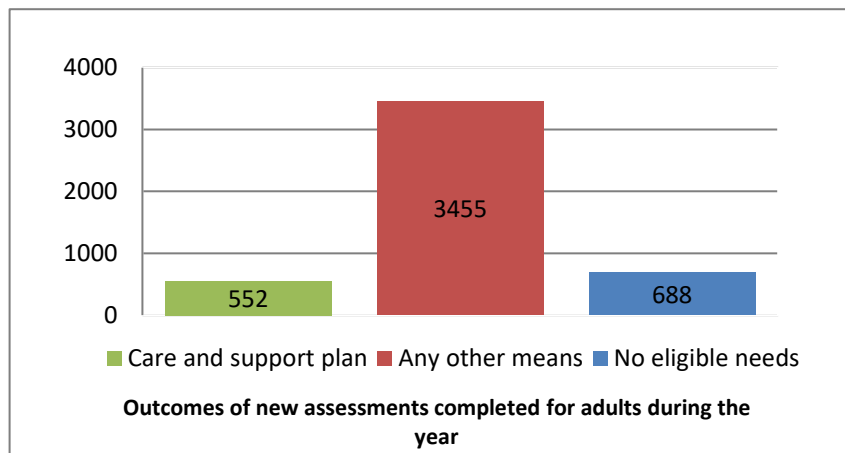
Throughout this service during Covid 19 we have ensured multi-professional and clinical support via technology to support communication with professionals or safe visits from GP’s, mental health, dementia, OT/allied health professions

A Regional Escalation Policy was developed with local arrangements agreed and this was shared across the sector.

Daily SitRep across all care homes have been completed 7 days a week to identify potential issues or concerns so that issues were actioned quickly.

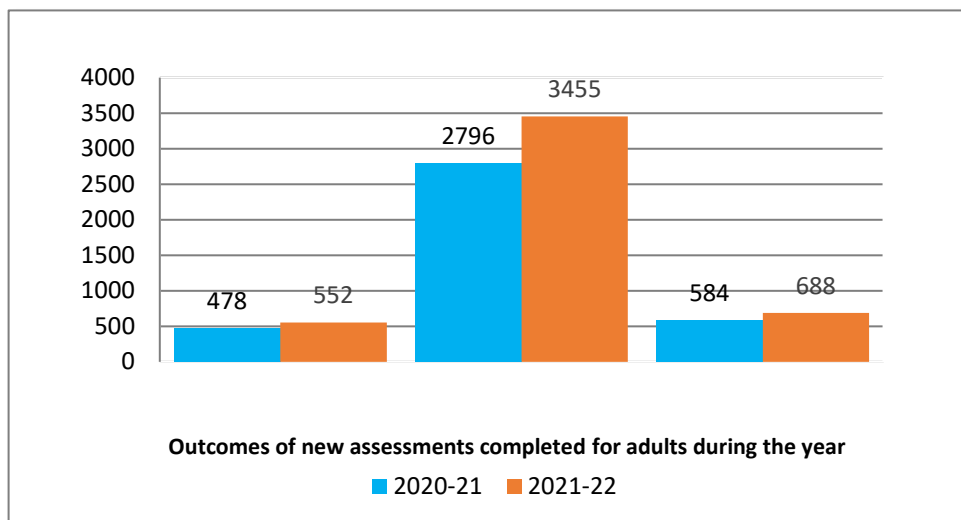
The local authority invested at a very early point in conferencing facilities to ensure that families could have access technology to maintain contact whilst face to face visiting was suspended. Later in the year, the Council supported the implementation of outdoor visiting facilities when alert levels were reduced.

Advice and Assistance for Adults



All new adult referrals to the authority are progressed to Porth Gofal Integrated Triage and Assessment service when advice and assistance is required. Porth Gofal is an integrated Triage with Hywel Dda Health Board. The integrated Triage consist of a Senior Social Worker, nurse, Occupational Therapist and Physiotherapist who will undertake a holistic proportionate assessment with a focus on Prevention, early

intervention reducing escalation of need for long term statutory care and support.



*Any other means relates to the other national outcomes for assessment that are not for a care and support plan or no eligible needs.

- There are no care and support needs to meet. = There were no eligible needs to meet
- Needs can be met through the provision of information, advice, and assistance. = Needs were able to be met by any

other means.

- Needs, can be met, through the provision of preventative services. = Needs were able to be met by any other means.
- Needs, can be met, wholly or in part by the individuals themselves (with or without the assistance of others). = Needs were able to be met by any other means.
- Other matters can contribute to the achievement of the personal outcomes, or otherwise meet the needs. = Needs were able to be met by any other means.
- Needs can only be met through a care and support plan, or a support plan (needs are eligible). = Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan.

Porth Gofal provides

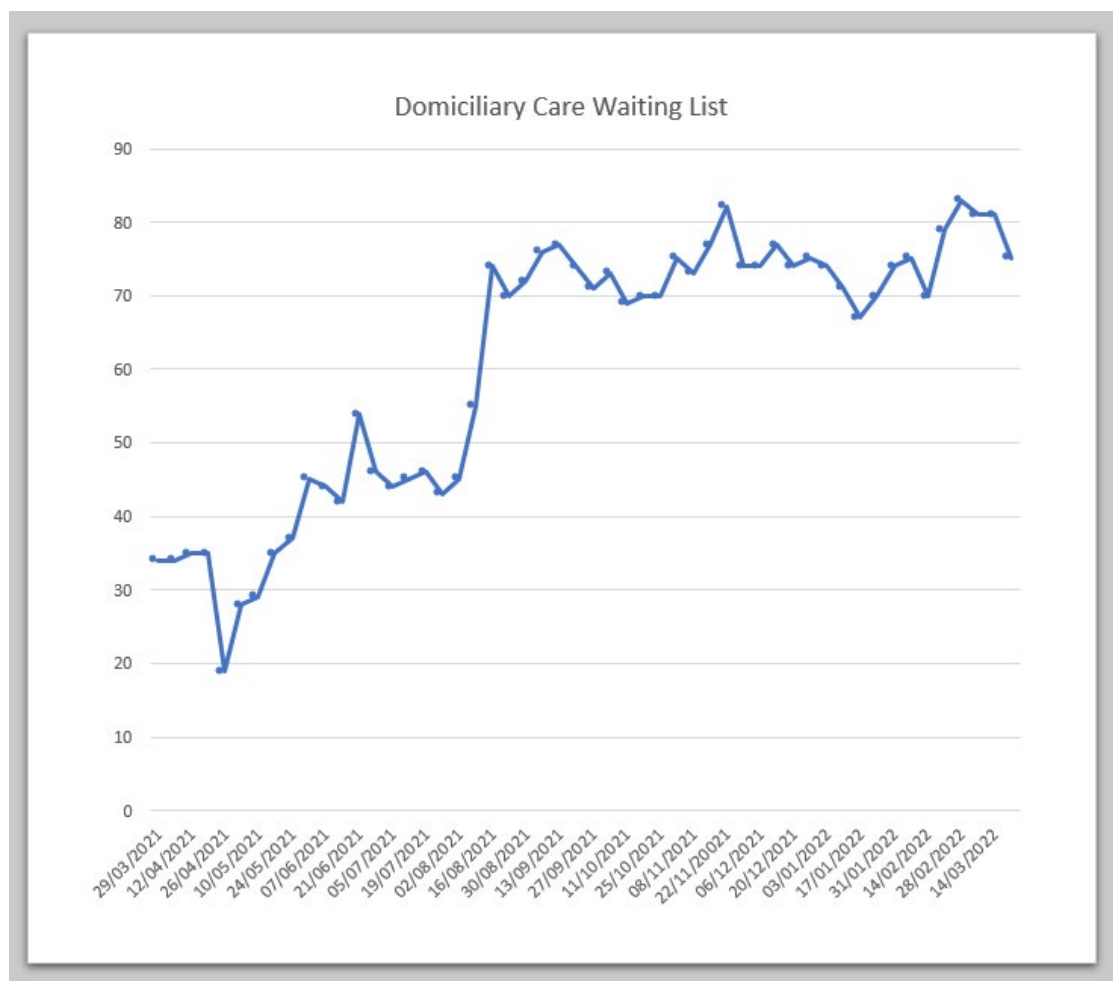
- Help information and advice about community health and social care services for adults and improve the connection between people and their communities.
- Encourage a balanced approach to the assessment of need ensuring that citizens are at the center of conversations and decisions and the “what matters” conversation takes place.
- Multidisciplinary triaging of referrals to identify the right professional to respond e.g., physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist or Social care workers to ensure right response at the right time.
- Provide more consistent, coordinated assessment for care and support.
- Improve the flow of information between services, resulting in faster decisions being made about people’s needs and support.
- Reduce hospital admissions. Provide an in-reach service to reduce delayed transfers of care and provide timely discharges from hospital.
- Fast response of simple service e.g., provision of simple equipment to improve the person independence and to reduce the risk of further deterioration.

With the impact of Covid 19, Porth Gofal has continued to hold Triage and assessments virtually with all face-to-face contact with service users risk assessed and infection control measures adhered to.

Provision of Domiciliary Care

During the period 2021-03-21 to 2022-03-14 the number of people waiting for domiciliary care fluctuated between a low of 19 and a high of 82.

The waiting list was over 70 from August 2021 onwards, following a sharp rise from around 45 that month.



Providers reported that recruiting new staff remained steady, unfortunately they were losing some staff at a similar rate. The net staff loss/gain across the providers overall was often a negative figure. Staff were noting various reasons for leaving the service including the cost of running a vehicle; low pay; not suited to care work (physical/mental health impact), unaffordable childcare expenses and the impact of Covid 19.

Ceredigion's financial settlement from Welsh Government was the lowest in Wales at 2% so the authority was looking at fee increases from a difficult position whilst recognizing the extra pressures on providers. The agreed uplift for 21/22 was 2.2%. Welsh Government also confirmed the extra payment per hour for domiciliary care staff would continue until the end of June 21. The SSP enhancement scheme and extension was further extended to 30th Sept 21.

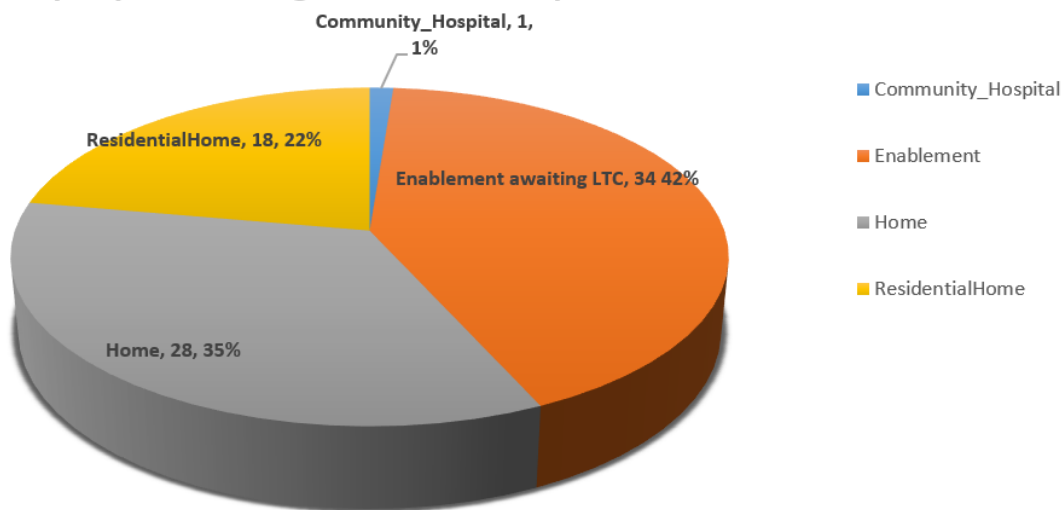
In June 2021, several domiciliary care providers attended a workshop facilitated by Lucy Richardson, Policy Officer, National Commissioning Board (Welsh Local Government Association) looking at a new Business Continuity Plan template. The workshop provided a good opportunity to look at the template BCP and how it could support an existing BCP organizations may have or be used as a template to create a new BCP.

On 17 March 2021 the Welsh Government’s Minister for Health and Social Services announced a one-off payment of £735 per person for NHS and social care staff. This amount covered the basic rate of tax and national insurance contributions and after deductions most people received £500. Confirmation followed that the additional £1 per hour for domiciliary care workers which was scheduled to end in September, was extended until March 22.

Providers contributed to a Domiciliary Care Providers Workforce Survey in the summer of 2021. The information from the Workforce Survey helped take forward the conversation in Ceredigion to work with providers to find ways of creating a future framework in Ceredigion. This aimed to answer some of the questions that all domiciliary care providers in Wales were struggling with and to find a way to remain competitive.

Discussions in the regular providers/CCC meetings and the informal drop in discussions that took place over the summer, including all concerns and queries raised, were shared, and discussed at highest level including the Chief Executive. Providers were reassured that their voices were being heard at the highest levels

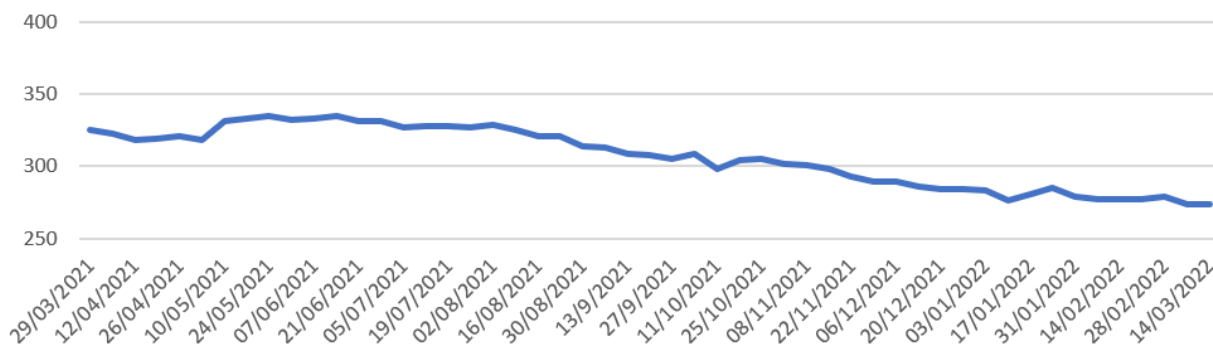
Total people awaiting dom care - snapshot as of 2022-03-14



Total Number of people in receipt of domiciliary care:

The total number of people in receipt of domiciliary care showed a decline in the period between March 2021 and March 2022 and remained static in the second half of the year at around 277

Total number of people in receipt of Domiciliary care



	Total hours of home care purchased from independent sector	Individuals in receipt of commissioned care
2017/18	239470.73	551
2018/19	241300.18	571
2019/20	234499.18	540
2020/21	209780.61	487
2021/22	192088.00	278

2021/22	Total referrals	enablement	Long Term	Closed	Started
Apr-21	50	32	15	18	32
May-21	34	23	11	12	22
Jun-21	39	28	11	20	19
Jul-21	44	33	11	16	28
Aug-21	48	33	15	17	31
Sep-21	39	29	10	23	16
Oct-21	44	19	25	19	25
Nov-21	44	25	19	9	35
Dec-21	36	25	11	15	21
Jan-22	42	33	9	15	27
Feb-22	47	31	16	22	25
Mar-22	34	22	12	13	21
TOTAL	501	333	165	199	302

We continue to enjoy good working relationships with most providers which gives us a good basis on which to build, allowing us to work closely with the market through the peaks and troughs. Providers continue to feedback that their regular meetings with Ceredigion County Council are beneficial and informative. Providers can raise important issue and trends can be identified and escalated when necessary, ensuring their voices are heard regionally.

We have several remote, isolated areas in which it is very difficult to procure care. In order to facilitate the release of pressure in certain areas and to aide hospital discharges we during the pandemic utilized our in-house Enablement team to support with domiciliary care bridging long term cases and discharges.

As of 28/03/2022, 12 commissioned providers were delivering around 3694 hours of care every week. CCC in house enablement were supporting 51 people with long term care needs.

Our domiciliary care providers have generally been able to work together to ‘patch’ their cover to parts of the county. Several of our providers offer care services to Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Powys and can fill the gaps in their rotas across county lines.

Day Services

The Day Centers were closed during this period and the Centre based services to Disabled Adults and Older Adults were suspended. Service Adjustments were made with Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Teams, Social Care and Health and Safety Risk Assessments were completed and Infection Control Measures adhered to ensure safe respite and support arrangements for the most vulnerable supplemented with regular virtual and keep in touch calls.

Mental Wellbeing Services

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed by the Porth Cynnal teams’ staff and infection control measures adhered to with continuation of Mental Health Act assessment and statutory support for people experiencing mental health difficulties and illness and their carers.

Substance Misuse Service

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for people experiencing difficulties and dependency with substance misuse and their carers.

Extended Support

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for people with disabilities and their carers.

Planned Care

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for adults with longer term care and support needs.

Children and Families Services

During this year, social care teams collaborated closely with schools service and key partner agencies to safeguard and support Children and Young people in Ceredigion and continue to meet statutory duties within the requirements of regionally and nationally agreed Covid 19 protocols and guidance, The significant impact of Covid 19 on children and families has been evident in terms of

the reduced visibility of children, reduced access to community support and an increase in support needs for children and young people’s mental and emotional wellbeing .

During the lockdown periods and closure of schools and with localized closures, Porth Cynnal services have collaborated closely with the Schools Service and partner agencies to support vulnerable children and their families.

Respite and support arrangements have been prioritised for disabled and vulnerable children and their families. within the confines of the Covid 19 restrictions

With the easing of restrictions, children were able to access summer of fun activities arranged by Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar services in collaboration with partners whilst adhering to Covid 19 safety measures.

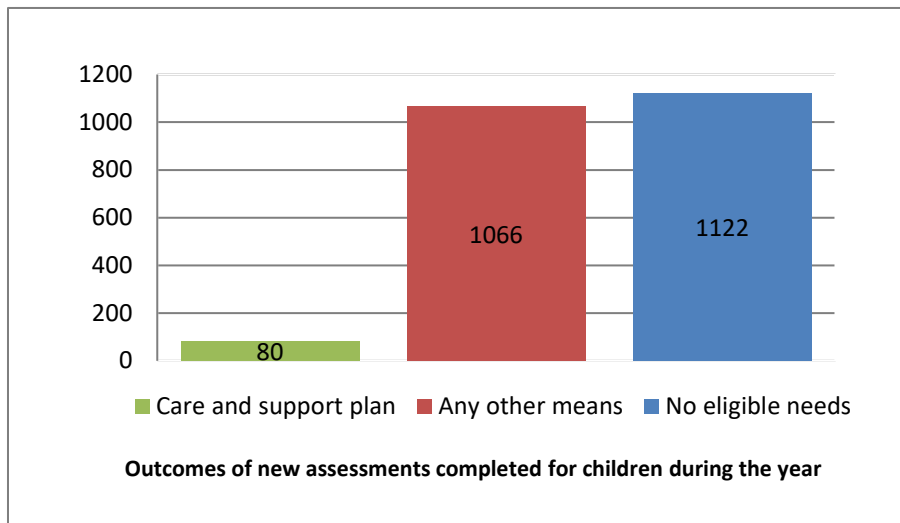
The Child Protection Register has fluctuated during 2021/22, the Child Protection Register and is at 45 children as at the end of the year. This is an increase on the end of year figure for 2020/2021 and in part can be attributed to the greater visibility of children towards the latter part of the year and due to the increase in safeguarding reports for children at risk.

The number of Ceredigion Looked After Children increased to 100 children by 31 March 2022. The increase is being closely monitored and the impact of Covid 19 on the ability to keep children safe within their homes and in the community has been evident.

A lack of suitable placements for looked after children has been a consistent theme locally as across Wales. In October 2021, Ceredigion Cabinet members agreed the development of a small group home for children within the county as part of the regional safe accommodation scheme under the Regional Partnership Board. A project Group was established with input from all relevant services across the Council to take this important development work forward.

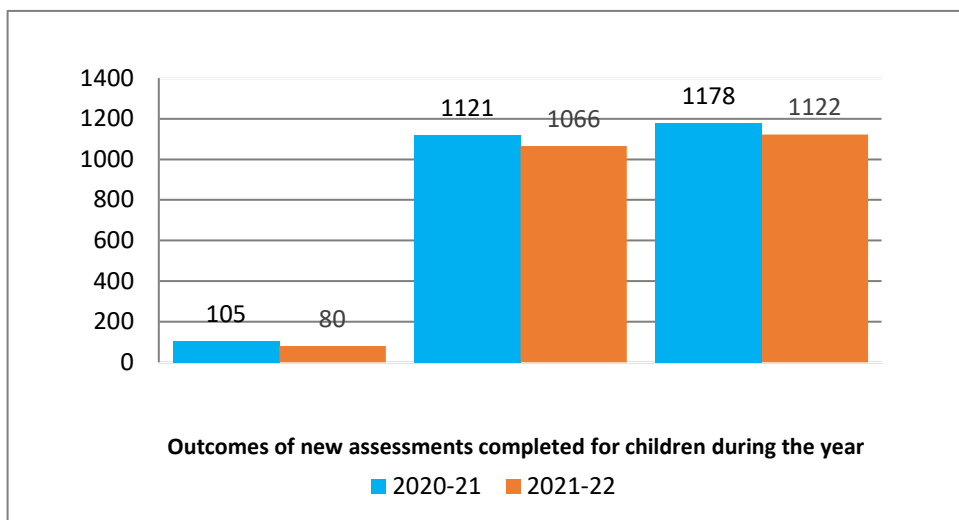
The availability of Early Intervention and Prevention activities have been affected greatly by Covid 19. Wherever possible support services have been offered virtually.

Outcome of Assessments



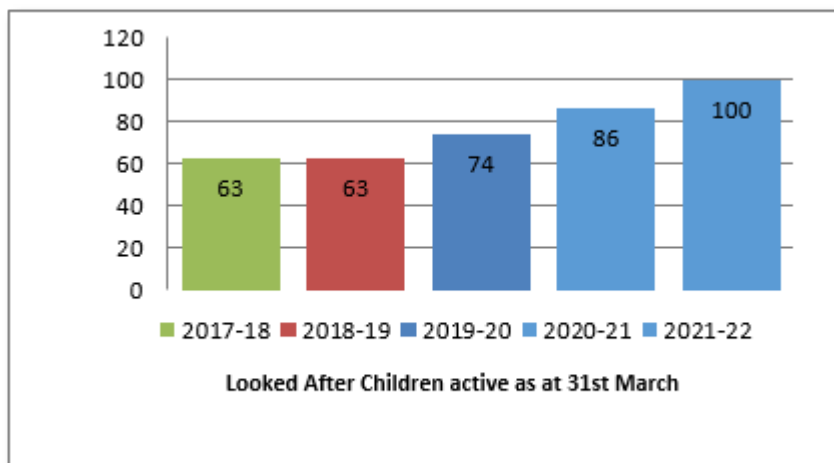
Risk assessments have been completed for all necessary home or face to face visits. Virtual working was implemented for multi-agency meetings with support provided for families to participate.

There were 4056 contacts made with Porth Gofal/Porth Cynnal for children during 2021-22.

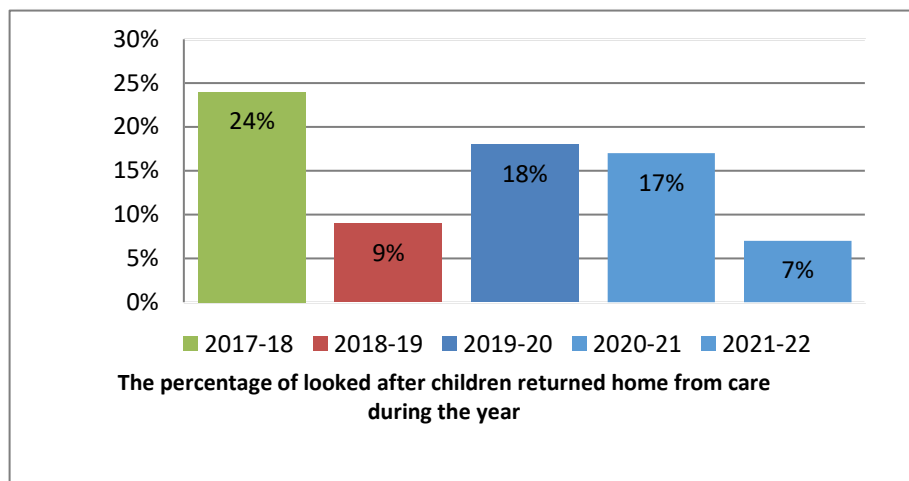


Looked After Children

In 2021-22, we saw a further increase in the number of Looked After Children and a considerable decrease in those returned home from care which reflects the increase in complex cases that are having to be managed. The Edge of Care service continues to provide a key service with practical support for safer parenting. However, this area of work has been impacted by the Pandemic with less easy access to support in the community and greater difficulty to manage risk of harm in the child’s home or in the community. Porth Cynnal teams are actively implementing the Public Law Protocol and whenever it is safe to do so, children are supported to remain in or return to the care of their parents or extended family members.

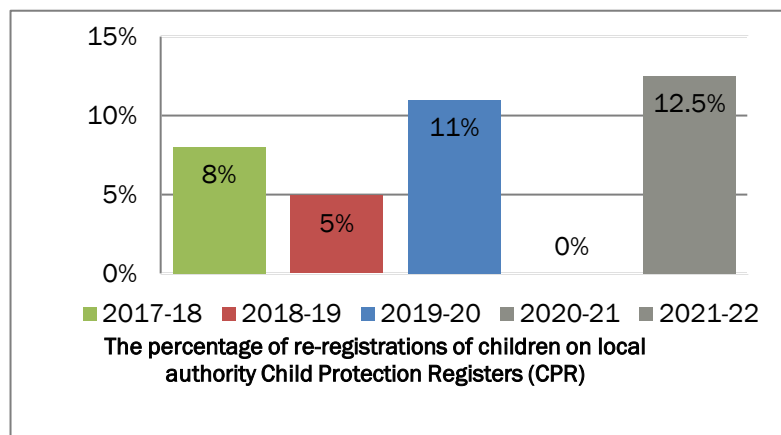


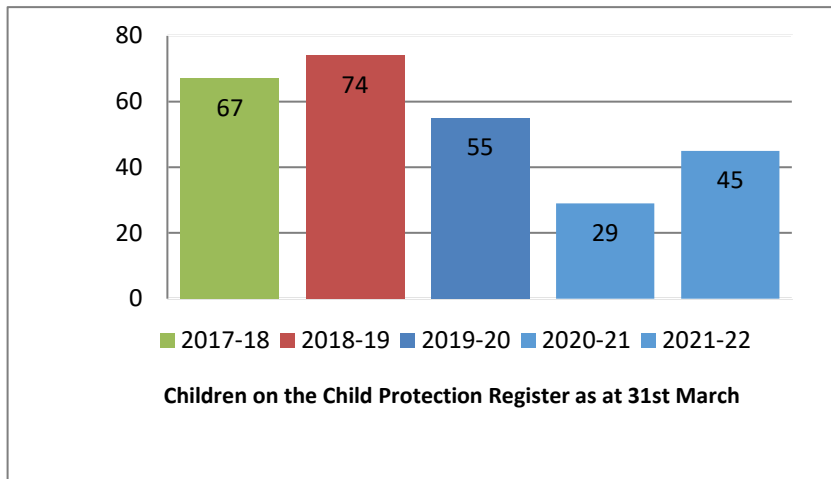
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The Child Protection Register (CPR)

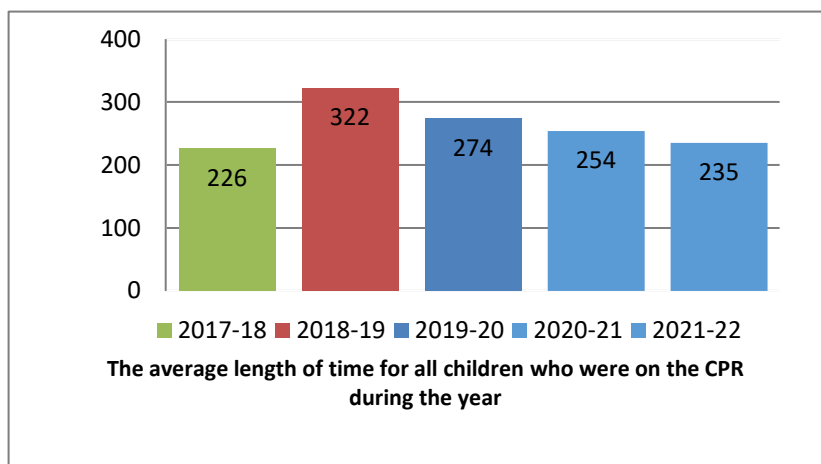
There has been a 12.5% increase in the re-registration of children on the local authority’s Child Protection Register During 2020-21, a period of which was during the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions, children and young people did not have a great deal of access to support and contact outside of their own homes. However, since restrictions were more fully lifted in the 2021-22 period, and children/young people were returning to education and outside agencies had more contact with children/young people, the high percentage of re-registrations occurred. In 20-21, there were specifically larger families where a number or all the children within one family were re-registered.





During 2021-22, a period of which was during the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions, children and young people did not have a great deal of access to support and contact outside of their own homes. However, since restrictions were more fully lifted in the 2021-22 period, and children/young people were returning to education and outside agencies had more contact with children/young people, the number of children on the Child Protection Register

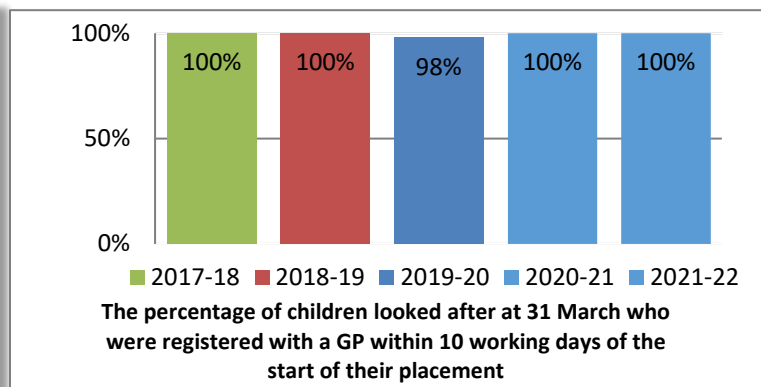
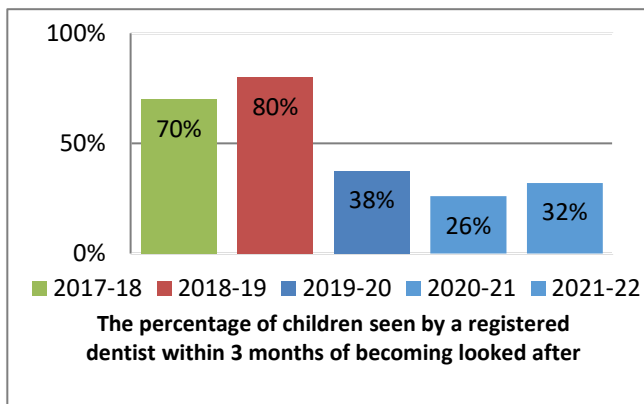
at the end of the 21-22 was higher than at the end of 2020-2021 but not as high as at the end of 2019-2020



During 2021-22 period it was more possible to work with partner agencies to undertake actions with children and families who had been on the register for a longer period, and this has led to the decrease in the length of time children have been on the CPR in relation to the previous year.

Health of our Looked after children

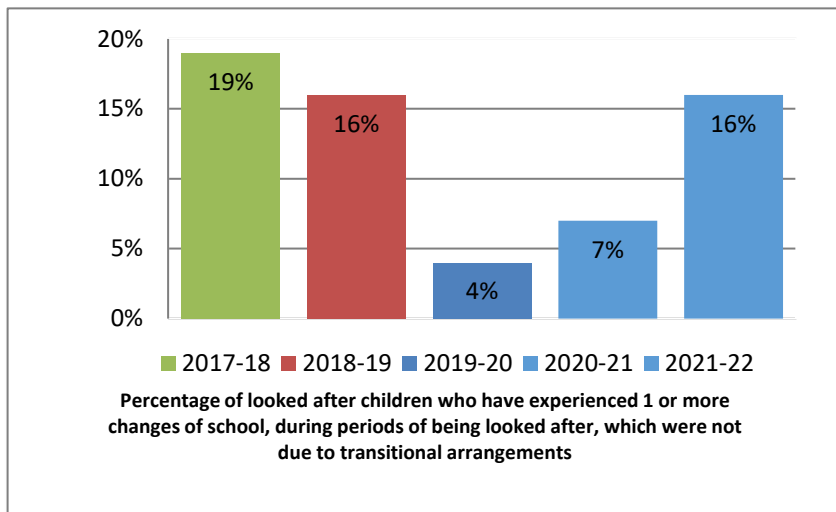
The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that the responsible authority must ensure that a looked after child is under the care of a registered dental practitioner as soon as practicable and in any event not later than 20 working days after the placement is made.



NICE Clinical Guideline [CG19] – ‘Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews’ sets out the guidance on the frequency of dental checks. This is based on the individual patient’s risk factors for dental disease. Looked After Children are generally considered to be at increased risk of dental disease and it is, therefore, expected that most Looked After Children would be put on recall for either three months or six months. In 2021-22, we saw an increase in the percentage of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after. This an issue that is being considered and addressed by Hywel Dda University Health Board as there have been difficulties due to Covid and staffing of dental practices.

These regulations also state that responsible authorities must ensure that a looked after child is registered with a GP as soon as is practicable and in any event not later than ten working days after the placement is made. As you can see from the graph in 2021-22 we met our target of 100% of Looked After Children being registered with a GP.

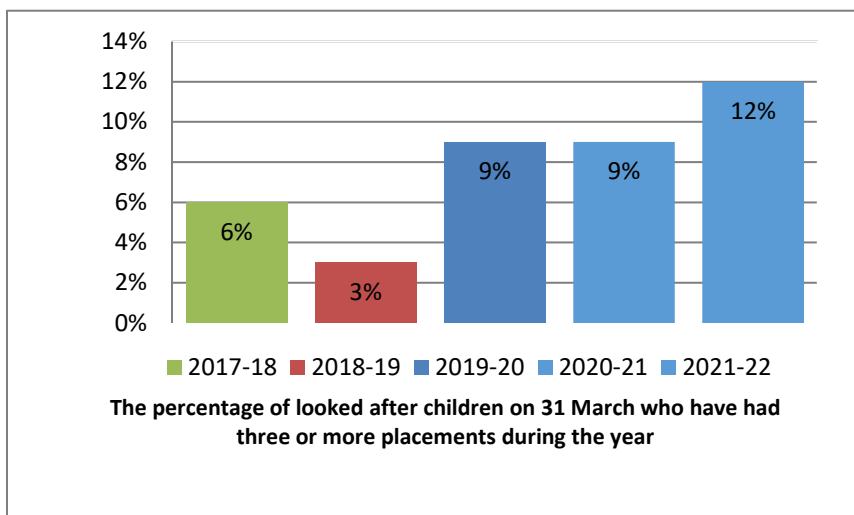
Looked after children – stability of placements



Research has shown that frequent moves can negatively affect children. Breakdowns, or unplanned moves, are much less likely in younger children. In comparison, ‘teenage’ placements have a higher chance of breaking down.

It is not fully understood whether placement moves themselves produce poor outcomes for children or whether this is due to children’s previous experiences and difficulties. There are two main measures which try to illustrate placement stability. The first looks at the number of times a child has had to change school (not including where a child moves from primary to secondary school) and the second looks at how many times a child has had more than two changes of

placement. These measures are long-standing and can give an insight into the long-term performance of a service. The downside of both measures is that they are particularly susceptible to change due to the low numbers of children included in them. The increase evidenced in 2020-21 and the further increase 2021-22 regarding children having 3 or more placement moves is what we believe to be a consequence of Covid and the difficulty of trying to place the children with

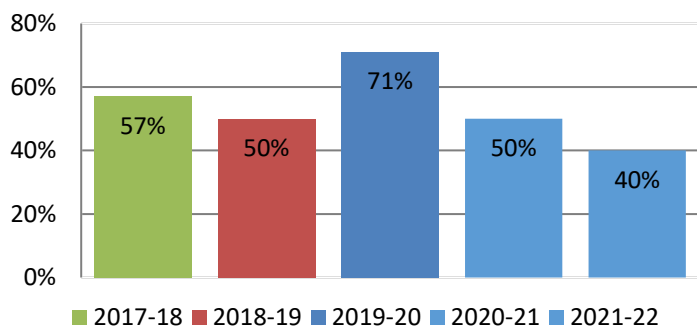


different carers when the children have complex needs and due to restrictions only being able to offer limited/online support as well as the carers having the children at home even on school days. With regards to the low percentage of children having 1 or more changes of school as a service we continue to work closely with our education colleagues and try to ensure that a school move is only ever considered when appropriate for the child i.e. moving to their local school having stabilised in placement, or where we have been unable to successfully identify a placement where it is manageable to support the child continuing to attend their school. However the low measure taking into consideration the increase in the number of Looked After Children is again illustrative of the success of the work being undertaken within our Planned Care Service.

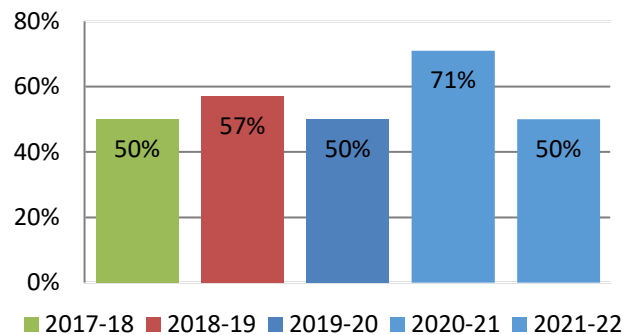
Young People Leaving Care

Leaving care is a term used to reference a group of children who are between 16 and 18 yrs. old and have previously been in care but are no longer legally “looked after” by the Local Authority. When children leave care, we still have a duty to support these people until the age of 21, or 25 if they are in full time education or have a disability.

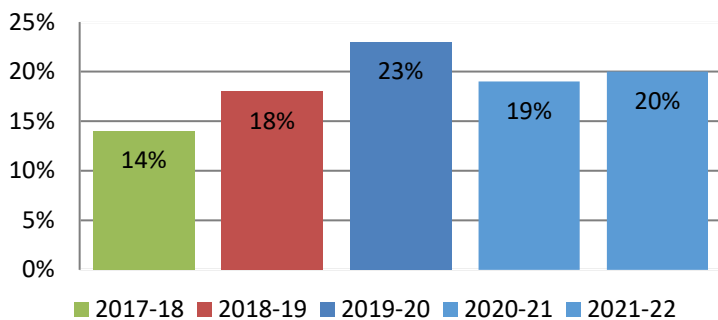
For this cohort of young people Covid has been a particularly difficult period with challenges for some with loosing employment and accommodation and increased isolation during lockdown. It is disappointing to see a drop in the percentage of young people within 12 months of becoming care leavers who are in employment education or training and a significant drop in those accessing some form of education/employment who have accessed the leaving care service for 24 months. The percentage of young people presenting as homeless in 2021-22 is also of concern. The Local Authority continue to work on their projects and strategies to address the need for appropriate accommodation for care leavers and work closely with registered social landlords and external agencies in our area to look at ways of addressing the situation. The Local Authority will continue to prioritise this issue and raise its profile accordingly. The Personal Advisers continued to support Care Leavers well during this difficult period.



The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care

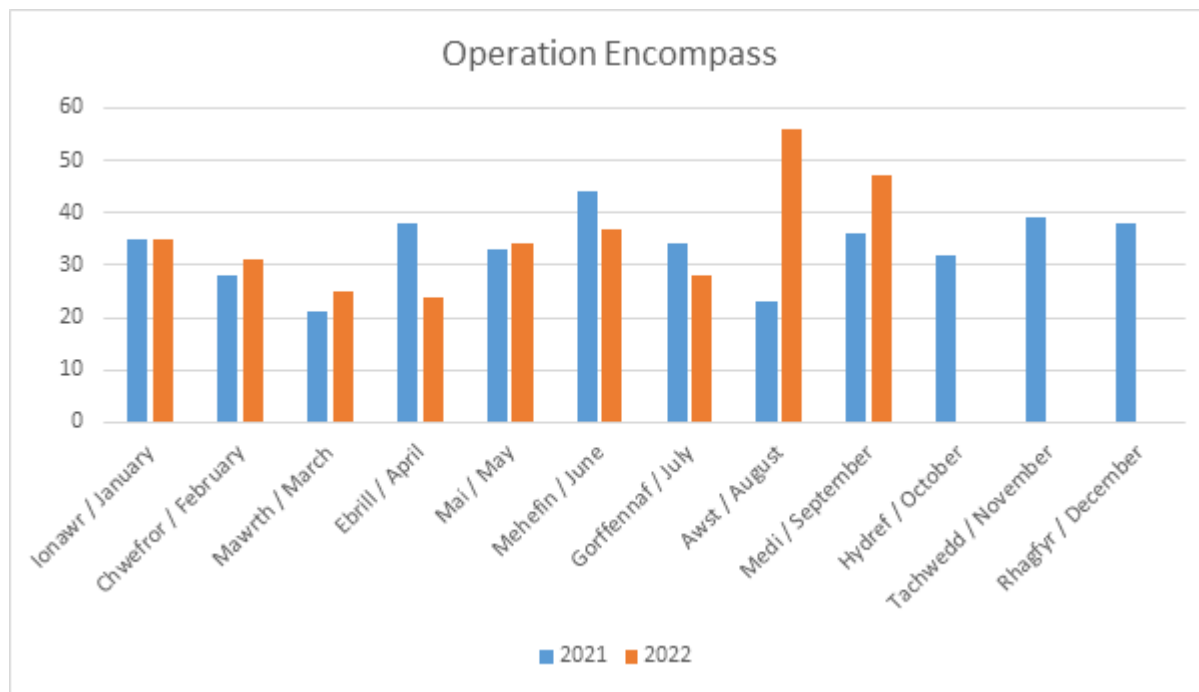


The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care



The percentage of care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year

Operation Encompass



Operational Encompass became live in Ceredigion in November 2019. It has been working consistently well since its launch, with sharing of information daily with Schools (or as notifications are received). There have been a few notifications received from time to time regarding families from neighboring authorities on the border of Ceredigion, however this information is also forwarded accordingly. Since lockdown, the sharing of information changed from telephone calls to emails, and the Information Sharing Protocol was then amended to accommodate this. It is noted however that the full email notification is not shared with schools in its entirety, each report is edited to include only the victim/alleged offender details. Children details, whether they were present, time/date and summary of the incident. Schools are fully briefed on the support services available for children who have been exposed to incidents either within their homes, or within their own relationships, these include Spectrum (Hafan Cymru) and West Wales Domestic Abuse Service. To ensure that Schools remain fully sighted on their pupil’s safety and wellbeing, the School’s Safeguarding Service continue to share notifications also throughout the School holidays, therefore is not limited to term time only. The figures within the above table reflect the number of referrals received, which remained high through much of 2021 as we continued to adjust to Covid restrictions. Summer 2022 was the first time in over 2 years that we had almost no restrictions and by the end of those holidays and into the new term of September 2022, there has been a significant increase in referrals

3. How Are People Shaping Our Services?

Ceredigion County Council, Social Care Services ordinarily engages with citizens and stakeholders through various methods. We take “call back” type feedback within Clic and Porth Gofal services. We ordinarily engage with various boards and groups, for example, Safe Stars Junior Safeguarding Board, LAC Group, Disability Forum, 50+ Forum, Mental Health Transformation Boards, where we share future and promote feedback regarding the redesign of service delivery. We also learn from CIW inspections, Welsh Audit Office inspections and Child and Adult Practice Reviews as they occur. We meet with Town and Community Councils to share our plans for future developments and to take feedback on these plans

During 2021-2022 with the impact of Covid 19 face to face and other routine engagement exercises with service users have been restricted.

Nonetheless, feedback from the public in receipt of support services has been regularly collated and considered with key groups such as Safe Stars creating a whole programme of engagement and support for children and young people online.

Summary of Examples of ensuring service user voice and control during 2021-2022.

- Roll out of person - centred practice in assessment, care planning and reviewing; use of Signs of Safety and Well-being, work on developing forms and pathways informed by practitioners and managers
- Flexible use of direct payments; in lieu of residential care and day care
- Use of technology to ensure virtual service user feedback
- Respite questionnaire to inform support during Covid 19 for disabled children and families
- Development of feedback questionnaire for those involved with adult safeguarding
- School counselling service; listening to children's views re service provision
- LAC reviews, Child Protection Conferences, Care and Support Reviews held virtually
- Use of commissioned virtual and face to face advocacy services for children and adults
- All recipients of Domiciliary care/Enablement given opportunity to stand down/reduce provision to limit risk
- Learning from outbreaks within specific areas has enabled policies and procedures to be reviewed and revised (specifically in care homes i.e., Use of PPE, safe zones, IPC etc)
- Transformation programme 1 – Connect programme roll out
- Youth Satisfaction Survey and Sessional feedback forms
- Feedback from children’s play and holiday activities
- Feedback from Ceredigion Youth Council

Learning Disability Strategy 2018-2023 and Improvement Action Plan

Ceredigion is an active participant in the Regional Lives Improvement Group (RLIP). This group ordinarily alternates bi-monthly between a business meeting and a meeting led and chaired by the Dream Team. The Dream Team is a group of service users, supported by Pembrokeshire Peoples First, who actively support the regional group, particularly with use of Integrated Care Funding.

Services for Disabled Children, Prevention and Transition were inspected by CIW in the 4th quarter of 2019-2020. The Action Plan created in response to issues raised has been implemented albeit that progress on certain aspects has been hindered by Covid 19 and adjustments made.

Progress on the Action plan

- 1.1 Ensure that children and their families can be clear about what support they can access, how and when and where.
 - Service specification and revised working agreement with Health has been implemented
 - Client strategy has been drafted setting out levels of service regarding offer of support
 - Staffing structure for the TAW has been implemented and through age team established

- 1.2 Equip and support staff to complete and record good quality assessments and care plans that meet all statutory requirements including the child’s communication needs
 - Staff have completed outcome and assessment focused training and Covid 10 risk assessment has been implemented
 - Monthly staff supervision is in place to quality assure live cases.
 - Use of 1-page profiles for children on their WCCIS record.
 - Mapping of staff’s communication skills has been completed and training needs has been identified. Some staff can use Makaton where needed

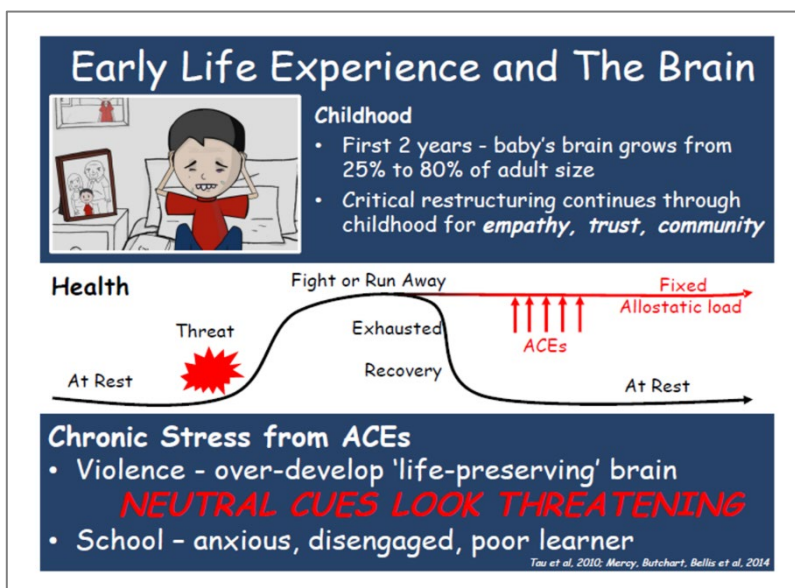
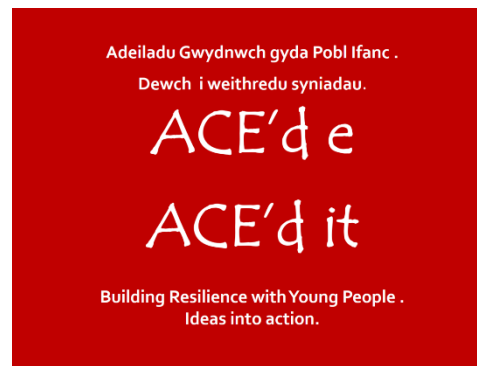
- 1.2 Equip and support staff to identify assess and provide support when required for carers in accordance with statutory requirements.
 - Staff identify carers and offer carers support needs assessment
 - Staff training re carers assessments has been completed.
 - Staff will record reason for refusal of carers assessment if this is the case.
 - The team work closely with the Through age carers and community support team to sign post carers in the right direction.

- 2.1 Establish the Disability Register in compliance with SSWBA requirements and use it to inform future service development and strategic commissioning.
 - Register is now live and on Ceredigion County Council web site for families to enter their data.
 - This will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to identify and inform future service developments and demands.

- 2.2 Improved service delivery and range of support services available for disabled children and their families in accordance with their needs.
- Multi agency reviews held with families to identify needs using virtual means due to Covid 19
 - Local complex needs panel will discuss care and support packages and joint commissioning monthly.
 - Service requests forms are completed for each new service such and Direct payments are now supported in house
 - Camu Mlaen will consider all year 9 students who might be eligible for the service and work with them and their families to ensure a smooth transition into the scheme when deemed appropriate to meeting their educational need post 18
 - DASH have been provided with the contract to offer respite weekends to some of the young people identified as in need of this provision. Respite provision has been affected by Covid 19 restrictions.
 - Ceredigion will spot purchase further respite opportunities from DASH once the contracted amount of weekends purchased has come to an end.
 - We have employed 2 project workers in the team to enable them to undertake direct work and offer further hands-on support to individuals and families according to their assessed needs.
 - Ceredigion are in talks with neighboring authority about spot purchasing respite provision from them.
- 2.3 The Local Authority and the Health Board work effectively together in the provision of support and review and develop existing commissioning arrangements for disabled children and their families.
- Service specification is implemented.
 - Regional action plan and regional children’s outcomes group has recently been established.
 - Weekly tracking meeting are held between Extended Support and health colleagues to discuss cases and identify the most suitable person to work with the young person.
- 2.4 Children and young people can receive greater support for independence and enhance outcomes through the use of assistive technology
- RIF funding has been agreed to develop the use of assistive technology
- 3.1 Develop an effective quality assurance framework, underpinned by effective managerial oversight of its core functions and processes.
- SOS template and methods are being used in staff supervision.
 - QA framework to be developed as an audit tool for managers to undertake random audit checks on cases.
 - Managers have had training on supervision skills.
 - IPC Programme of support for managers in Extended Support.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events that affect children. These could happen whilst growing up, being abused, or living in a household affected by domestic violence, substance misuse, mental illness, or criminal problems. Children who suffer ACEs are more likely to develop a range of chronic diseases and suffer with poorer mental well-being.



In the year 2020-2021 training opportunities were offered to staff to ensure that we, in Ceredigion, were able to provide earlier interventions and help our professional care for and support children, young people and their families. This was a follow-on to the 1829 frontline staff who were made Ace aware the previous year following a training needs analysis across services.

Even though COVID-19 had a huge impact on training due to restrictions

many staff were trained in ACEs to develop their understanding of the impact of trauma and the effects on children and young people. Team Teach training (positive behaviour management) was done by many staff as was the STAR programme which covers domestic abuse and respectful relationships. Drawing and Talking therapy training was provided for 13 members of staff to be able to support children, young people and adults who may be suffering from trauma or poor mental health.

Self-Harm and Suicide Awareness was provided due to the nature of referrals being sent in for support for children and young people both in schools and the community.

Other courses included ‘Creative Counselling’, Trauma Recovery Model, (TRM was developed in a response to the complex needs of children and young people with multiple adverse childhood experiences.)

During 2021-2022, new members of staff are required to attend ACEs awareness sessions when they are available through the county’s Learning and Development team. Team Teach training was delivered to a total of 326 staff within Ceredigion including 246 school-based staff and the other 80 including Support and Prevention staff and staff that have been supporting vulnerable young people and children.

A further 11 members of the Support and Prevention staff team received Trauma Recover Model training in March continuing with the county’s commitment to ensure that staff are ACE aware and can respond to the complex needs of those children and young people.

Planned training for May 2022 will be provided by Wales Restorative Approaches Partnership (WRAP) for Support and Prevention staff along with the Deputy Head Teacher of one primary and one secondary school in the county as part of a pilot scheme with a view to rolling out WRAP training in the coming year. There are 36 members of staff which will receive this training.

Ceredigion Safe Stars Children and Young People Safeguarding Group facilitated by TGP

The Junior Safeguarding Board for Ceredigion created a number of simple and healthy recipes for children and young people. They were distributed as part of the Safe Stars Health and Wellbeing Packs for children and young people living in Ceredigion, to support young people, particularly those who may be experiencing challenges at home, by equipping them with information to support their wellbeing and health. Also included within the Health and Wellbeing Packs, as well as being delivered to Ceredigion young people, is the Safe Stars calendar, which they have developed once again for 2022. The calendar includes dates of key awareness days relevant to young people, on themes including mental health and exploitation, against the backdrop of picturesque views of Ceredigion taken during the young people’s time spent getting into nature during lockdown.

As well as utilizing Zoom to keep in touch on a regular basis, the Safe Stars have also made use of social media to increase communication this year, both by sharing frequent updates on current projects on Facebook and Instagram, and by utilizing a “group chat” to stay in touch with one another.

Ceredigion Safe Stars have experienced similar challenges to the regional Board in terms of recruitment, with the departure of some existing members due to progressing onto new opportunities and moving out of county leading to a reduced membership compared to previous years. Recruitment will be a focus locally and regionally in the coming year to attempt to bring in new young people with a passion for safeguarding and promoting the voice of children and young people

See reports of activity with children and young people to promote safeguarding and well-being during 2021:

[Ceredigion Safe Stars Project Update « TGP Cymru](#)

We are also very proud that Ceredigion ‘Sêr Saff’ and Ceredigion Youth Service contributed to the Regional Junior Safeguarding Board CADW’s work in 2021-22.

National Safeguarding Week November 2021

Ceredigion’s Operational Group collaborated with the Regional Safeguarding Board Business Unit to deliver a programme of activities to support National Safeguarding Week. Events and communications during the week were centered on themes of particular significance during the pandemic, for example, domestic abuse, exploitation, suicide and self-harm and self-neglect. Several virtual seminars and workshops took place with attendance from Ceredigion officers throughout the week exploring these topics, complemented by a social media and website campaign.

Ceredigion County Council, focused on promoting awareness about the safety and wellbeing of older people at risk of online crime, scams or experiencing abuse. Using our social media outlets, we provided a wide range of easy-to-understand guidance and information relating to online safety, as well as useful tips and updates on the latest scams to look out for and information about specialist helplines.

Carer Support and Engagement

During 2021-2 as part of the transformation towards the Through Age and Wellbeing model, two small teams, the Carers Unit and Porth y Gymuned merged to become the Carers and Community Support Team.

Working in the presence of COVID, for a second year, continued to present us with challenges. We have been committed to delivering the message of the importance of the vaccination programme to the community, ensuring that unpaid carers knew when they could expect their vaccinations and boosters and that those who are vulnerable knew where, when, and how to get theirs.

One of the biggest challenges for unpaid carers is accessing long term replacement care to enable them to have a break from their caring role. Care agency staff vacancies and staff isolating due to Covid made it difficult for replacement services to be commissioned for carers. Some of the requests from commissioning were going out to tender without an agency having capacity to take on a new client. To help alleviate this, we were able to access winter pressures funding to extend the short-term replacement care service that Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers offered, from 6 weeks to 12 weeks. This allowed more time to source long term services. Towards the end of the year the Community Connectors were able to undertake doorstep visits and be involved in outdoor events. This has had a positive impact on the team and our clients, allowing us to connect within our communities and showing us that there is light at the end of the tunnel. We are looking forward to being back out, in person, across Ceredigion in 2022/23.

We have received feedback from a great many carers regarding our activities which have included the Ceredigion Carers Fund, Information provision, Welsh afternoon tea, 'Break in a Box', Young carer information, The Carers Magazine, Training and Learning sessions, Events and Activities. The feedback was used to evidence positive outcomes from the Carers Fund, shape the development of staff carer newsletters and events and inform the development of the Carer Card benefits

Young carers feature in all our work, however, due to their age, an alternative approach to the services we provide is required to ensure that their specific needs are met. This year, we

coordinated the recommissioning of the young carers service in Ceredigion. To do this, we consulted with young carers about what support they felt they needed, where they wanted it, and how and where they wanted to access it. Working with key partners within the local authority, health services, and the third sector, we designed a new service specification which successfully went out to tender in November 2021. The new service is scheduled to commence on 1 April 2022, with the old and new providers working in partnership to ensure a seamless hand over. Action for Children, who were the outgoing commissioned service, worked professionally with the new service to ensure that the young carers continued to receive the best possible service during this time. We would like to thank all the staff at Action for Children for their commitment and hard work with young carers in Ceredigion over the past few years.

The new young carer service provider is Gofalwyr Ceredigion Carers, who currently provide support for adult carers in the county. We look forward to seeing how they will develop our joint vision of a through age service over the next two years.

We have also reached out to young carers to review the outdated ‘Who cares’ young carer leaflet. Using ICF money, we asked our partners to develop a new regional information booklet. The new material will be distributed across the region as a free resource for young carers.

A major highlight of the year is that The Carers and Community Support Team worked alongside Arad Goch, Ceredigion’s Youth Service and Action for Children to support a group of young carers from Ceredigion Young Carers Service to create a short film that educates and raises awareness of what it means to be a young carer. The young carers worked with Arad Goch to create a story and script, and filmed scenes in and around Aberystwyth, before editing the footage to create a short film. The film was produced by young carers under the guidance of local theatre company, Arad Goch. The project was also supported by local drama pupils, who took part in the production as young actors.

Community Connectors

During 2021/22, 971 enquiries were logged through Clic, via email, mail, telephone, and the Ceredigion website.

468 individuals and community groups were signposted and referred to Council services, Health services and 3rd sector organisations.

The top 5 support gaps identified were;

- Transport
- Befriending
- Sitting services
- Meals at home
- Handy person

Throughout 2021/22 the team continued to keep the Covid community resources up to date, giving us the ability to easily identify gaps in service and when there was a particular need for action to be taken to fill those gaps. A surge in requests for information on accessing meals on wheels, from

clients and professionals, illustrated that people in particular areas of the county did not have access to this service. Following a mapping exercise, carried out by the team, several geographical areas were identified as a priority and we decided to contact local businesses and enterprises to ask if they would be interested in the opportunity to develop a service to meet the need of the local community.

Ceredigion Family Support and Early Help Services

Ceredigion Parenting and Family Support Team – Team Around the Family (TAF), Family Workers (previously Tim Teulu) & Penparcau Family Centre provide early help to the most vulnerable families & children to prevent problems occurring or to intervene early before they escalate. These services work with the whole family network rather than focussing on one individual. TAF work with the family to identify and address the issues by developing and strengthening their connections, relationships, and skills to build resilience and support their wellbeing.

Team Around the Family

In 2021-22 Team Around Family (TAF) completed 180 JAFF assessments, of which 14 related to children with a specific additional learning requirement or disability.

Annually, around 35% (approx.63) of the requests are re-referrals (often years later) when families are reaching a different life stage and considered TAF effective in the previous instances and request support once again.

31 of the referrals received were noted to have concerns with regards to Substance Misuse with a proportion of these also displaying other factors that would contribute to Adverse Childhood Experiences.

There have been significant improvements in the number of requests being processed within five working days which reflects the planning and changes that have been implemented in the last year. Allocation meetings are now held on a weekly basis where referrals are discussed and allocated to the appropriate worker within the meeting.

Ceredigion Team Around the Family are now part of the Parenting and Family Support wider team with the integration happening in late 2021. Stakeholder information meetings have been held to inform of these changes. A task and finish working group has also been established to look at current documentation and resources and are working their way through streamlining information with the new structure.

Family Support

Family Support is delivered by a small cohort of family support workers who assist families to make the identified changes with a focus on parenting and behaviour change.

This year our Family Support workers (non-Flying Start) received 218 referrals. Of those, only 10 were signposted to different avenues of support. 43 declined support or the invite to attend a parenting programme.

45% of the families who received intervention reported an increase in their wellbeing and 36% reported an increase in community resilience.

The team continues to adapt resources and interventions for virtual delivery, however since Covid restrictions have ended, courses are also being facilitated in person. Courses and workshops that are being delivered are, Blame It on The Brain; Family Links; One-to-one Parenting Support Stori a Sbri sessions to young parents/parents of toddlers, and ASC Programme.

In Spring 2022 staff attended SPACE Training, which is a programme designed to support parents and children who have experienced trauma. Family workers are hoping to facilitate the programme in Winter 2022.

During 2021/2022 family workers have successfully developed and facilitated an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) Programme. The programme is aimed at parents of children and young people who are in the pre-diagnosis period and on the Neuro Development Team waiting list for an ASC assessment.

The programme is proving to be successful, with many external agencies attending as guest speakers. These include Speech Therapists, Bowel and Bladder specialists and Occupational Therapists.

Family Workers continue to support families on a one-to-one basis and create a tailor-made programme of support. There are plans to hold drop-in sessions in the Family Centre for families to help with challenging behaviour, hardship, and create a safe space for them to meet other parents in similar situations.

Penparcau Family Centre

Penparcau Family Centre has not been used to its full potential due to lockdown and services being delivered virtually. However, Stori and Sbri sessions have been taking place there since Summer 2022. The Family Centre has been used for contact sessions for the LAC team. As well as one-to-one tutoring sessions.

As mentioned previously there are plans to facilitate drop-in sessions in the centre as well as facilitating the SPACE Programme in Winter 2022.

Ceredigion Support and Prevention Services

The Support and Prevention Service is made up of multi-disciplined teams, with the overall aim of providing child, youth, and family-led approaches to enable children, young people, families, and wider communities to be empowered, to achieve, to develop personally, emotionally, socially and be the best that they can be. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Signs of Safety underpin everything that we do. Our teams provide universal and focussed support that include:

- **Youth Work and Engagement;** Youth work in schools, education progression, accredited learning, and participation

School based Youth Workers engage with young people aged 11 – 18 both in universal and focussed contexts. Youth Workers strive to build and maintain meaningful relationships with all

school pupils; that include referred pupils who are deemed at risk of disengagement from mainstream education, due to one or a host of reasons.

Youth Workers form relationships based on voluntary engagement. Through participation with individuals, Youth Workers can design a tailored plan that offer support in the form of personal, social, emotional, and behavioural needs of the individual. This can be delivered both within and outside the school environment and be both targeted and universal.

- **Support and Attainment;** Primary/ secondary mentoring, transition, emotional wellbeing, nurture, and outreach

The Children and Young People’s Skills (CYP) Mentors support children and young people who may show challenging behaviour because of their social and emotional experiences. Mentors provide support for children and young people in Primary and Secondary Schools, and other education settings.

Mentors promote a holistic and strengths-based approach to better understand the deeper reasons as to why children are finding their current environment challenging in both focussed one-to-one and small group-based settings. This is to help manage their emotions, channelling their energy positively by focussing on attainment, both educationally and personally.

- **Community Youth Work and Prevention;** 16-24 support, community outreach, youth centres, focussed and universal provisions

Our Community Youth Work and Prevention team provide targeted and universal interventions with the aim of tackling and alleviating potential risk factors or underlying issues such as family, social, individual, educational, or mental and emotional health related issues, that may arise that put them at an increased risk of offending and re-offending, but also preventing them from needing further statutory intervention such as professional mental health services, further medical intervention and even housing support as an example.

Provisions range from outreach, mobile and detached activities, youth centres and clubs, and collaborative targeted programmes and projects.

- **Support Pathways;** Through-age interventions, allocations, screening, quality assurance, data and performance analysis, resource support

The Support Pathways team is the gateway for all referrals to Porth Cymorth Cynnar and its services whether they are received from Clic or triaged by Porth Gofal. The team provides direct support to each service within Porth Cymorth Cynnar to identify, allocate, monitor, and evaluate interventions or support.

The team supports the ‘step up and step down’ protocols by working with Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal to ensure timely and effective support for children/young people, adults and for families/carers.

The team also helps oversee the data and quality assurance processes of Porth Cymorth Cynnar services, ensuring that we can meet the needs of citizens as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Service snapshot 2021/22:

- ❖ 520 children and young people were **open to support**

- ❖ 74% of cases were identified as **‘vulnerable’**, 15% **‘complex’** and 10% **‘universal’**
- ❖ An average of 160 pupils received weekly support via **school-based youth worker**
- ❖ **Skills’ Mentors** supported an average of 150 pupils each week
- ❖ 15 primary-aged pupils received weekly **1:1 support** with a further 34 accessing weekly community-based **nurture programmes**
- ❖ 100 cases closed to Mentor support due to positive outcome i.e., reintegration, signposting
- ❖ 170 pupils identified as at risk of disengagement/ exclusion engaged in weekly **targeted projects** such as Pathways, Phoenix Course, Tonic Surf etc.
- ❖ 68 pupils have been **escalated** to PCC Strategic Panel for Step-up/ statutory service escalation due to complexity
- ❖ 30 vulnerable pupils at risk of statutory intervention were **monitored** weekly
- ❖ An average 75 children and young people accessed weekly **universal and extra-curricular activities** (after-school clubs, youth clubs and community-based programmes)
- ❖ 228 children and young people accessed **holiday activity programmes**
- ❖ 105 young people aged 16-18 and a further 76 aged 18-25 referred to **community youth work team** due to factors affecting their route into education, employment, and training (EET) such as substance misuse, mental health, and youth homelessness. 90 organized workshops have been delivered with 66 young people successfully **entering EET** with 48 young people reporting an **increase in self-efficacy and confidence**.
- ❖ 7 additional members of staff have joined the service. **90% retention rate**.
- ❖ **Signs of Safety** practice implemented in referrals, allocations, and monitoring processes.
- ❖ 90% trained in **Trauma Recovery Model, Team Teach level 2** and **Restorative Approaches**

Care Inspectorate Wales Activity

CIW inspectors completed a Health Assurance Inspection in Ceredigion from May 10th - May 14th 2021. They focused on two key lines of enquiry and reported their findings in line with the four themes of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014; People - Voice and Control, Prevention, Partnerships and Integration, Safety and Well-being.

Lines of Enquiry:

- How has Ceredigion supported those in need of care and support and carers during the pandemic
- How has Ceredigion prevented the need for children to come into local authority care and returned children home when safe to do so.

The Inspectors reviewed case files of adults and children and tracked in detail a selection of cases. In addition, they spoke with providers, care experienced young people, care leavers, unpaid carers, foster carers, focus groups of Practitioners, Team Managers, Corporate Leads, IRO’s and Managers for Looked After Children and Fostering Services.

From the Inspection they reported as follows;

We found that **people’s voices were heard**, their choices respected, and people routinely achieved self-identified outcomes. There was evidence in most case records of the “active offer” of Welsh language being made. Most practitioners who responded to our survey felt supported by colleagues and

managers and regarded their workload as manageable. During the Assurance Check we found staff morale to be good and most practitioners were positive about their experience of working for the local authority.

Senior leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the benefits of adopting a **preventative approach** and are able to convey the rationale for their strategic direction and ambition verbally and through strategic documentation. They have worked hard to re-design the service and developed a through age and wellbeing operating model with the focus on ensuring people receive the right help at the right time and in the right place. Prevention or delaying the development of care and support is closely aligned in Ceredigion to other local authority responsibilities including housing, leisure, and education.

In terms of **partnership and integration**, in most of the cases reviewed we saw evidence of practitioners developing professional working relationships with people built upon co-operation and shared understanding of what matters. People are supported to identify what matters to them and how they might achieve their personal well-being outcomes.

In terms of **promoting safety and well-being**, the people we spoke with told us that the local authority had maintained safe contact with them throughout the pandemic. Where needed, direct safe face-to-face contact has continued, subject to a covid risk assessment, and Public Health Guidance. We saw examples of practitioners and providers working creatively as means of delivering their professional responsibilities. The quality of assessments, care and support plans and recordings seen were varied. Some of the documentation reviewed did not always reflect the positive work being undertaken. We saw some examples where a more explicit focus on strengths would have been beneficial in providing a holistic view of the person and their individual circumstances.

Overall, CIW identified several strengths and some areas for improvement and the progress of these areas have been discussed in CIW’s performance evaluation review meetings with the Director and the Corporate Lead Officers.

Complaints and Compliments

Introduction

This report will refer specifically to all Social Services complaints and compliments received during 2021 – 2022. However, this data was included within the Council’s Annual Compliments, Complaints and Freedom of Information Report for 2021 – 2022, which was accompanied by the Annual Letter from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) relating to the same reporting period. The aforementioned documents were presented to the following committees during 2022 (provided as hyperlinks to the relevant pages on the Council’s website, should further information be required):

- [Governance and Audit Committee 27-09-22](#)
- [Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee 03-10-22](#)
- [Cabinet 01-11-22](#)
- Council – 24-11-2022 – papers not published at the time of writing

The Council fully implemented the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, and this document is the guidance that underpins the Council’s own Social Services Complaints Policy. The Policy was approved by the Council’s Cabinet committee on 17th March 2020 and sets out the requirements placed upon

staff within the Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Services, and the Council’s Complaints and FOI Team. This promotes accountability and ensures that effective arrangements are in place deal with complaints in accordance with the Council’s statutory duties, as well as ensuring the process is accessible, fair, and transparent.

Social Services Complaints Activity

Every effort will be made to resolve a complaint at the earliest available opportunity, and, in most cases, this is successful, and the matter is recorded as an ‘enquiry/concern’. In the event that the matter cannot be resolved at an early stage, or if the issues being raised are of a serious or complex nature, concerns will be addressed in accordance with the formal complaint’s procedures referred to above.

The Council operates a two-stage complaints process and the Complaints and FOI Team liaise with the relevant Corporate Managers to ensure the appropriate level of accountability is held and correct process is followed at each stage.

During 2021-2022 62 enquiries/concerns were received and the majority of these were resolved satisfactorily without needing to be progressed under the complaint’s procedures.

The data provided relates to all complaints that were addressed under Stage 1 and Stage 2 during the reporting year. Stage 2 is the final stage under the Council’s own complaints procedure; however, complainants have the right to refer their concerns to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) if they remain dissatisfied after Stage 2.

It must be noted that the information provided relates only to complaints investigated in accordance with either the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 or the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. Some complaints regarding both Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Services,

Total number of complaints received in 2021 – 2022

Service Area	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Porth Cynnal	9	12	21
Porth Gofal	1	0	1
	10	12	22

A total of 22 complaints were received in relation to Social Care Services in 2021-2022. In comparison, 24 complaints were received across Social Services in 2020-2021, which demonstrates a slight decrease in the number of complaints received during this reporting period.

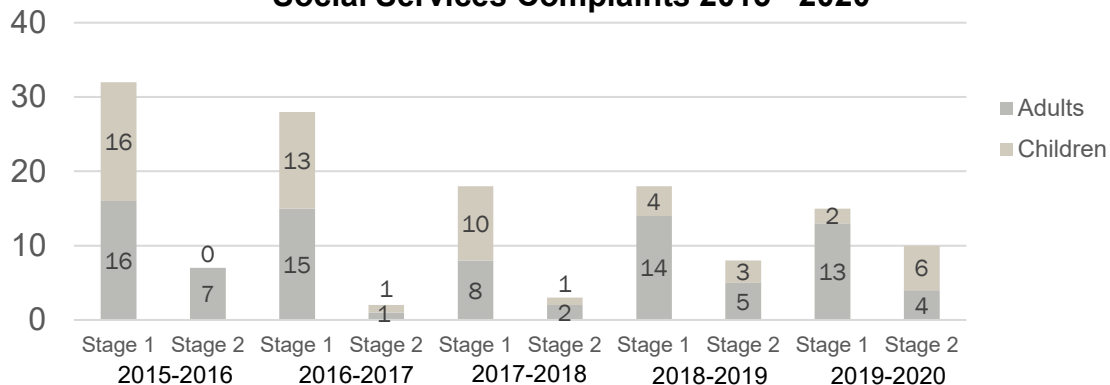
Social Services staff continue to work closely with the Complaints and FOI Team by adopting an early-resolution approach to incoming concerns and queries, which is proving to be an effective strategy. This can be demonstrated when comparing the number of enquiries/concerns against the number of cases which required consideration under the formal complaint’s procedure (i.e., 64% of all contacts received by the Complaints and FOI Team in relation to Porth Cynnal or Porth Gofal were closed without escalation).

Comparative data

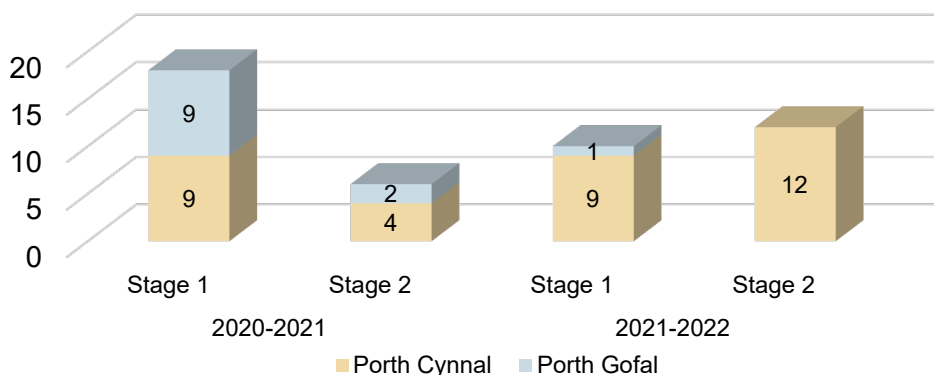
As referred to in the Introduction, the Complaints and FOI recording systems were only aligned with the service structures implemented as part of the Council’s Through-Age and Wellbeing Strategy at the start of 2020. It is therefore only possible to make a direct comparison between the performances of the Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Services, in relation to complaints activity, for the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Consequently, the data included in previous reports compiled for the Statutory Director of Social Services, is provided below. A visual representation of the complaint’s activity for the current service structures (i.e., for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022) is also provided.

Social Services Complaints 2015 - 2020



Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Complaints 2020 - 2022



Complaint Outcomes by Service

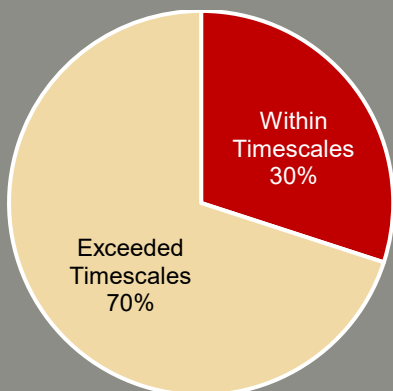
A breakdown of the number of complaints and their outcomes is provided below, in accordance with the relevant areas:

Porth Cynnal	Not Upheld	Upheld (whole or in part)	Ongoing / Suspended
Planned Care (Adults) (3)	2		1
Planned Care (Children) (3)	2		1
Safeguarding (4)	5		2
Extended Support (9)	5	4	
Total	14	4	3

Porth Gofal	Not Upheld	Upheld (whole or in part)	Ongoing / Suspended
Porth Gofal Triage (1)			1
Total			1

Stage 1 Timescales

Of the 10 complaints which were considered under Stage 1; 3 were responded to within the prescribed timescales (i.e. 15 working days) and the remaining 7 cases, exceeded these.



Stage 2 Timescales

11 out of the 12 complaints investigated under Stage 2 of the Social Services complaints procedure took longer than prescribed timescale (i.e. within 25-working-days of the complaint having been agreed by all parties).

However, all cases were investigated independently, as stipulated by the statutory guidance and each formal response was issued at the earliest possible opportunity.

Analysis

The number of complaints considered under the statutory Social Services complaints procedure during this reporting period (2021-2022) were not dissimilar to the levels of activity observed during the previous year. However, there was an increase in the number of complaints considered under Stage 2 in 2021-2022.

Response times at both stages of the complaints process also remained consistent with the previous year, though it is acknowledged that all but one complaint investigated under Stage 2 during this period were responded to outside of the stipulated timescale. This, in itself, is not of great concern because the priority must be to ensure that complaints are investigated thoroughly, and careful consideration is given to the findings and recommendations which emerge from such investigations.

Porth Cynnal received a higher number of complaints by service, but this is largely due to the nature of those services and the complexity of the cases they deal with.

Of the 22 complaints received across Social Services, 4 were upheld following investigation, which equates to 17% of all complaints received during the reporting period. This is a positive outcome when compared to the data available for 2020-2021, which concluded that 58% of all complaints were upheld (i.e., justified).

Themes and Trends

Poor communication remains a consistent factor in most complaints, and, in most cases, these can be addressed promptly at service-level to prevent unnecessary escalation of the issues being reported. This was evidently the case in respect of the 62 enquiries/concerns reported above, which far outnumbers the number of cases which subsequently progressed under the formal complaints process.

Timescales

As identified in 2020-2021, improvements need to be made about the response times at Stage 1 of the complaints process. There is a requirement at Stage 1 to offer a ‘discussion’ between the complainant and the relevant Corporate Manager. Therefore, securing the availability of managers during the pandemic was challenging, as well as attempting to then co-ordinate their availability with that of the complainant. Failing to meet prescribed timescales under these circumstances is therefore understandable. However, this will continue to be monitored in future reporting periods.

Lessons Learned

In all cases whereby a complaint is deemed to be upheld (either in its entirety or specific elements) it is crucial that recommendations are put in place to learn lessons and prevent any recurrence in the future. Examples are provided on below of some of the lessons learned from complaints received during 2021 – 2022.

- *It was agreed that the Service would put in place improvements in the process to address issues related to timely sharing by the Council of information to Service Users. In addition, information sharing was placed as an item on the relevant meeting’s agenda when professionals come together to manage concerns, which should therefore prevent any unnecessary delays in relation to these matters occurring in the future.*

- *The Council agreed to identify any training or briefing needs within the Service provision in relation to different models of care and support provision and related issues of mental capacity, deprivation of liberty, trauma informed care.*
- *All Social Workers working with children and families will be advised, in writing and via a Team Meeting and in supervision with the Team Manager, of their responsibility to share the outcomes of a Section 47 enquiry with parents, in line with the National Safeguarding Procedures for Wales. Staff will be advised that the sharing of this information must happen after the Section 47 process ends and prior to parents receiving reports that are to be presented at an Initial Child Protection Conference.*

Complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

During 2021 – 2022 the Council received nine new contacts from the office of the PSOW relating to Social Services complaints. These were categorized by the PSOW as follows:

- Adult Social Services (6)
- Children’s Social Services (3)

This represents no change in the number of complaints about Children’s Social Services received compared to 2020-2021, and an increase (by one case) regarding Adult Social Services.

None of the complaints referred to the PSOW were referred for formal investigation, though there were four cases which were resolved via Early Resolution / Voluntary Settlement:

Service & Reference	Summary of Complaint	Agreed Actions
Porth Cynnal (202106308)	Complaint regarding the experience had with the Council, and that the Council failed to escalate the complaint to a stage 2 complaint when requested.	The Council agreed that the complaint would be escalated to a stage 2 investigation. It was also agreed that an apology letter be issued to the complainant for the delay in escalating the complaint when requested.
Complaints Handling / Porth Cynnal (202100516)	The Council had failed to address a Social Services complaint in a timely manner.	The Council agreed to offer the complainant a “time and trouble” payment of £150; provide a formal apology to address the failures identified in relation to the handling of the complaint, as well as contacting the complainant to confirm that their complaint would be investigated in accordance with the most appropriate stage of the Social Services complaints procedure.
Complaints Handling / Porth Cynnal	Complaint that the Council had not provided the complainant with a response to their Social Services	The Council agreed to provide the complainant with an apology for the delay in responding to their complaint as

(202102036)	complaint which had been submitted to the Council in November 2020.	well as provide an explanation for the delay. The Council also agreed to provide a complaint response and offered £200 in recognition for the time and trouble in making their complaint.
Complaints Handling / Porth Cynnal (202106906)	The Council had failed to respond to a complaint about Social Services, and further failed to respond to their letters.	The Council agreed to contact the complainant to establish whether they would like their complaint dealt with at stage 1 or 2 of the Social Services complaints procedure. The Council also provided an apology for failing to respond to their letters.

The remaining five cases were concluded as follows:

- 4 cases were closed after initial consideration by the PSOW (e.g., they were either satisfied that there was no maladministration on the part of the Council or there would be very little achieved from the PSOW investigating the complaint).
- 1 case remained under consideration by the PSOW on 31st March 2022.

Compliments

A total of 104 compliments were received which are broken down according to service:

Service Area	Compliments received
Porth Cynnal	27
Porth Gofal	77
Total	104

Examples of the compliments received are provided below:



“Could I take this opportunity to thank you and all of the carers for the help and care that was given to mam. Very much appreciated.” – *Porth Gofal*

“Thank you very much for organising the review meeting and for your excellent handling of a very difficult situation. I am very grateful for all that you are doing to support mam” – *Porth Gofal*

“Our family appreciates the support and kindness provided by Dad’s Social Worker, in finding a suitable home for him. We are so grateful that he is nearby, and we are happy with the home.” – *Porth Cynnal*

Examples of Compliments received by Porth Cymorth Cynnar Services

“Just a quick message to thank you for the very thoughtful tea for two gift that I received through the post. Very much appreciated. ”

“We have Direct Payments for our loved one and it was hard for a few years trying to find a Personal Assistant and the right person. Now that we have got the right person, our love done really enjoys going out with them and they have a great few hour – it’s good for him get out without us having to be there with him all the time. He needs his own space too.”

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

The six quality standards used to measure the Local Authority’s performance against the wellbeing outcomes are:

1. Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
2. Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being
3. Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect, or harm
4. Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
5. Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family, and personal relationships
6. Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

What did we plan to do last year?

Our objectives are focused on a through age approach and family approach whilst also meeting the needs of adults and children in line with statutory and best practice requirements.

Covid 19 Objective

- Continue to work closely with partner agencies to reduce the risk of spread of the infection
- Effectively implement adjustment plans
- Recovery

Improvement Objective 1

To ensure that the transformation of social services is achieved during 2021/22 in partnership with other corporate services and partner agencies.

- Work in partnership on the corporate restructure plan, enabling an efficient whole-council approach
- Ensure the Statutory requirements for Social Care are clearly defined within the structure
- Ensure robust services are in place to enable citizens to achieve their personal outcomes

Improvement Objective 2

Ensure the Local Authority continues to have a strong voice in the Region

- Ensure regular committed involvement at all regional partnership events by relevant staff
- Ensure that Ceredigion takes full advantage of the resources available to us from the Regional Partnership Board
- Influence the developments through the region and nationally

Improvement Objective 3

Ensuring that the LA is effective, along with partners in securing and utilising Transformation Funds to drive better outcomes for people in Ceredigion

- Continue to enhance the regional Technology Enabled Care Project in conjunction with Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire and Hywel Dda
- Work in partnership with Hywel Dda to drive forward the Integrated working agenda including the Fast Access Community Team
- Work in conjunction with Health and 3rd Sector to develop community hubs and resource

Areas for Development:

Porth Cymorth Cynnar

- Wellbeing Centres’ - to develop facilities that enhance the core physical activity and leisure offer with meeting, consultation, and treatment spaces. The Wellbeing Centre will incorporate services that consider and improve the physical, social emotional and mental aspects of an individual’s wellbeing and contribute to them enabling individuals to achieve their full potential.
- Further develop and deliver blended universal and focussed through-age community activities and interventions to enable empowerment, resilience, and independence.
- Work collaboratively with key stakeholders and voluntary sector organisations to develop a range of services to meet the evolving needs within our communities to support and enable individuals and families in Ceredigion to cope well with the challenges and pressures that they may face.

Porth Gofal:

- Direct Payments support service developed in house
- Domiciliary Care – progression with hybrid model of service delivery with Enablement
- Implementation of the Health and Social Care Support Workers as part of Transformation programme 3
- Fostering – service development plan including recruitment and training of new foster carers
- Day Services Review – focus on community and individual resilience, prevention and empowerment strategies and respite opportunities

Porth Cynnal:

- Develop preventative and recovery approaches across Porth Cynnal Services and the TAW model and with partner agencies focusing on mental wellbeing, domestic abuse, substance misuse
- Safe Looked After Children Reduction initiatives
- Regional and local projects: develop trauma informed safe accommodation for children and local parent and baby accommodation
- Embed Signs of Safety practice

How far did we succeed in working towards those priorities?

Covid 19 Objective

Throughout 2021-2022, our response to Covid 19 has been the number one corporate priority in managing and reducing the risks and effects in relation to the Global Pandemic.

From the outset, Ceredigion County Council’s priority has been to protect its citizens and to minimise the number of the population who will contract the Covid 19 and the number of deaths from it. At the beginning, Public Health Wales projections indicated a reasonable worst-case scenario of 600 deaths in the County and this was not acceptable to us.

Ceredigion County Council identified a clear vision that every single person, business, and service could understand and agree upon to ensure Ceredigion succeeded in not only reducing predicted deaths through the first peak but more importantly for any future predicted peaks.

- Phase 1 - Preparedness – Closing down of all non-essential services
- Phase 2 - Implementation – Delivering essential key services under lockdown conditions
- Phase 3 - Adjustment and long term resilience
- Phase 4 - Recovery

We recognise that our geographical location and sparse population have provided us with distinct advantages in relation to the control of the virus. Within this context from the outset, we put in place several strategies to consolidate our advantages and actively try to suppress the virus. We thank the residents of the county for following guidance so rigidly and diligently, ensuring that the number in the County who have been infected by Covid 19 has been kept relatively low throughout the year despite some peaks. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that each death from Covid 19 has been a very sad loss and in our communities staff and public alike have been greatly affected by the impact of the Pandemic on physical and mental wellbeing as well as financially and economically.

Strategy and decision-making during the pandemic

Ceredigion CC’s’ Strategic Priorities:

- Protection of the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable, including care services for the elderly and those whose medical conditions make them particularly at risk from COVID-19.
- Protection of the education provision within schools, colleges, and universities.
- Enable the local economy to survive.

Gold Command structure and decisions

The Gold Command structure and process put in place from the outset of the Pandemic has enabled key decisions to be made and implemented in the following areas:

- Support for the most vulnerable
- Contact tracing
- PPE sufficiency and distribution

- Roll out of use of LFTs and staff testing regime
- Staff redeployment to support frontline services
- Care homes
- Risk assessment and infection control measures
- Extensive local guidance and protocols
- Financial and Hardship support
- Support and facilitation of the Mass Vaccination programme
- Silver command groups set up specifically, Residential care, Contact tracing/TTP, Economic Adjustment, Vaccination/Testing,
- Senior representation at local and regional IMT’s
- Senior representation on Covid specific local and regional forums including the Ceredigion Covid Response Group, Regional Safeguarding Covid Group, Subgroups of the RPB/PSB,

Adjustment and Recovery Planning.

The Council has a public facing road map which outlines the key milestones in relation to service changes and the phased reinstatement of services.

Recovery plans have been drafted across all service areas and include;

- Residential care homes (staff sustainability and reviewing visiting arrangements to enable outdoor visits and continue with multi-professional and clinical support via technology to support communication with professionals or safe visits from GP’s, mental health, dementia, OT/allied health professions
- Learning Disability and Older Peoples Day Services adjustments
- Respite care adjustments
- A wide range of Early Intervention/Prevention services including Organized outdoor vocational, learning and work, Employment Support Team to restart paid Work and Volunteering Opportunities, Organized and approved outdoor children/young people’s group activity, Outdoor Health Intervention Classes / Exercise Classes for Adults
- Mental Wellbeing Service
- School Counselling Service adjustment

Workforce Challenges

A redeployment programme of staff was implemented in the early stages of the pandemic to assist key services including care homes and school hubs caring for vulnerable children. There has been a continued focus on recruitment with several campaigns both internally but also supporting external providers with campaigns.

The challenges of recruiting and retaining key staff specifically Social Workers and Occupational Therapists has been significant throughout 2021 -2022, however it is acknowledged that this is a national trend and opportunities around regional working has been explored. The Council has a strategy for meeting this challenge including the following approaches:

- Increase number of Social Work traineeships
- Offering qualification opportunities and learning pathways for the current staff
- student placements
- Reviewing job roles and evaluations
- Refreshing advertising - intensive and new campaigns to join Ceredigion

- Use of agency staff where required alongside Ceredigion staff

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

We are committed to providing responsive, accessible, and inclusive support to staff throughout the Pandemic, this has included:

- Employee Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Employee Assistance Package
- Occupational Health
- Responsive approach including, wellbeing surveys/questionnaires, discussions with managers & teams, streamlined appraisal process, drop in sessions
- Organization wide activity and support including, information on intranet, Wellbeing Wednesdays, Activities, Wellbeing Webinars, Shielding staff
- Dedicated health and wellbeing webinars, regular meetings with Corporate Manager/Registered Managers,
- Individual staff support within care homes

New ways of future working

The last 24 months has meant a significant change in the way that the Council and its staff has had to work and meet the daily demand of the services it provides.

In March 2022, Ceredigion County Council published its Hybrid Working Strategy 2022 -2025 was published. The Strategy sets out the vision and associated approaches that will be taken to ensure Ceredigion County Council has a workforce with the skills and ability to be working in a way that is fit for our organization’s future, in workspaces that meet its needs and in a sustainable way.

Having responded well to the initial challenges posed by the pandemic, the focus during this year has shifted to how we can learn and build from the experience. The 'Way We Work' project was established to review the remote working practices adopted during the pandemic. The project aimed to explore the appetite for long-term change within the workforce and the extent of a shift in the wider strategic vision of where, when, and how we as an organization approach work. As part of the project a significant staff engagement exercise was undertaken during April 2021. The purpose of the exercise was to gather feedback, experiences, ideas, and future workplace requirements to support strategic decision-making.

The responses and underlying themes emerging from the staff engagement exercise, as well as national research, trends, and insights, has informed the development of our vision and our strategy towards moving to new ways of working in the long term.

Our aim is to embed a hybrid working model that gives our people greater flexibility in balancing their work and home lives. We want to build a culture where our people feel trusted and empowered, and will have greater freedom on how, where and when their work is delivered. Focus will be placed on outcomes as opposed to attendance at our offices. This level of flexibility, due to the nature of some roles, will not be achievable for all our people. There will however remain a commitment to explore how a level of flexibility can be built into roles across the organization.

To support successful implementation of our hybrid working model, 3 key workstreams have been identified:

- Workplace Design

- Digital Solutions
- Policies, Procedures and Training

Leadership and strategic direction for implementation will be provided by the New Ways of Working Project Board. The 3 workstreams will report to the project board. Each workstream will have a designated lead officer who will co-ordinate the area of work and will report to the project board on progress during 2022/23.

Financial and business recovery

The Council has enabled and empowered a range of services and initiatives via various funding streams from Welsh Government during the Pandemic. These have included the Hardship Fund that has specifically provided support for residential and front-line care services. This Fund has allowed internal and commissioned services to focus on their recovery plans. There has been grant funding for businesses and support for the reopening of the visitor economy which is very important to the general economic recovery within Ceredigion.

Work has also progressed in accordance with aims and objectives of the Council’s Tackling Hardship Strategy 2020-2022 which has a strong focus on mitigating the financial and social effect of Covid 19 on individual and community well-being. A progress report was presented to Cabinet members in November 2021.

Improvement Objective 1 – Transformation of Social Services

Through Age and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2027 and Action Plan

On October 21st, 2021, the Through Age and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2027 and Action Plan were approved by Ceredigion Councillors

The Strategy sets out the vision and associated approaches to transform how people’s health, wellbeing and safety can be supported in Ceredigion.

It aims to identify at an early stage what concerns people have and aims to prevent escalation, wherever possible, through a timely and proportionate response.

The Strategy also provides a model to deal with the root causes of concerns and includes key objectives and focused areas of need. The Strategy and Action Plan progress the initial work to restructure services in 2019 which was delayed in 2020 due to the pandemic. However, the transformation of services has now progressed well, social care and lifelong learning have integrated into three services – Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal. These services, along with Customer Contact, make up the four main areas that fall within the Through Age and Wellbeing Programme.

This Strategy is a key part of the Ceredigion County Council Corporate Strategy that illustrates the main priorities for the Council. The priorities aim to enable the delivery of services that will enhance the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being for the people of Ceredigion. Providing support for all ages and needs is a significant challenge for the Council with limited resources. The profile of society and demographics have changed considerably over the last decade in the County with a significant increase in the prevalence and impact of substance misuse, poor mental health and domestic abuse and older age groups living longer. Consequently, demand for certain services

has increased placing a greater financial pressure on those service areas. In addition, the unemployment levels coupled with the low-income levels has placed increased difficulties on the ability of people to access safe, affordable housing.

One of the key priorities within the Corporate Strategy is to enable individual and family resilience. Within this priority the Council seeks to achieve the key outcomes:

- Citizens of all ages will have an improved quality of life
- Improved support networks for families and those in need across the County
- Improved well-being and health by adopting effective interventions
- There will be well established networks of community and voluntary groups throughout the County providing strategic preventative support thus increasing community resilience and sustainable social care
- Improved choice and quality of local housing.

The Through Age and Well-being Strategy describes the journey the Council will take, alongside its partners, to transform its way of working and to achieve its vision. It provides the strategic context to drive future commissioning, operational service delivery, care management and our role in the integration of services.

The Action Plan clearly outline what is required over the next three years (and to signal what is likely in the years beyond that) to address the root causes to meet the 5 key objectives of the Strategy and, alongside our partners, rebalance the care and support that is provided within Ceredigion.

5 Key Objectives of the Strategy;

- Promote positive health and wellbeing and support people to self-support
- Strengthen families so that children can remain in their care
- Enable individuals to live independently in their own communities
- Provide proportionate approaches to managed care and support
- Protect individuals and keep them safe from abuse, harm, and neglect

Implementation Workstreams

A range of workstreams to progress the changes and implementation have been established reporting to the Through Age and Well-being Programme Board:

- Strategy Development
- Systems & Processes
- Review of SLA’s and contracts
- Signs of Safety
- HR Processes
- Finance & Procurement

Staff Information and Engagement Sessions

During July August and September 2021, several information and Question and Answer sessions were held with staff to discuss and receive feedback regarding the Through Age and Well-being

Strategy and Action Plan. This was a very valuable exercise in terms of the development of the Strategy and strengthening staff input regarding the proposed implementation actions. A version of the video along with other material was also used in partner agency and service user sessions.

Following on from the staff information sessions held over the Summer, the formal Through-age & Wellbeing Consultation on the re-design of services and roles with staff was launched on 1st of December 2021 and ended on January 31st, 2022.

Most teams across Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Porth Gofal and Porth Cynnal were included in this consultation except for Residential Care Services and Day Services. The consultation for those teams was planned to take place in January 2022 but was then postponed to a later date for further preparation. The redesign of roles and functions across the model will be completed with the conclusion of the Residential Care and Direct Services.

The Consultation provided an opportunity to ask any questions in response to the organisational redesign and to discuss the principles to be adopted across the services.

Signs of Safety

A key aspect of the Through Age & wellbeing Programme is to embed Signs of Safety Practice and work continued to develop the use of the framework as central to the. At the front door and in assessment we do this by ensuring that the information we collect from citizens directly or via other agencies is appropriately used to deliver a person-centered approach based around the fundamental questions of ‘What’s worrying you?’ and ‘What’s working well?’ As a result of these we are seeking to further develop strengths-based, outcome focused services for citizens which respond in a timely creative manner, and which always focus on what is important to the individual. Signs of Safety basic and advanced training sessions have been provided to staff during 2021-2022.

Staff Supervision and Professional Support

In September 2021, the Through Age and Well-being Supervision Policy was launched. The Policy specifies the way that all employees, agency staff, volunteers and students working in Through Age and Wellbeing should be supervised and supported in relation to their working practices. This covers a wide range of staff roles, responsibilities, and functions. The basis of the Policy is that good quality and effective supervision provides a way of supporting staff to achieve our collective vision as well as Organisational, team and individual objectives. It also supports the achievement and maintenance of high standards in service delivery for the people of Ceredigion.

The Policy adopts the Signs of Safety principles, and it guides line managers to follow a conversational ‘appreciative enquiry’ approach, including reflective questioning to enable reflective practice. Thus, promoting co-productive practice leadership as opposed to a command-and-control directional approach. It will also help to identify solutions for the individual being supported and/or the member of staff overseeing a task/activity and to involve and place people who use access our services at the heart of their practice.

Improvement Objective 2 - Partnerships

Ceredigion County Council has continued to actively engage with the West Wales Care Partnership and the Regional Partnership Board and other key partnership forums including The Mid and West

Regional Safeguarding Board and the VAWDASV Partnership Board. These provide a mechanism for driving regional improvements across social care whilst maintaining the focus on Ceredigion specific priorities and areas of need.

There are several regional fora that Ceredigion County Council support and are effectively engaged in the work Programmes. Opportunities for regional funding are maximised through regional partnerships and initiatives, including the Healthier Wales Transformation Programme and the forthcoming Regional Integrated Fund as the successor to the Integrated Care Fund.

Full participation in all regional Covid 19 planning fora has also been a major priority for us during this year.

In 2021, Ceredigion County Council carried out an extensive exercise across all services in the Pwrth to draft proposals for the use of Regional Integrated Fund and many new and innovative ideas were put forward in relation to service development for children and adults and families.

Improvement Objective 3 – Healthier Wales Transformation Programme

As part of the West Wales Care Partnership Our original submission for A Healthier West Wales programme of work included:

Improving lives through technology

- Proactive technology enabled care
- Shared digital framework

Strengthening integrated localities

- Fast tracked consistent integration
- Proactive supported self-management

Supporting change together

- Continuous citizen engagement
- Behaviour changes for good

Connecting people... kind communities

- Creating connections for all
- Building the infrastructure to deliver differently



A total of £11.89 million was provided by Welsh Government to the WWCP to support the delivery of the 3 agreed programmes highlighted below:

Programme 1: Proactive, technology-enabled care

- Proactive approach to keeping people well in communities
- Based on proven approach in Bilbao, Spain
- Evidence from Spain of significant impact on system demand and wellbeing
- Bespoke and individualised TEC
- In-depth wellbeing assessment and supported wellbeing plans
- Proactive calls using existing Delta Wellbeing platform providing built-in benefits
- Multi-agency rapid response with enhanced, local community support
- Digital inclusion project to support informal networks

Programme 3: Fast-tracked, consistent integration

- Fast Access Community Team providing 24/7, professional crisis response

- Model to be implemented in each locality, shaped to ensure that arrangements meet local needs and build on existing arrangements
- Additional programme capacity to support further integration at locality level

Programme 7: Creating connections for all

- Consistent community connectors model across West Wales creating community links and building resilience
- Active citizens – promoting and supporting volunteering
- Intergenerational buddying programme to develop IT and other skills
- West Wales is Kind programme
- Embedding Dewis and Info-engine
- Accelerated skills programme for staff providing community support

All 3 programmes were initiated in 2019/2020 with programme 1 being led regionally, programme 3 led locally and programme 7 led by the 3rd Sector and continued during 2020/21.

The positive progress of this Objective, our engagement with the West Wales Care Partnership and the adjustments made in view of Covid 19 priorities has continued throughout 2021/22 as the quarterly reports of the Regional Partnership Board demonstrate.

Programme 1:

Following a phased rollout of the programme CONNECT is now being delivered across all three Counties in the Hywel Dda region. At the end of quarter one there were 3584 active CONNECT clients across the three counties, the majority of which (1578) fall within the key target cohort of “prevent”.

Programme 3:

Ceredigion Health and Social Care colleagues presented their approach to an integrated Health and Social Care Worker to the Regional Workforce Board with a large amount of interest generated. The approach is also being considered as a way to help alleviate pressures being felt across the non-registrant public and private sector workforce within Ceredigion

Programme 7

584 people joined Ceredigion’s Connect to Kindness social media group

The Connect Platform launched the Above and Beyond Awards which offers a prize draw for registered platform with four prizes per County. A showcasing event was held during the Autumn 2021 In Ceredigion with Span Arts Ray Ceredigion Play as an opportunity to learn about the valuable work in our local communities to support intergenerational working. A 3-minute video was produced giving an opportunity to further share with the audience.

Progress on Areas for Development as set out in the previous year

Porth Cymorth Cynnar

- Wellbeing Centres’ – planning continues with the identification of Lampeter as the location for the first Well-being Centre.

- Adjustment and Recovery Plans have progressing well to ensure blended universal and focussed through-age community activities and interventions to enable empowerment, resilience, and independence.
- Close collaboration with key stakeholders and voluntary sector organisations has continued to develop a range of services to meet the evolving needs within our communities to support and enable individuals and families in Ceredigion to cope well with the challenges and pressures that they may face.

Porth Gofal:

- The Direct Payments support service is now fully operational as an inhouse service
- Domiciliary Care – progression has continued with the hybrid model of service delivery with the Enablement Service and future commissioning is being developed
- Implementation of the Health and Social Care Support Workers as part of Transformation programme 3 has continued
- The Fostering Service has successfully recruited staff and strengthened support for carers
- Day Services Review –preparation for consultation on restructure for 2022/23

Porth Cynnal:

- Preventative and recovery approaches are being developed across Porth Cynnal in conjunction with partner agencies focusing on mental wellbeing, domestic abuse, substance misuse
- Safe Looked After Children Reduction Strategy is being drafted with full participation of stakeholders
- Regional and local projects to develop trauma informed safe accommodation for looked after children and local parent and baby accommodation are progressing well
- Signs of Safety practice is being take forward with full participation in the development of recording forms and practice methods

Ceredigion Local Authority Housing Services

Under Homelessness interventions, in 2021-22, 737 cases were opened where there had been approaches due to households believing to be at risk of homelessness or presenting as homeless on the day. This represents an increase of 258 cases who approached the service. (54% increase)

Of the 737 cases opened 40% (294) were provided with advice and assistance and aided to prevent homelessness. This represents a significant increase in cases coming forward to the team, and being aided through use of Housing Support, or referred to other services, or provided with advice and guidance to sustain their housing situation.

This has been aided by the introduction of the housing support gateway, which has streamlined referral process, and enabled improved reporting for housing support outcomes. Since the introduction of the gateway, a full year has seen 2095 persons supported, with 1575 successful housing related outcomes achieved including;

Housing related support needs have been met	216
Moved into sustainable accommodation	69
Maintaining Stable Accommodation (6 mths+)	330

443 homelessness assessments were carried out under s62 of the Housing Act. This figure is similar to last year.

As a result of these assessments, 153 cases were successfully prevented and/or relieved. This figure has dropped by 63 cases. This indicates that, whilst the number of homeless duty awards is similar, the service is less able to prevent or relieve homelessness. More persons are needing temporary accommodation (increase in temporary accommodation units by 38% in the year) with 86 cases not being resolved in the 8-week prevention period and moving through to full duty.

The number of clients assisted through financial means including signposting remains steady. There remain many cases where paying off arrears or aiding person to additional benefits is not able to prevent homelessness. This is because there are many non-financial reasons for homelessness, as seen in the table below. (s66, prevention cases)

Parent, friend or other relative no longer willing or able to accommodate	20
Breakdown of relationship with partner	Violent 5 Non-violent 7
Violence or harassment (non-partner)	1
Mortgage repossession	2
Rent arrears	14
Loss of accommodation, e.g., Landlord served notice	59
Current property unaffordable	4
Current property unsuitable (e.g., overcrowding/ medical reasons)	15
Other, inc homeless in emergency, return from abroad, sleeping rough	15

The Housing Options services remain in an approach of ‘Everyone in’ following guidance from Welsh Government, which will shortly be enacted in law, effectively removing ‘priority need’. This means that there are no longer any single persons without vulnerabilities turned away at full duty stage. This has had an impact on our single persons temporary accommodation, going from 25 spaces pre-pandemic to 44 spaces currently.

For the year 2021-22 Under the adaptations service, 60 Disabled Facilities Grants, 124 Minor works adaptations, and 46 Safe, Warm and Secure Grants have been delivered. This delivery was again hampered to a certain extent due to impact of the pandemic, i.e., restriction on homes visits, etc.

Under housing register work, for the year 2021-22, 1400 Housing Register Applications were received across all 4 Registers (affordable, general, older persons, accessible)

What difference has the service made?

The focus of the objective on improved access to advice and assistance to for those seeking housing, has enabled a preventative and early intervention approach. Better joined up working between housing support and housing options services along with the introduction of the gateway referral and recording system enables us to track and monitor the level of assistance achieved. The new introduction of a landlord guarantee scheme, which will shortly be operational, will also aid early approaches and a prevention focus.

The number of assessments of homelessness has not decreased, but as can be seen by the number of approaches to the service, advice and assistance figures have gone up significantly

indicating that early advice and assistance has enabled the service to avoid homelessness increasing, despite increasing presentations.

Disabled Facilities and Safe Warm and Secure grants have assisted clients to live independently within their own homes.

A total of 338 applicants secured housing from the Housing Register. 76 (22%) allocations were made to people owed a homeless duty. This percentage remains steady.

Due to the increasing reliance on temporary accommodation coupled with the increased number of potential homeless cases from both cost of living, and Ukraine refugees, for a short period the Housing service is working with the partner RSL’s to prioritise allocations to social housing to persons with homeless duties and in temporary accommodation.

How well have we done?

Housing - Homelessness

Total prevention outcomes: 142 (this includes successful prevention, unsuccessful prevention, non-cooperation, assistance refused, withdrawn, and withdrawn due to loss of contact)

Successful prevention outcomes: 95. Therefore 68% of households threatened with homelessness were successfully prevented. (Meeting target of 65%, but slightly down on last year’s 75%)

However, 46 of the 142 were unsuccessfully resolved. 26 (18% of total) clients withdrew from the service and therefore Housing Options were unable to assist or establish an outcome. A further 20 clients (14%) went forward to the next homeless duty as unable to prevent.

Housing - Adaptations

During the year 2021-22 a safe home was provided for 297 disabled and vulnerable applicants to remain living independently leading to improved quality of life.

Energy Efficiency

During the year a total of 209 clients received either improvements to their homes through EE initiatives and/or EE advice to improve their financial position and outgoings.

15 Warm Home Boiler Grants delivered

Housing – register

1116 Housing Applications were activated on to the Housing Register enabling consideration for social housing allocations. In addition to this, amendments were made to applications and application renewals ensuring correct and up to date information for our RSL partners.

Delivery of affordable housing across all tenure

The SHG programme is part of a 3-year rolling development programme made up of several funding streams from Welsh Government.

The development programme is based on regularly updated needs analysis of the Housing Registers with the aim of delivering a mix of social and intermediate housing across Ceredigion.

What difference has the objective made?

The number of Social Rented units being delivered is likely to increase year on year over the next 3 years and so contribute to Welsh Governments 20,000 Target. Developments are being targeted to help meet the identified local need in the County. The range of affordable tenure options is also being increased to help address the different housing needs within the County.

During this year there was a total 77 Social Housing units delivered by our partner Housing Associations operating within Ceredigion.

The Authority is improving the targeting of all new social housebuilding because of the Housing Register database system (Abritas). Specialised and adapted housing such as wheelchair accessible/mobility impaired units are also being delivered to try and address the need for specific applicants/clients.

Contribute towards the development and integration of the Porth Gofal - Early Intervention and wellbeing model:

During 2021-22 saw the start of implementing the new HSG Gateway Service as a central point for submitting all requests for Housing Support, ensuring all cases would be allocated the appropriate interventions in a timely manner. This entailed devising new roles and employing into these positions. Further developments were also undertaken 2021-22 including the preparations and development of the HSG Programme Plan.

Furthermore, with the location of Housing Services within the Porth Gofal integrated, through age service model, many opportunities have been identified for building on opportunities and links across the service model from prevention, early intervention through to crisis intervention.

Ensure that the accommodation needs of residents are met

The Housing service continues to work towards ensuring that the accommodation needs of residents are being met. Throughout the year 74 inspections of licensed Houses in Multiple Occupation (private rented accommodation) were undertaken to ensure safety standards were being met, 19 cases of harassment and illegal eviction were investigated, and 204 service requests related to poor housing standards were followed up.

Note – many of the activities undertaken by the Housing Services were hampered by the changing requirements of the Pandemic, i.e., lockdowns, changes in restrictions, etc. Yet the service continued to function in challenging times and react accordingly.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

This coming year will see the continuation of several whole-system transformation projects along with continuing to deal with the challenges of the Covid 19 Pandemic and its aftermath.

With the publication and approval of The Through Age and Wellbeing Action Plan, the focus will be on aligning Service Business plans to the Strategy and the Action Plan’s 5 key objectives and 12 areas of need.

Covid 19 Objective:

- Continue to work closely with partner agencies to manage the risks and effects of Covid 19
- Continued support for effective Covid 19 vaccination take up
- Continued Recovery from Covid 19 and after math

Improvement Objective 1: -Transformation of Services

- Implementation of the Through age and Wellbeing Strategy
- Implementation of the Through age and Wellbeing Action Plan
- Implementation of the Hybrid Working Strategy
- Strengthen Staff Recruitment and Retention

Improvement Objective 2 - Partnerships

- Ensure the Local Authority has a strong voice in the Region
- Ensure regular committed involvement at all regional partnership events by relevant staff
- Ensure that Ceredigion takes full advantage of the resources available to us from the Regional Partnership Board and other sources
- Influence the developments through the region and nationally

Improvement Objective 3 - Ensuring that the LA is effective, along with partners in securing and utilising Transformation Funds to drive better outcomes for people in Ceredigion

- Continue to enhance the regional Technology Enabled Care Project in conjunction with Carmarthenshire/Pembrokeshire and Hywel Dda
- Work in partnership with Hywel Dda to drive forward the Integrated working agenda including the Fast Access Community Team
- Work in conjunction with Health and 3rd Sector to develop community hubs and resource

5. How We Do What We Do

How we have supported the professional development of the Social Care Workforce

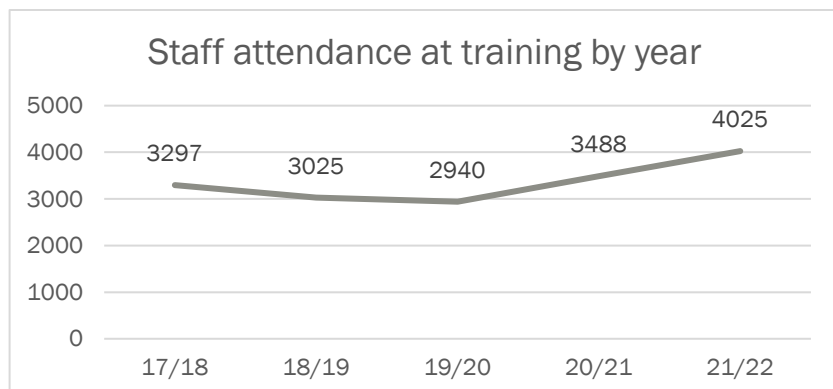
This year has again been challenging for the social care workforce, facing staff recruitment and retention challenges alongside the impact of Covid. It is, however, a testament to the commitment and professionalism of the workforce that whilst maintaining operational service delivery the numbers undertaking training has increased.

Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) grant funding is core to the provision of learning and development opportunities made available to the sector. A broad range of training which supports the induction, continuous professional development, and the regulatory qualification requirements of those involved in service delivery has been offered. In addition to the annual planned schedule of events, the SCWWDP grant has allowed us to respond to emerging and priority training needs that have arisen in year, for example sessions to support the wellbeing and mental health of the workforce and dealing with loss and bereavement.

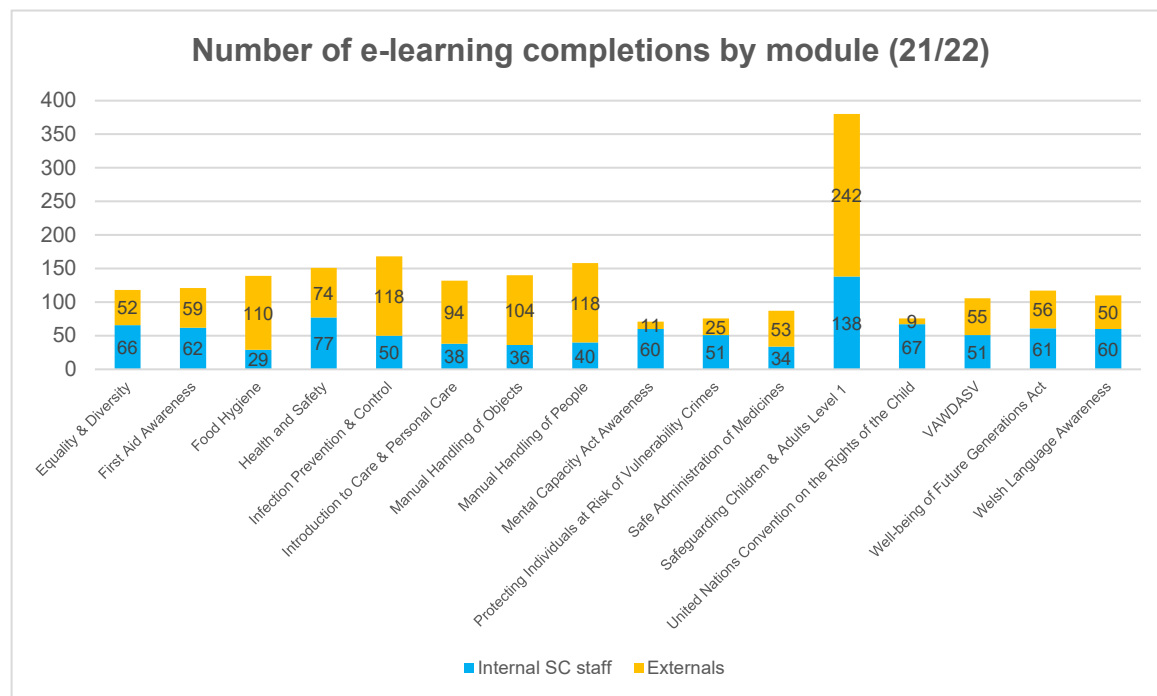
Positive working relationships have been maintained with external social care providers supported by annual engagement events that encourage dialogue around forthcoming priorities and training needs. This allows the needs of the whole sector to be taken into consideration in planning the annual training schedule.

Training delivery was adapted and moved to online delivery methods at the start of the pandemic. Online training delivery has now become embedded into practice. In recognition of the emphasis on new and different ways of working and the role of e learning plays within this, the Council has made a significant investment in a new Learning Management System. ‘Ceredigion Learning Pool’ will enable bilingual and user-friendly access to e learning modules for the whole social care workforce and will be launched in May 2022.

A total of 556 trainer facilitated events have been delivered online covering core areas of social care/social work practice and health and safety. With a total of 4025 staff attendances, this is an increase of 537 on the previous year. The graph below shows the training attendance by year and reflects staff feedback received that online training delivery is more accessible.



The number of subjects covered by E learning modules available has increased and the external social care workforce completion rate continues to grow. The graph below shows the range of subject areas available and number of completions.



Workforce succession planning has been supported through a range of initiatives including pilot delivery of on-line information sessions for those interested in careers in social care/social work, support for the We Care Wales national recruitment campaign and the provision of 16 social work student placements. 2 Trainee Social Workers qualified in October 2021 and a further 6 Trainee Social Workers have been recruited and are due to start in post in July 2022. This takes the number of Trainee Social workers within the authority up to 10. To establish a career pathway into social work and enable a pool of staff ready to progress on to qualifying training, the Certificate of Higher Education in Social Work Practice consisting of the first two modules of the social work degree is also offered annually.

To support the ‘Active Offer’ 26 social care staff members have been supported to undertake Welsh language courses. In addition, bespoke sessions were developed by the Work Welsh Tutor for beginners, intermediate and Welsh speakers, these were delivered locally and regionally aimed at improving Welsh language skills and confidence of staff undertaking Best Interests Assessments. The Welsh language awareness e learning module also continues to be promoted with 60 internal and 50 external social care staff completions in year.

Language profile of our Through Age Workforce:

Porth Cymorth Cynnar:

OVERVIEW	No of People	% of People
ALTE 0, 1 & 2	46	18.78%
ALTE 3, 4 & 5	199	81.22%
TOTAL	245	100%

GAP	No of People	% of People
GAP IN ALTE REQUIREMENTS	95	38.78%
Meets ALTE Requirements	150	61.22%
TOTAL	245	100%

PERSON - SPEAKING & LISTENING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	4	16	26	33	59	107	245
% of People	1.63%	6.53%	10.61%	13.47%	24.08%	43.67%	100.00%
PERSON - WRITING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	10	22	31	35	67	80	245
% of People	4.08%	8.98%	12.65%	14.29%	27.35%	32.65%	100.00%
PERSON - READING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	9	20	28	36	59	93	255
% of People	3.67%	8.16%	11.43%	14.69%	24.08%	37.96%	100.00%

Porth Cynnal:

OVERVIEW	No of People	% of People
ALTE 0, 1 & 2	62	50.00%
ALTE 3, 4 & 5	62	50.00%
TOTAL	124	100.00%

GAP	No of People	% of People
GAP IN ALTE REQUIREMENTS	61	49.19%
Meets ALTE Requirement	63	50.81%
TOTAL	124	100.00%

PERSON - SPEAKING & LISTENING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	3	34	25	16	12	34	124
% of People	2.42%	27.42%	20.16%	12.90%	9.68%	27.42%	100.00%
PERSON - WRITING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	13	35	21	12	14	29	124
% of People	10.48%	28.23%	16.94%	9.68%	11.29%	23.39%	100.00%
PERSON - READING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	11	34	23	8	19	29	124
% of People	8.87%	27.42%	18.55%	6.45%	15.32%	23.39%	100.00%

Porth Gofal:

OVERVIEW	No of People	% of People
ALTE 0, 1 & 2	167	47.99%
ALTE 3, 4 & 5	181	52.01%
TOTAL	348	100.00%

GAP	No of People	% of People
GAP IN ALTE REQUIREMENTS	184	52.87%
Meets ALTE Requirement	164	47.13%
TOTAL	348	100.00%

PERSON - SPEAKING & LISTENING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	31	74	62	70	33	78	348
% of People	8.91%	21.26%	17.82%	20.11%	9.48%	22.41%	100.00%
PERSON - WRITING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	67	74	73	53	24	57	348
% of People	19.25%	21.26%	20.98%	15.23%	6.90%	16.38%	100.00%
PERSON - READING	0	1	2	3	4	5	
No of People	59	66	73	44	40	66	348
% of People	16.95%	18.97%	20.98%	12.64%	11.49%	18.97%	100.00%

Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

The Council’s financial settlement for 2021/22 was a poor one, with overall WG funding of £109.7m being only a 2.0% increase on the previous year, which was the lowest increase of all 22 Local Authorities in Wales, compared with an average of 3.8%. This led to savings of £3.4m needing to be found across the Council of which £2.1m was set as a Corporate target and £1.3m as Service targets.

The Council has also now gone through a process to ensure its Budgets are fully aligned to the new Through Age and Wellbeing operating model, which saw Early Intervention and Wellbeing related services become far more integrated alongside the more traditional Social Care services. As a result, the Council’s new ‘Pyrth’ operating model consisting of Porth Gofal, Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar is now fully reflected in both Budget structure and Financial reporting, with a combined 2021/22 Original Budget of £38.6m – which is 25% of the Council’s 2021/22 Original budget (£154.7m).

The Council’s 2021/22 final performance was an overall underspend of £668k and the Council’s overall financial position remains positive and resilient. The Pyrth services out-turned at a negligible overspend of £13k. However, the position was heavily masked by one off Welsh Government and Regional grant funding and ongoing financial challenges were still prevalent in particular in the areas of Looked After Children and Independent Sector Placement costs, offset partially by temporary savings in the areas of Domiciliary Care, Day Services and Housing. There was also a growing recruitment challenge starting to affect more teams and leading to a higher than average level of vacancies which was financially beneficial but operationally challenging.

As a result of the Council’s overall positive outturn position, additional funding was set aside at year end as part of the clear financial commitment and investment being put in place to deliver the Council’s Corporate Priorities. In the case of ‘Enabling Individual & Family Resilience’ £1.0m was set aside, with a further £1.0m being set aside to manage the volatility of out of county Placement costs.

2021/22 can’t be concluded without referencing COVID19, The Social Care sector has been at the forefront of the pandemic with the impact being felt both by the Local Authority and the wide range of Private Providers whom services are commissioned from. Through the Welsh Government Hardship Fund, significant additional funding was made available to the Social Care sector. There was also additional funding made available in the form of the Welsh Government Social Care Recovery Fund (£1.388m) and the Welsh Government Social Care Pressures funding (£1.145m). All of these funding streams were critical during challenging times for both internal and externally commissioned Social Care services.

Looking forward to 2022/23 and beyond, the financial challenge facing the Pyrth services remains significant both in terms of cost pressures and the ageing population dynamic. In the short term there are the national policy decisions around an increase in the Employers National Insurance rate by 1.25% and delivering the £9.90 Real Living Wage for Registered Care Workers. The full range of indicative cost pressures being faced by the Pyrths are over £7m, which equates to an inflation rate of c18% against the £38.6m 21/22 budget. Factors within these cost pressures include the national policy decision on the Real Living Wage for Registered Care Workers as well as general Payaward challenges, a new Pyrth Services staffing structure, a drive to reduce the Dom Care

waiting list, Direct Payments, a challenging Fee Setting Process with in County Care Homes and the increasing costs associated with Looked after Children.

In terms of Capital investment, there is a variety of investment going into Pwrth services whether that be the repurposing Leisure facilities as Wellbeing Centres, much needed investment in the Local Authority Care Home infrastructure through to new initiatives being progressed in a variety of areas from a new in County Group Home provision for Children, the Camu Mlaen facility and a new in county Learning Disability setting.

Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

On 25th March 2020, the Council Leader and Deputy Leader granted temporary delegated powers to the Council’s Chief Executive and Leadership Group to make decisions relating to the Council’s COVID-19 response. The decision was made in accordance with the Council’s Constitution. Supporting Gold Command are 5 Silver Command Groups, which report weekly to Gold Command.

Gold Command, which is made up of the Council’s Senior Management Team has continued to regularly meet this year to manage the Council’s response to COVID-19. The frequency of meetings has increased or reduced in accordance with risk and alert levels.

The record of Gold Command’s decisions and actions can be found on the Council website.

Healthier Communities Scrutiny Committee

The Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal Specialist Services regularly attends Committee meetings to present the quarterly Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Reports which includes national and local standards, and targets used to measure outcomes for looked after children and care leavers. The Independent Reviewing Officer has regard as to whether the child/young person’s human rights being breached in any way and, if so, considers a referral to CAF/CASS Cymru. This action was not required at any of the review meetings in the period. These reports are considered within Multi Agency LAC Quality Assurance Meetings which meet on a quarterly basis; these meetings provide an opportunity to identify and act upon performance and other issues in relation to this area of work. These reports are also circulated and reviewed by Local Authority’s Corporate Parenting Group which is Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children Services and Culture which take place on a quarterly basis.

On September 17th, 2021, The Corporate Director delivered a ppt presentation and video to the Committee on the Through Age & Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2027 and Action Plan. Members of the Learning Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee were also invited to attend the meeting. Following questions by the Members of the Committee it was agreed to recommend the Through Age and Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2027 and Action Plan for Cabinet approval.

At the same meeting, the Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Cynnal and Statutory Director of Social Services informed the Committee that a letter had been received from Care Inspectorate Wales (‘CIW’) on 2nd July 2021 following the Health Assurance Check carried out during May 2021. The summary of findings and priorities for improvement were outlined to the Committee. Following discussion, Members agreed to note the contents of the letter and praised all Social Services staff for their hard work and commitment to their roles prior to and during the pandemic. Members wished to note that staff and the service are under increased pressure and are doing the best they can having to work within the current service pressures

On September 22nd, 2021, the Corporate Manager, Porth Cymorth Cynnar presented a report to the Committee, which gave an update on the recent developments within the service. The Committee were informed Lampeter Leisure Centre will be the location of the Council’s first Wellbeing Centre providing an enhanced range of Through Age Services to the residents of Lampeter and mid county. Following discussion about the future use of the sports facilities by local

clubs and other aspects regarding funding and structure and purpose, Members agreed that the Committee respect that the decision regarding developing the Wellbeing Centres has been made by Cabinet.

On 6th October 2021, consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Gofal updating the Committee regarding recruitment of Welsh Speaking Foster Carers. It was reported that currently Ceredigion County Council had 31 registered Foster Families. There were also 16 Kinship carers who had been identified and progressed through the same processes as mainstream Foster Carers and registered to provide care and support for specific Looked after child/ren as outlined in their individual registration. Ceredigion’s Kinship carers were located across the UK. Areas of further development for the service was outlined: work with National and Regional recruitment campaigns that would provide a range of specifically targeted opportunities utilising National resources including media. This would be enhanced by a local County Engagement and Communication plan. In addition, to provide Ceredigion Foster Carers with opportunities to improve their Welsh language skills through accessing training. To develop an annual social and integration plan maximising on the heritage and culture of Ceredigion providing the Foster Carers with the knowledge and access to the wealth of local heritage, natural environments, and cultural activities available locally. The service will be working in conjunction with Porth Cymorth Cynnar, Education and 3rd sector organisations to enhance and celebrate the wealth of local provision available to Ceredigion Foster Carers. It was agreed to note the report for information that a progress report on the Fostering service be presented at a future meeting and to thank the service for all their work within the Fostering Service.

At the same meeting, consideration was also given to the Report of the Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Gofal on the Domiciliary Care Provision in Ceredigion. It was reported that the provision had over a number of years continued to be met through the Commissioning Framework for Procurement for the provision of care to individual service users. All providers in Ceredigion were registered to the Framework having passed through a series of Procurement requirements, were then able to contract for services with Ceredigion County Council.

It was explained that once a Social Worker had identified eligible care needs following a Social Services and Wellbeing Act Assessment, a service request was made. Once confirmed the notice was placed on the E Tender Procurement Portal on Sell2Wales. The providers who were registered to deliver care within Ceredigion were then able to look at the packages of care that were required in the community and submit offers to deliver that care. These offers were made to the family and once accepted care would be arranged to commence. If a family refuse the offer (for example if care times do not meet their personal preference and a compromise was not possible), then the care request would remain on procurement pending an alternative offer. The care needs for a care and support package for highly complex care needs may require 2 care staff up to 4 times a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, and others care needs would also range throughout the spectrum of needs through to lower-level interventions once or twice a week to assist with bathing/showering as an example. Care and Support at home had a focus on delivering skills to provide personal care and wellbeing needs. Throughout the Covid 19 pandemic the Domiciliary Care Providers had worked tirelessly to sustain the care and support needs of our communities. Their staff continued to deliver to those vulnerable individuals in the face of increased risks to themselves and their families, in maintaining close contact care and support and their efforts have been and continue to be recognised as exceptional in unprecedented times.

Following a lengthy discussion, a Committee Member put forward a recommendation

to Cabinet which was agreed by a majority vote to recommend to Cabinet that they investigate the possibility of making use of Council reserve funding to provide an innovative funding package to support much needed recruitment in the Domiciliary Care Provider Sector and to support an introduction of a Bonus Referral Scheme used in a Residential Care home to encourage recruitment; and to thank all involved in providing the Domiciliary Care service.

At the same meeting, Members received a presentation from the Corporate Manager for Substance Misuse about the implementation of the Welsh Government’s Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-2022 (Revised in Response to Covid 19) in Ceredigion and data on Substance Misuse Service Cases in the County along with Drug Related Deaths and Non-Fatal Overdoses. The multi-agency responses were outlined from the Police in tackling supply, Barod and other 3rd sector service providers service, and Hywel Dda Health Board and Ceredigion local authority team.

On October 20th, 2021, The Cabinet Member and Team Manager – Through Age Carers and Community Support reported the achievements of the Ceredigion Carers Unit and progress against their agreed targets and objectives during the year 2020-2021. It was stated that Ceredigion County Council remain committed to providing the best possible outcomes-focused service to enhance the lives of Carers, and to continuously improve support, services, and recognition of Carers in Ceredigion. The Committee agreed to note the report and praised the work of the Unit.

The Cabinet Member and ‘Team Manager – Through Age Carers and Community Support’ also presented the report that had been produced by the West Wales Carers development Group for Welsh Government to outline the progress that has been delivered to meet the Welsh Government Carer priorities by the West Wales Care Partnership Regional Carers Development Group (WWCDG).

On December 16th 2021, the Director of Social Services’ report for 2019-2021 was presented to members by the Cabinet member and the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Gofal. It was noted that due to the Covid 19 Outbreak in March 2020, Welsh Government extended the time frame for the completion of the report due to the need for officers to focus on the delivery of essential services during the Pandemic. There was also a reduced requirement for Councils to provide performance information which is reflected in the report. The report describes how the Social Services Department in Ceredigion has performed during the year (2019 – 2020) in context of major changes in the operating environment. The report also sets out the priorities for 2020 -2021 considering that the pandemic was still a major influence on service delivery. The Committee agreed to note the report.

At the same meeting, an update on the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care was provided to the Committee. The focus of the Joint Committee’s business in their October meeting was to discuss the on-going work undertaken on the priorities and delivery plan for 2021/22 and the organizational Annual / COVID-19 Recovery plans.

Overview and Scrutiny Coordinating Committee

The role of the Co-ordinating Committee is to oversee all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees Forward Work Programmes to ensure that they are relevant and reflect the corporate priorities and focus on key areas.

The CYSUR Local Operational Group Safeguarding Report quarterly reports are presented by the Corporate Lead Officer for Porth Cynnal and the safeguarding Corporate Manager and are considered by the Committee. The reports provide management information on action taken under the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures. The Reports include information provided by other agencies in relation to safeguarding the welfare of children in Ceredigion. Management information is discussed by members of the CYSUR (Ceredigion) Local Operations Group to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding children’s arrangements in Ceredigion and the outcomes achieved. The multi-agency meetings provide an opportunity to identify and act upon any performance and other issues within this area of work. Performance information is also provided to the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board, which is also an opportunity to analyse performance, trends and issues across the Region. The Adult Safeguarding Service quarterly reports are considered by the Committee. The reports highlight activity and performance of the Adult Safeguarding activity in different quarters and previous years as well as noting key achievements and work undertaken during the year. The report also highlights key areas of work and improvement during this financial year.

The Committee has also considered in its meetings each of the regular Reports on Covid-19 Gold Command Decision log.

The West Wales Care Partnership

Section 14A of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to produce Area Plans setting out the range and level of services that will be provided in their area in response to regional Population Assessments. These Plans must be produced every 5 years and initial plans must be published by 1 April 2019.



The West Wales Area Plan for 2019-23, ‘Delivering Change Together’, has been agreed by the Regional Partnership Board and endorsed by Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire County Councils and Hywel Dda University Health Board. It includes a series of strategic commitments which the Partnership will take forward over the next five years to support the transformation and integration of care and support in the Region.

The Plan is available [here](#). It is also available via the new [West Wales Data Portal](#), which has been developed in partnership with Data Unit Cymru. This provides access to a wide range of population and service data for the region and allows our Plan to be updated regularly to reflect local and national developments and report on progress against the commitments within our Plan.

In February 2022, The West Wales Care Partnership published the first regional Market Stability Report (MSR) for West Wales. The purpose of the report is to assess the market for services for individuals requiring care and support and their carers, inform action and ultimately to improve outcomes for people. The MSR was commissioned by the West Wales Care Partnership (WWCP) which brings together partners from local government, the NHS, third and independent sectors with users and carers with the aim of transforming care and support services in the region. The legal duty to prepare a MSR was introduced by the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 in recognition that the way social care services are provided has changed dramatically over recent decades. The assessment comprises two inter-linked assessments: the sufficiency of care and support services; and the stability of the market for regulated services. All population groups and all services regulated by Care Inspectorate Wales. The findings and the analysis in the report will help inform the development of services in Ceredigion and across the region.

Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board:

CYSUR is the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Children Board.

CYSUR is an acronym for Child and Youth Safeguarding: Unifying the Region and is also the Welsh word for reassurance.

CYSUR is an amalgamation of the former Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Powys.

CWMPAS is the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Adults Board.

CWMPAS is an acronym for Collaborative Working and Maintaining Partnership in Adult Safeguarding and is also the Welsh word for scope or remit.

The CWMPAS remit also stretches across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, and Powys


The regional arrangements were established to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

During 2021-2022, The Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board continued to operate in accordance with its statutory obligations. Ceredigion County Council officers participated fully in the Board’s activities both locally and regionally. Developing creative solutions to some of the significant workforce challenges the social care and the public sector workforce is experiencing at a national level has been another key area of the Boards’ work this year, as well as the implementation of key multi-agency policies and protocols which include the High-Risk Behaviours (Including Self-Neglect and Hoarding) Policy and Procedure. The success of events and activities delivered as part of National Safeguarding Week in November 2021, both from an engagement and feedback perspective, is just one example of how our creative use of digital and virtual platforms can be used successfully to reach large multi-agency audiences as part of our COVID recovery journey.

The Board’s collaborative response to the continuing challenges, alongside our successes and achievements, have continued to demonstrate the paramount importance of the Regional Safeguarding Boards and their work in the safeguarding of children and adults at risk.

The COVID-19 Operational Group was a temporary bespoke group established in March 2020 to ensure an efficient and consistent response to the COVID-19 pandemic across safeguarding services in Mid and West Wales. The group, made up of senior strategic and operational multi-agency partners across the region. It was disbanded in the summer of 2021 as it was considered all the necessary systems and structures were in place to manage the effects on services and practice of the pandemic. This work includes the continued use and implementation of regional policies and frameworks, including the COVID-19 Regional Escalation Process and Risk Management Policy for Care and Nursing Homes, and the COVID-19 Threshold Documents developed to support safe decision making. As previously referenced,

6. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Title	Location
Mid and West Wales Safeguarding Board	_media_hq2fzckn_maww-safeguarding-board-annual-report-2021-22 (8).pdf
Ceredigion CC Carers Unit Annual Report 2021-2022	 ADDED - Carer's Annual Report 2021-22
West Wales Regional Partnership Board Regional Carers Strategy	West Wales Carers Strategy 2020-2025 – West Wales Care Partnership (wwcp.org.uk)
West Wales Regional Partnership Market Stability Report February 2022	WWCP-MSR-Final-Feb-2022.pdf
West Wales Area Plan for 2019-23, ‘Delivering Change Together’	http://www.wwcp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/West-Wales-Area-Plan-English-Final-Version-29-03-18.pdf
Gold Command Decision Making	Governance Structure for decision making - Ceredigion County Council
Through Age and Well-being Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2027	PowerPoint Presentation (ceredigion.gov.uk) 20211001-taw-strategy-action-plan-final-approved.pdf (ceredigion.gov.uk)

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	2 May 2023
LOCATION:	Hybrid
TITLE:	Feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Statutory Social Services Directors Report 2020/2021 & 2021/2022
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To provide feedback from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 th April 2023

BACKGROUND:

The Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Statutory Social Services Directors Report 2020/2021 & 2021/2022.

The duty to compile the Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services requirement is defined in Part 8 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 under the 'Code of Practice on the Role of Directors of Social Services'.

The completion of the reports had been delayed during the Covid-19 crisis.

There will be no reason for delay in producing and publishing the report for the current year.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The reports have now been compiled and are ready for approval.

Following consideration, Members agreed to recommend that Council:

- Receive the reports as information only.

Members thanked Officers for their hard work and commitment during what had been a difficult time.

Councillor Caryl Roberts
Chairman of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	2 May 2023
Title:	Porth Cynnal Specialist Services (Children & Adults) Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report Qtr. 3 2022/23
Purpose of the report:	To monitor the progress of Looked After Children through Independent Reviewing Officers scrutiny of their plans and placements during the third quarter of 2022/2023
For:	Information
Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:	Councillor Alun Williams, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Through Age and Wellbeing

This report represents the monitoring and quality assurance of Looked After Children who were reviewed during the third quarter of 2022/23.

This information contributes to Members fulfilling their roles as Corporate Parents.

The information is based on the monitoring forms completed by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) following each Looked After Children Statutory Review (LAC Review) and is informed by other performance information held by Children Services.

The report includes National and Local standards and targets used to measure outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC) at the time of their statutory review and includes Welsh Government Performance Indicators (PI's) and Local Performance Targets.

On the basis of the information available and the views expressed during the LAC Review Meeting, the IRO makes a professional judgement about the effectiveness of a child/young person's Care Plan in meeting their needs and may recommend changes to the Plan.

During the Review Meeting the IRO considers whether the child/young person who is being reviewed requires assistance to identify relevant other people to obtain legal advice/take proceedings on their behalf. This action was deemed necessary for 1 young person by the IRO in the period

In addition, the IRO has regard as to whether the child/young person's human rights are being breached in any way and, if so, might make a referral to CAFCASS. This action was not required at any review.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:

- At the end of quarter 3, there were 122 children being looked after compared to 112 at the end of Q2.
- 116 children were reviewed in this quarter compared to 63 in the previous quarter. The large number of reviews completed in this quarter was due to the commencement of the Innovate Team in the county. LAC reviews that had been due were postponed to a time in Quarter 3 where there was more capacity with Innovate starting and the children's cases were re-allocated to new social workers who could participate in the review process. 85.3% of children were reviewed in the statutory timescale compared to 88.9% in Quarter 2.
- 8 children left care in this quarter compared to 6 in Quarter 2. 6 children had their Care Orders revoked, 6 children returned home to family, 1 child went on to a When I'm Ready placement and 1 child went to supported lodgings or independent living or in to a shared lives placement.
- The placement provision for the children reviewed during this Quarter were 13 in Local Authority foster care, 24 in kinship carer placements (19 in county, 5 out of county), 22 were in Independent Foster Agency placements (7 in county, 15 out of county), 15 children were placed with parents (12 in county, 3 out of county) and 12 were placed in residential care provision outside of the county.
- 74 children were being cared for under the legal status of a Full Care Order, 18 were under an Interim Care Order, 4 under a placement order and 20 under Section 76.
- Of the children reviewed in this quarter, 83.6% of children received a statutory visit. This was compared to 93.7% in Quarter 2.
- 42.9% of the care and support plans were recorded as being in place at the first review. The low percentage this quarter was due to staffing difficulties within the Planned Care Team which prevented the plans being completed on time.
- There were only 16.7% of children reviewed in this quarter who had a Permanency Plan in place that had been agreed by the second review. This compared to 57.2% in the previous quarter.
- Length of time in Care for Ceredigion children who are being looked after that were reviewed in Quarter 3 were 27 under 6 months, 9 between 6 – 12months, 19 between 1 – 2 years, and 61 over 2 years.
- For children reviewed and their second or subsequent reviews, permanency plans that were in place were, Long Term Foster Care for 37 children, kinship care for 17 children, twin tracking for 15 children, placement with parent for 15 children, residential care for 8 children, adoption for 5 children, independent living for 4 children and rehabilitation back to parents for 1 child.
- The percentage of children (of sufficient understanding) who understand their reason for being looked after were 95.3%
- The percentage of children of sufficient understanding who were involved in or consulted about their review, was 100%
- The percentage of children who were made aware of their right for an advocacy service was 92.5%
- Number and percentage of Looked After Children of school age who had a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school during this quarter is 95.5%
- Number and percentage of Parents consulted by the Social Workers before the review or who attended the review was 100%.

- 17 Pathway Plans were held in this quarter, compared to 33 in Quarter 2. (70.6%) Pathway Plan Reviews were held within timescales.
- The percentage of Young Persons with allocated Personal Advisor / Social Worker was 100% during this Quarter.
- The Percentage of Young People Consulted for their Review Meeting during this Quarter was 82.4%

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If, not, please state why

Summary: This report is provided on an ongoing basis and demonstrates the continuing work that is undertaken with Looked after Children in Ceredigion.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:	Long term:	Balancing short term need with long term planning for the future
	Integration:	Positively impacting on people, economy, environment and culture and trying to benefit all three
	Collaboration:	Working together with other partners to deliver
	Involvement:	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views; stakeholder engagement and consultation
	Prevention:	Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse

Recommendation(s): **Members to note the contents of the report**

Reasons for decision: To ensure that Ceredigion Local Authority and its officers and safeguarding partners are effectively discharging their statutory duties

Overview and Scrutiny: Healthier Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Policy Framework: Corporate Strategy

Corporate Priorities Enabling individual and family resilience

Finance and Procurement implications: Within core budget

Legal implications None

Staffing implications None

Property / asset implications None

Risk(s): The report reflects a risk of harm to children and how they are safeguarded.

Statutory Powers: Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Social Services Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Background Papers: Internal documents only that are held by Specialist Services

Appendices: Appendix A- Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report Quarter 3 2022/23

Corporate Lead Officer: Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal

Reporting Officer: Elizabeth Upcott, Corporate Manager: Safeguarding

Date: 9 March 2023

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council
Safeguarding Service

Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Report

Quarter 3: 1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022



...yn gofalu i wneud gwahaniaeth
...taking care to make a difference

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

This report provides information collated by the Quality Assurance and Independent Reviewing Service in order to monitor performance and quality assure services to looked after children, care leavers, children in residential placements and those children who receive respite care and short breaks. The information is based on the monitoring forms completed by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) following each review meeting within this quarter along with other performance information held by the Children and Families Service.

BENCHMARKING

This report includes national and local measures and targets used to measure outcomes for looked after children and care leavers at the time of their review meeting.

On the basis of the information available and the views expressed during the review meeting, the IRO makes a professional judgement about the effectiveness of a child/young person's care plan in meeting their needs and the IRO will highlight to managers any poor practice.

During the review meeting the IRO considers whether the child/young person requires assistance to identify relevant other people to obtain legal advice/take proceedings on their behalf. This action was deemed necessary for 1 child/young person in the period.

In addition, the IRO has regard as to whether the child/young person's human rights are being breached in any way and, if so, might make a referral to CAF/CASS Cymru. This action was not required at any of the review meetings in the period.

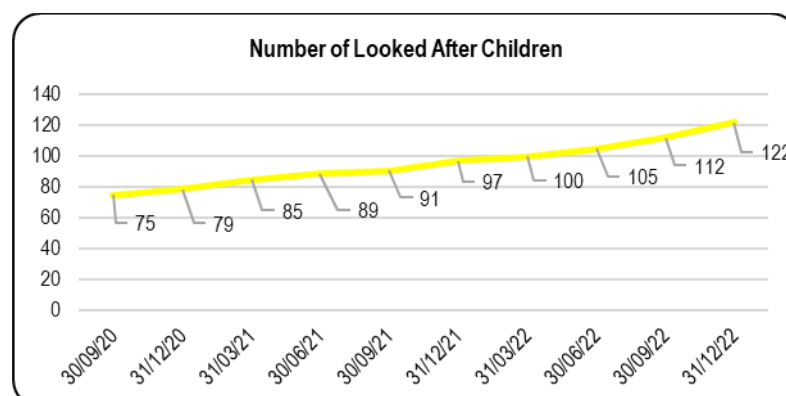
For any query or comment contact:

Elizabeth Upcott
Safeguarding Service
Penmorfa,
Aberaeron
SA46 0PA

SECTION TWO CARE PLANNING

1. **Headline Figures for Q3:**

The following table and chart provide the total number of Looked After Children data at the end of each quarter commencing with the most recent quarter.	
31 December 2022	122
30 September 2022	112
30 June 2022	105
31 March 2022	100
31 December 2021	97
30 September 2021	91
30 June 2021	89
31 March 2021	85
31 December 2020	79
30 September 2020	75
30 June 2020	78



2. **Number and percentage of Looked After Children Reviews undertaken within the statutory time requirement.**

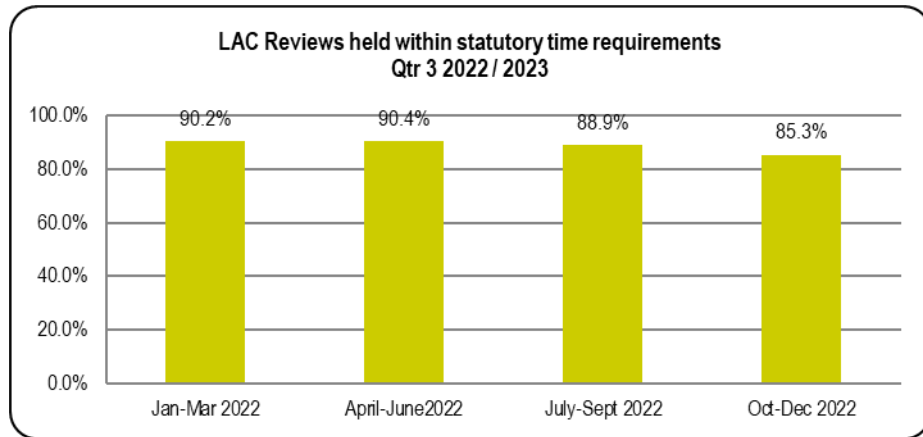
Target Set 100% - Target achieved 85.3%

116 Children were reviewed within the Quarter.

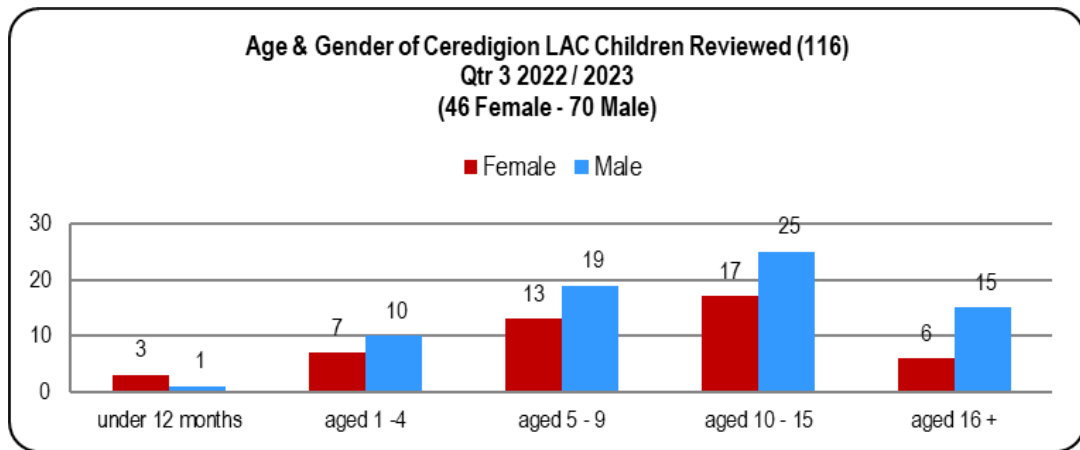
- 99 (85.3%) LAC Review Meetings were undertaken within the statutory requirements.
- 17 (14.7%) LAC Review Meetings were held out of statutory requirements; the reasons recorded were as follows: -
 - All reviews were postponed due to staffing issues within Social Services.
 - The Innovate Team commenced work in Ceredigion in September 2022 and as a consequence of the team becoming established, the postponed

reviews were then able to be undertaken during this quarter. Hence, the high number of reviews completed during this quarter.

	Oct-Dec 2022	July-Sept 2022	April-June 2022	Jan-Mar 2022	Oct-Dec 2021
Number of children reviewed in the quarter	116	63	83	61	72
Number of reviews held in timescale	99	56	75	55	69
Number of reviews held out of timescales	17	7	8	6	3

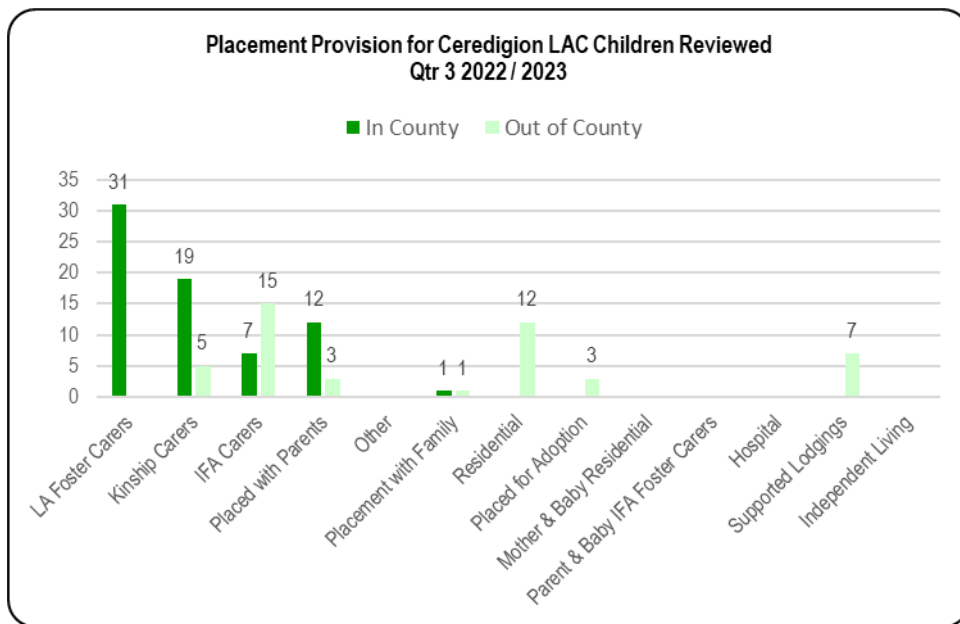


3. Age and Gender of the Children Reviewed in the Quarter:



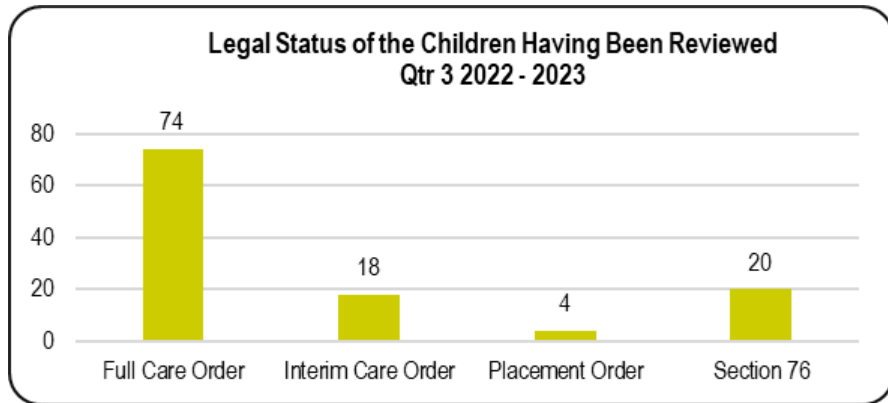
4. **Nature of the Placement Provision of Children Reviewed in the Quarter:**

Type of Placement	In County	Out of County	Total
LA Foster Carers	31		31
Kinship Carers	19	5	24
IFA Carers	7	15	22
Placed with Parents	12	3	15
Other			
Placement with Family	1	1	2
Residential	-	12	12
Adoption	-	3	3
Mother & Baby Residential			
Parent & Baby IFA Foster Carers			
Hospital			
Supported Lodgings		7	7
Independent Living			
	70	46	116



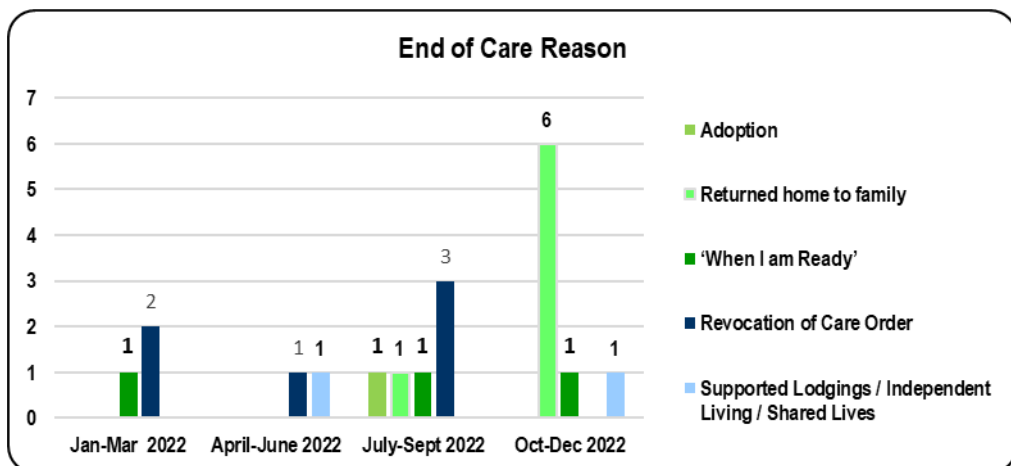
5. Legal Status of Children Reviewed in the Quarter:

Legal Status of the Children Having Been Reviewed	
Full Care Order	74
Interim Care Order	18
Placement Order	4
Section 76	20
Total	116



6. Reasons for End of Care of the Children Reviewed

Period	Number left care	End of Care Reason				
		Adoption	Returned home to family	'When I am Ready'	Revocation of Care Order	Supported Lodgings / Independent Living/Shared Lives
Oct – Dec 2022	8	0	6	1	0	1
July – Sept 2022	6	1	1	1	3	0
April – June 2022	2	0	0	0	1	1
Jan - Mar 2022	3	0	0	1	2	0
Total	19	1	7	3	6	2



7. Number and percentage of Looked After Children who have an allocated Social Worker.

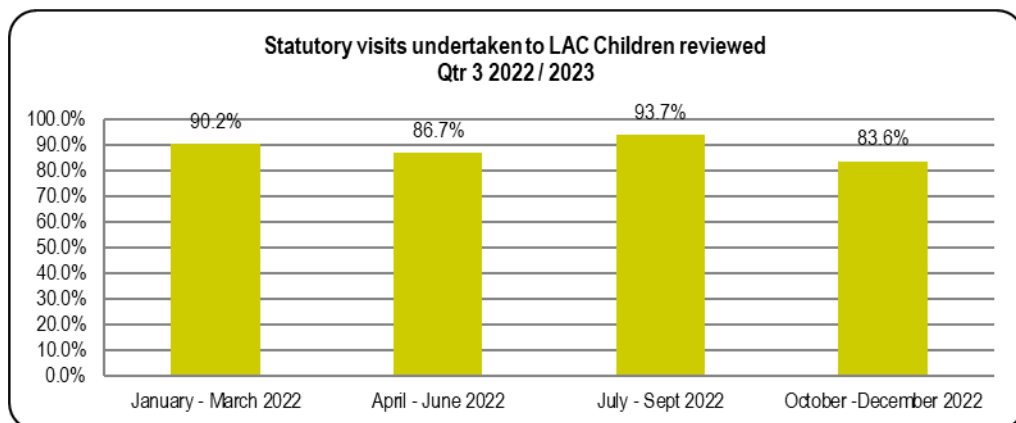
Target Set 100% - Target achieved 100.0%

- 116 (100.0%) LAC Reviews recorded that a qualified Social Worker was allocated and actively involved with the child.

8. Number and percentage of statutory visits undertaken to Looked After Children reviewed within the required timescales.

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 83.6%

- 97 (83.6%) Looked After Children received Social Worker visits in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- 19 (16.4%) Looked After Children did not receive Social Worker visits in accordance with the statutory requirements.

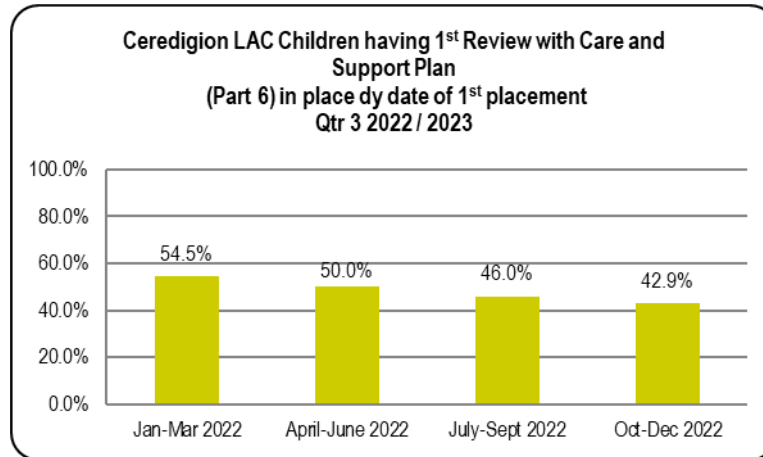


Comment: The staffing capacity within teams has an impact on statutory visits being undertaken and / or updated on the database.

9. Number and Percentage of Care and Support Plans (Part 6) in place at the date of the first placement and of up-to-date plans available for the Review.

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 42.9%

- There were 14 Children that became Looked After during this quarter; 6 (42.9%) Review meetings recorded that the child / young person had a Care and Support Plan (Part 6) in place by the date of his/her placement. The Care and Support Plan (Part 6) wasn't in place by date of placement for the other 8 children / young persons.



- The IRO identified that updates were required to the Care and Support Plan records (Part 6) of 29 children. It was identified that the updating of the Care and Support Plan was still outstanding for 19 children/young persons.

10. Number and percentage of Looked After Children who have a Permanency Plan by the second review if a return home has not been planned.

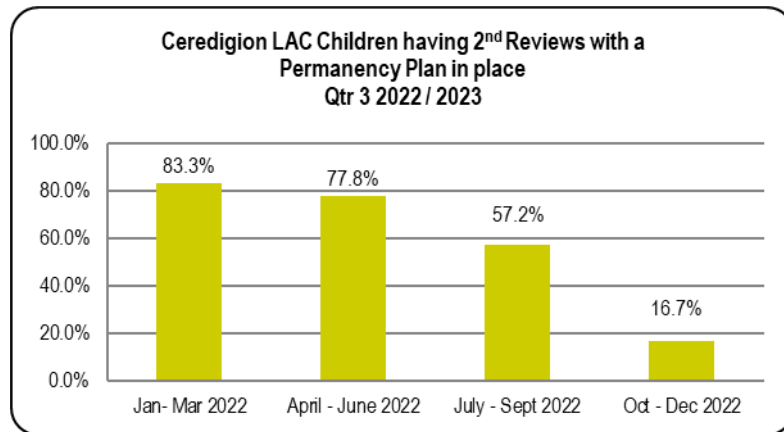
Target Set 100% - Target achieved 16.7%

- There were 12 second reviews during this quarter, 2 reviews (16.7%) recorded that a Permanency Plan had been agreed. This compares to 57.2% in the previous quarter.
- There were concerns recorded by the IRO in 20 (17.2%) reviews in this period regarding the progress of the Placement / Care and Support Plan / Permanency Plan.

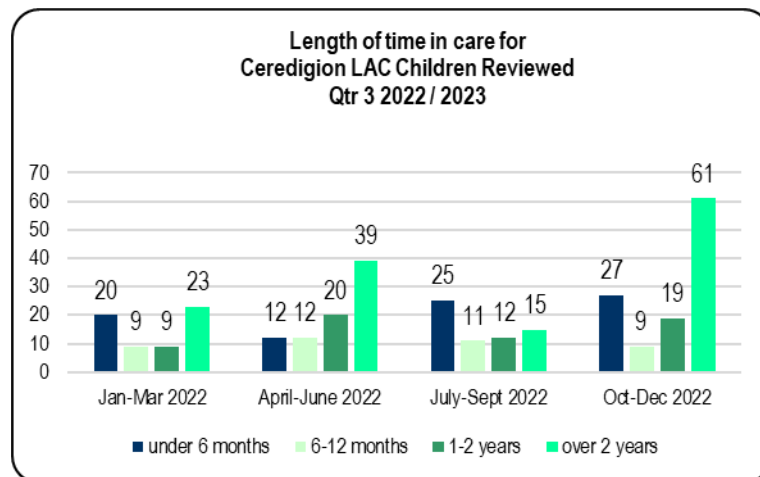
The nature of the concerns were as follows: -

- For 1 young person it was noted that there was an ongoing Court Process.
- 1 young person reviewed twice in the period, it was recorded that plans for adoption by previous long term foster carer fell through due to issues in the placement and thereafter placement moves, (drift had occurred in that adoption process) and IRO now wishing to reduce further drift in confirming a new plan and taking the matter back to court.
- Ongoing Court Process and Special Guardianship Order Assessment was recognised as a delay for 1 young person.
- 1 Young person was reviewed twice in the period and drift was identified at both reviews in that the young person was in an unregulated placement.
- For a further young person spending time between parents mid-week and weekends; there was a delay in discussion and assessment regarding possible revocation of the Care Order.
- It was identified that no Plan for Permanence had been discussed for a sibling group of 3 children.

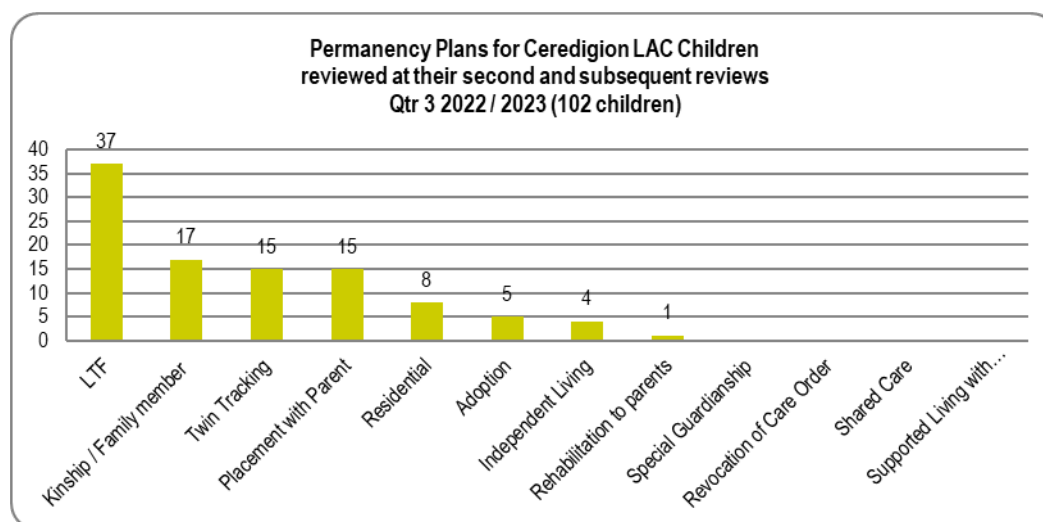
- A delay in an Adoption match / decision being made was a concern in drift for 1 young person; with a delay in Information regarding supporting Application for change in Legal Status recorded for another young person.
- The Plan was a long-term foster placement for 1 young person however this was unclear as young person was in a residential placement and parent might need to be reassessed to care for young person.
- The fact that the young person was not attending college and other concerns were highlighted for 1 young person; whilst for another young person there was drift in identifying a “long term” placement; with the young person aware that current placement was not long-term and struggling to settle and raised it with the IRO as had been in this situation for over a year.
- A Revocation of Care Order assessment was still not completed / nor application made to Court for revocation for 1 young person.
- For a sibling group of 2 there was a delay in the sibling assessment with 1 sibling raising this as a concern whilst for a further sibling group of 2 continued concerns existed of toxic relationship between the parents and its emotional impact on the children with contact with 1 parent not taking place.



11. Length of Time in Care:



12: Nature of Permanency Plans:



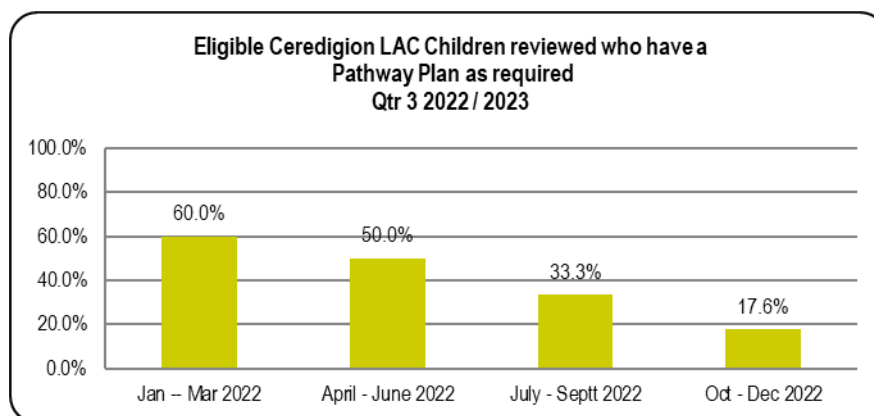
13. Number and percentage of Looked After Children receiving Short Break Care away from Main Carers

- 9 (7.8%) LAC Reviews noted that the child / young person was receiving short break care away from their main carer; 1 of these LAC Reviews reported that the respite placement wasn't meeting the young person's needs due to the fact that a new permanent placement was required for the young person.

14. Number and percentage of eligible young people who have a Pathway Plan as required.

Target set: 100% Target Achieved 17.6%

- 3 (17.6%) Young People's reviews recorded that there was a Pathway Plan in place and were allocated a Personal Advisor.
- 14 (82.4%) Reviews recorded that the young person did not have a Pathway Plan in place.
- 13 of the above reviews noted that the young persons were allocated a Personal Advisor; with a further 3 reviews recording that a Personal Advisor had already been allocated.



15 Number and percentage of Looked After Children (of appropriate age and level of understanding) who understand the reasons for them being looked after.

Target Set 100% -Target achieved 95.3%

- The data for this performance indicator relates to 86 children / young persons as 30 children / young persons were not considered to be of an appropriate age and level of understanding to comprehend the reasons for being looked after.
- 82 (95.3%) Of this group showed some level of understanding about why they were cared for away from their families, which compares to 97.3% in the previous quarter.
- 4 (4.7%) Reviews reported that it was unclear as to whether the child / young person understood the reasons for them being looked after.

16. Number and percentage of Looked After Children (of appropriate age and level of understanding) understand their Care and Support Plan.

The data for this performance indicator relates to 85 children / young persons as 31 children / young persons were not considered to be of an appropriate age and level of understanding and were therefore not included in the figures.

- 73 (85.9%) of this group showed a level of understanding as to the nature of their Care and Support Plan (part 6).
- 12 (14.1%) Reviews recorded that this needed to be shared with the children / young persons.

17. National Measure 33: Number and percentage of moves for Looked after Children.

- 16 (13.8%) LAC Reviews reported that there was a change in a child's/young person's placement during this quarter; this compares to (19.0%) in the previous quarter.

The reasons for the changes in Placement were as follows:

- 1 Young person was removed from a long-term foster / adoption placement to IFA foster placement; whilst 1 other young person moved due to a breakdown in placement.
- A further young person moved from a foster care placement to live with a parent.
- For a sibling group of 2 children a planned move was made to an adoptive placement whilst a planned move from family members to a long-term foster placement was recorded for another sibling group of 3 children.
- A move from foster carers to family members took place for 1 young person.
- There was a planned move from foster carers to a long-term placement with family for a sibling group of 2.
- 1 Young person had a planned move from family members to a grandparent due to a safeguarding concern.
- A planned move took place for 1 person pending a further suitable secure placement being identified.
- 1 Young person moved from a short-term unregulated placement to a long-term residential placement which broke down, and then moved to a short-term placement with foster carers
- 1 Young person placed with family had a respite placement which was extended to a short-term placement to allow for a new permanent placement to be identified.
- Following coming into care for a planned short break, 1 young person had a placement move as a longer period of accommodation was necessitated due to safeguarding concerns.

18 Number and percentage of placement plans (including education and health provision) that are assessed as meeting the needs of Looked after Children.

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 94.8%

- 110 (94.8%) Placement/care and support plans were recorded as meeting the needs of the children / young people, which compares to 92.1% in the previous quarter.
- 6 (5.2%) Reviews recorded that Placement/care and support plan wasn't meeting the needs of the child / young person. The reasons recorded were: -
 - There were significant concerns about the emotional harm caused by the adoptive carers for 1 young person and the lack of collaborative working and avoidance of professionals
 - An education meeting had not been held to support entry into school for 1 young person and this was to be arranged following the Review.

- The young person is aware that the current placement is short term / temporary- while it is maintained it does meet all of young person's needs, young person is unable to settle completely knowing the plan is to move to another placement
- Delay in Health Assessment being completed due to out of county placement and young person on waiting list for college but no places available and no timescale for a place to become available.
- Concerns re placement 'containing' young person rather than providing structure and developing/ supporting the young person's complex needs.
- Young person going missing from the placement and being brought back by the police, foster carers can no longer support young person in this placement and an urgent search is underway for a new placement.

19. Number and percentage of Safeguarding Concerns identified for Looked After Children during this quarter

- 6 (5.2%) LAC Reviews identified safeguarding concerns for the young person; it was confirmed that the concerns were being addressed.

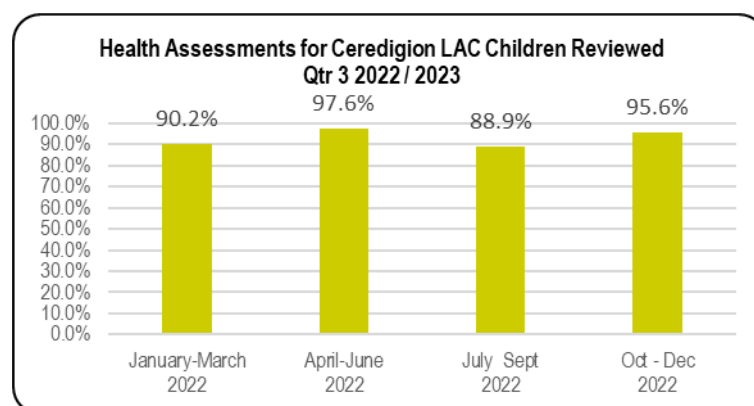
20. Number of Looked After Children's names on the Child Protection Register.

- 4 (3.4%) Reviews confirmed that the young person's name was included on the Child Protection Register.

21. Number and percentage of Looked After Children who received Health Assessments in accordance with statutory requirements

Target Set 100%- Target achieved 95.6%

- 109 (95.6%) Children/Young People Looked After had an up-to-date health assessment reported at their review, which compares to 88.9% in the previous quarter.
- 5 (4.4%) Children/Young People Looked After did not have an up-to-date health assessment at their review; for 2 of these young people the delay was due to a shortage of Health Visitors and for the other 3 young people the delay was due to young people being placed out of county; it was recorded for 1 of these young people that there was also a delay in informing agencies of the young person's LAC status. All these young people now have a health assessment in place.
- It was recorded at 2 reviews that the parent had refused a health assessment; these were therefore taken out of the equation.



22. The percentage of children registered with a dentist within 20 working days of becoming looked after

Target set: 100% Target Achieved 83.3%

Registered with a dentist

The data for registering a child / young person with a dentist within 20 days of becoming looked after relates to 12 children / young persons.

- 10 (83.3%) Reviews recorded that the child / young person was registered with a dental practitioner within 20 working days of the start of placement.
- 2 (16.7%) Review noted that the child / young person was yet to be registered with a dental practitioner.

Registered with a dentist

The data for this performance indicator relates to 102 Children / Young persons as 14 Children / Young persons having a first LAC Review were taken out of the above equation to coincide with National Measure requirements.

- 96 (94.1%) Children and young people were registered with a dentist. This compares to 86.0% in the previous quarter.
- 6 (5.9%) Children and young people needed to be registered with a dentist.

Comment: All of these children are placed out of county apart from 1 child who is 6 months old.

23. National Measure 30: Number and percentage of Looked After Children who have had their teeth checked by a dentist within 3 months of becoming Looked After.

Seen by a dentist

The data for being seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after relates to 11 children.

- 9 (81.8%) Reviews recorded that the child / young person had been seen by a registered dentist within 3 months of becoming LAC.
- 2 (18.2%) Reviews recorded that the child / young person had not been seen by a registered dentist within 3 months of becoming LAC.

Comment: Both these young people were placed out of county.

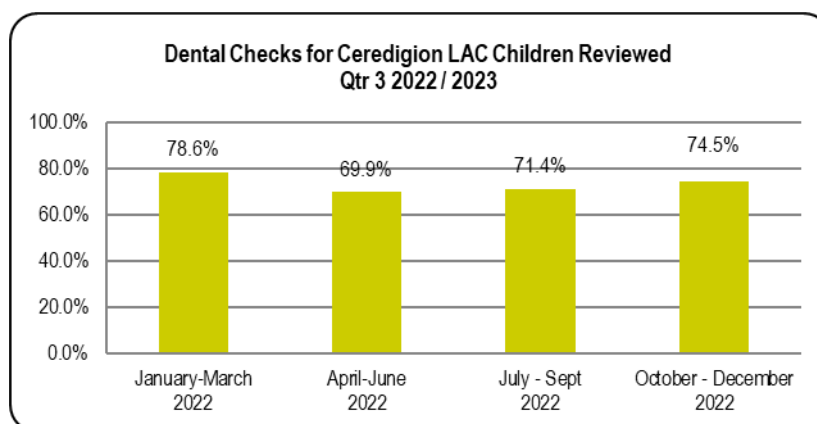
Seen by a dentist

Target Set 90% - Target achieved 74.5%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 98 Children / young persons as 18 Children / Young persons were under 2 years of age and / or having their first LAC Reviews and were taken out of the above equation to coincide with National Measures requirements.

- 73 (74.5%) Children and young people were recorded as having a dental check during the preceding 12 months, which compares to 71.4% in the previous quarter.

- 25 (25.5%) Children and young people were recorded as not having had dental checks.



24. National Measure 31: Percentage of children looked after who were registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement

- 29 (96.7%) Reviews recorded that the child was registered with a provider of general medical services within 10 working days of the start of placement.
- 1 (3.3%) Review reported that this action remained outstanding at the time of the review; however this action has now been completed and child registered with a GP local to their placement.

25. Number and percentage of children looked after who were registered with a GP

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 100.0%

- 116 (100.0%) Children and young people were registered with a GP, which is consistent with the previous quarter.
- 95 (86.4%) Children had their immunisations up to date.
- 15 (13.6%) Children were late in receiving their immunisations. 7 Of these young people are Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) and are offered an accelerated programme as there is incomplete previous immunisation history. Further clarity is required for a few young people who did not have immunisations in place.

6 Reviews were taken out of the equation as the parent / young person was refusing immunisation.

26. Number and percentage of Looked After Children assessed as requiring CAMHS services that are referred and receive an assessment /service.

Target: 50%

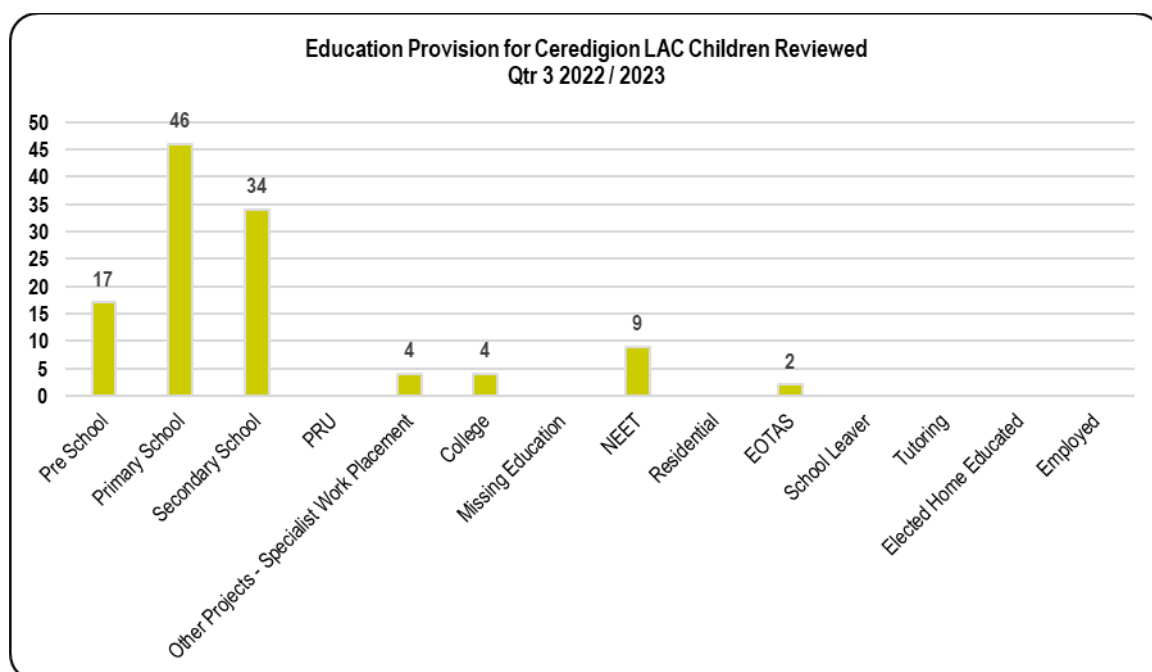
Actual Performance

- 5 (4.3%) LAC Reviews recorded that a child/young person had been referred to CAMHS, it was confirmed at 4 Reviews that the referral had been accepted for the child/young person.
- 97 (83.6%) LAC Reviews recorded that children/young people's mental/emotional health had been considered during the Health Assessment and/or during discussions in the meeting.
- 19 (16.4%) Reviews recorded that the mental health issues had not been considered. 3 Of these reviews were for babies.

27. Nature of Education Provision:

During this quarter the children and young people reviewed were in the following educational provision.

Education Provision	
Pre-school children	17
Primary school pupils	46
Secondary school pupil	34
PRU	
Other Projects-Specialist Work Placement	4
College	4
NEET	9
EOTAS	2
Missing Education	
Residential	
School Leaver	
Tutoring	
Elected Home Educated	
Employed	
Total	116



28. Number and percentage of Looked After Children of school age who had a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school.

Target Set 70% - Target achieved 95.9%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 74 children / young persons who were of compulsory school age and therefore eligible for a Personal Education Plan.

- 72 (97.3%) Children and young people of statutory school age had an up-to-date Personal Education Plan.
 - 20 (90.9%) Reviews recorded that the PEP had been completed within 20 school days of becoming Looked After or 20 school days of a change in school as required.
 - 52 (100.0%) Reviews recorded that the young person had an up-to-date Personal Education Plan.
 - 2 (2.7%) Reviews recorded that the PEP had not been completed within timescales; but were subsequently completed.

- 18 (96.1%) Children and young people attending school/college were identified as having a recognised highest additional learning need.

- 31 (38.3%) Reviews deemed that the children / young persons attending school/college were underachieving educationally. All 31 (100.0%) Reviews recorded that the young people were receiving support.

- 12 (92.3%) Reviews identified that the educational provision had been put in place at the start of the placement
- 1 (7.7%) Review recorded that the educational provision was not in place at start of placement.

- 1 (1.4%) Review identified that there had been a period whereby the child / young person had been out of education awaiting a school placement

29. National Measure 32: Percentage of Looked After Children who have changed schools and outside of transitional arrangements

Target Set 0% - Target achieved 9.5%

- 7 (9.5%) Reviews recorded a change of school which was not transitional, which compares to 5.3% in the previous quarter.

30. Number and percentage of Looked After Children who were excluded from school

Target Set 12% fixed term exclusion – Target achieved 0.0%

Target Set 1% permanent exclusion – Target achieved 0.0%

- 0 (0.0%) Review reported that the young person had been excluded on a fixed term basis during the review period. This is consistent with the previous quarter.
- 0 (0.0%) Reviews reported that the young person had been excluded from school permanently, which is consistent with the previous quarter.

There were exclusions during this quarter: -
6 sessions, total of 3 days

SECTION THREE

CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

1. **Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of Looked After Children of age and understanding consulted by the Social Worker or attended their review**

Target Set 100% – Target achieved 100.0%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 88 reviews as 28 reviews recorded that the children / young persons were not of an age and level of understanding to be included in the consultation process although 2 of these children / young people were present at their review.

- All 88 (100.0%) Reviews recorded that consultation had taken place

Breakdown of consultation

38 Children / young people attended their review via Teams.

50 Children / young people completed consultation papers spoke with IRO or/and had their views represented by professionals, parents, carers or advocates.

- The IRO had direct contact with 9 child / young person during the review period outside of the review meeting.

2. **Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of Children who were aware of their right for an Advocacy Service / Independent Visitor Scheme**

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 92.5%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 94 reviews as 22 reviews recorded that the children / young people reviewed were not of an age and understanding to be informed about their right for Advocacy / Independent Visitor Scheme and were therefore taken out of the equation.

- 87 (92.5%) Children / young persons were informed of their right for an Advocacy / Independent Visitor Scheme.

During the period of COVID 19 restriction, the advocacy service would be invited to all LAC reviews which were taken place virtually and the advocates would attend the meetings. However, during this quarter, due to restrictions being lifted, the advocacy service is now able to undertake more face-to-face visits to children/young people and so they are not always able to attend all LAC Reviews. However, where it is deemed appropriate for them to do so, they will attend.

3 Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of Children informed about the Complaints Procedure

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 97.3%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 73 reviews as 43 reviews recorded that the children / young people were not of the age / level of understanding and were therefore taken out of this equation.

- 71 (97.3%) Children / young people knew about the complaints process, which compares to 100% in the previous quarter.
- 2 (2.7%) Reviews recorded that the IRO was unclear/unaware if the child / young person knew about the complaints process.

4 Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of Parents consulted by the Social Worker before the review or who attended the review

Target Set 80% - Target achieved 100.0%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 101 reviews as 15 reviews recorded that the parents were not involved in the statutory review process and these were therefore taken out of the above equation.

- All 101 (100.0%) Parents completed consultation papers or met with / spoke with the IRO prior and / or after the review or / and attended the review themselves or / and had their views represented by a professional.

Breakdown of consultation

Consultation Papers were sent to all 101 reviews.

54 Reviews confirmed that the parents were present; or spoke to the IRO by phone prior and/or after the review.

5 Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of Foster Carers consulted by the social worker or attends the Child's Review

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 100.0%

The data for this performance indicator relates to 101 reviews as 15 reviews recorded that the child was placed with a parent or living independently, these reviews were therefore taken out of the equation.

- 101 (100.0%) Foster Carers completed consultation papers or / and attended the reviews during this period.

6 Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of Health Representative attending the Review or Sending a Report

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 81.9%

- 95 (81.9%) Reviews confirmed that information regarding health was available for the meeting.
- 21 (18.1%) Reviews reported that there was no health information at the meeting.

Comment: When the young person is placed out of area the health invite needs to be sent to the host health team, we continue to try and improve the information received.

7. Local Performance Indicator: Number and percentage of a School Representatives attending a Review or Sending a Report

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 93.7%

- 74 (93.7%) LAC Reviews had a school representative attend or provided a written report, which compares to 90.5% in the previous quarter.

8. Local performance Indicator: Number and percentage of LAC Review Documents completed by the Social Worker prior to the review

Target Set 100% - Target achieved 69.8%

- 81 (69.8%) LAC Reviews confirmed that the LAC Review document had been completed by the Social Worker prior to the review, this compares to 68.3% in the previous quarter.
- 35 (30.2%) LAC Reviews confirmed that the LAC Review document had not been completed by the Social Worker prior to the review.

Comment: The staffing capacity has had an impact on documentations being completed by social workers prior to reviews in this quarter.

**SECTION FOUR:
ISSUE RESOLUTION PROTOCOL**

The Issue Resolution Protocol was not initiated during this period for any child by the IRO.

5 Mid-Point reviews took place during this period and where needed IRO were bringing reviews forward when there were concerns.

SECTION FIVE

EVALUATION

This information was unavailable for this quarter

SECTION SIX

PATHWAY PLANNING

For over 16 years old and not LAC / over 18 year old care leavers

17 Pathway Plan Reviews were held during the quarter.

1 Performance Indicator: Percentage of Pathway Plan Review held within timescales

- 12 (70.6%) Pathway Plan Reviews were held within timescales, which compares to 72.7% in the previous quarter.
- 5 (29.4%) Pathway Plan Reviews were held out of timescales. The reasons recorded were as follows: -
 - 2 Reviews were rearranged due to young person's availability.
 - 3 Further reviews were delayed allowing attendance of professionals.

2 Performance Indicator: Percentage of Young Persons with allocated Personal Advisor / Social Worker

- It was identified at all 17 (100%) reviews that all the young persons had an allocated Social Worker or/and Personal Advisor.

3 Performance Indicator: Percentage of Pathway Plan Review Record Completed for the Meeting

- The Review Record had been completed for 13 (76.5%) Pathway Plan Reviews, which compares to 69.7% in the previous quarter.
- 4 (23.5%) Reviews reported that the Review Record had not been completed at the time of the review.

4 Performance indicator: Percentage of Young People Consulted for the Review Meeting

- 14 (82.4%) Reviews confirmed that the young person had his / her views represented at the review or / and attended the review.

5 Performance indicator: Percentage of Young People attending their Review Meeting

- 5 (29.4%) Reviews recorded that the young person attended their review.

- 12 (70.6%) Reviews recorded that the young persons had not attended their review.

6 Performance Indicator: Percentage of Pathway Plan meeting young person's needs

- 15 (88.2%) Reviews confirmed that the Pathway Plan was meeting the young person's needs.
- 2 (11.8%) Reviews reported that the Pathway Plan wasn't meeting the young persons' needs; the reasons recorded were as follows: -
 - 1 Young person was unhappy due to conflict and tension between the young person and the carers.
 - For another young person there was concern due to the fact the young person wasn't at the placement and not engaging with services offered.

7 Performance Indicator: Percentage of Pathway Plans updated prior to Leaving Care/18th Birthday

- None of the young persons reviewed had left care during their review period.

8 Evaluation This information was unavailable for this quarter

SECTION SEVEN

REGULAR SHORT BREAK CARE

There were no Regular Short Break Care Review held during the quarter.

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 May 2023

Time: 10:00am

Title: Recommendation from the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to its meeting held on the 13th of April 2023, to consider the Independent Reviewing Service Performance Management Reports Quarter 3, 2022-2023

BACKGROUND:

At its 13th April 2023 Committee meeting, the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Independent Reviewing Service report, quarter 3, 2022-2023 so as to monitor the progress of Looked After Children through Independent Reviewing Officers scrutiny of their plans and placements during the third quarter, 2022/2023 period. The information contributes to Members fulfilling their roles as Corporate Parents.

Committee Members expressed their appreciation to the Officers for their continued hard work and asked that the message is relayed to all Staff within this Service area.

RECOMMENDATION:

Following discussion, Committee Members recommend that Cabinet:

- note the contents of the report and the levels of activity within the Local Authority.

Councillor Caryl Roberts
Chairman of the Healthier Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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