

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Healthier Communities Scrutiny

DATE: 13 April 2023

LOCATION: Hybrid/Council Chamber, Penmorfa, Aberaeron

TITLE: Statutory Director of Social Services Annual Reports for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022

PURPOSE OF 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.

REASON SCRUTINY HAVE REQUESTED THE REPORT:

The compilation of these reports is a statutory requirement and requires the oversight of Scrutiny prior to publication.

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? No
If, not, please state why**

Summary:

Report only. There are no changes to existing services with no difference in impact to the community.

Long term:

Integration:

Collaboration:

Involvement:

Prevention:

RECOMMENDATION:

I respectfully request that Scrutiny consider the following recommendation:

The accompanying reports continue the journey through the governance procedures in readiness for publication.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

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.

Contact name: Audrey Somerton-Edwards,

Designation: Interim Corporate Lead Officer, Porth Cynnal and Interim Statutory Director of Social Services

Date of Report: 28 February 2023

Acronyms: None used

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:

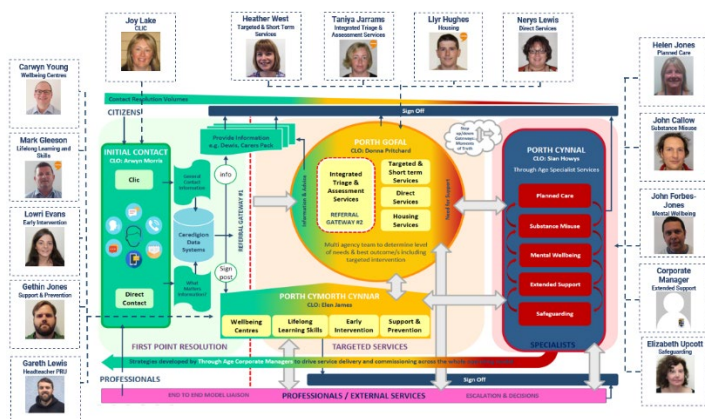
- Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
- Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being

- 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.

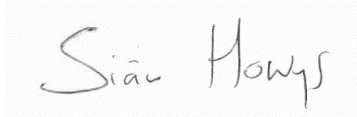
- Clic Customer Contact – Initial point of contact and referral
- Porth Cymorth Cynnar – Early intervention and Prevention
- Porth Gofal – Triage, Assessment, Targeted Intervention and Direct Services
- Porth Cymorth Cynnal – Specialist Care and Support Through Age Services

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.

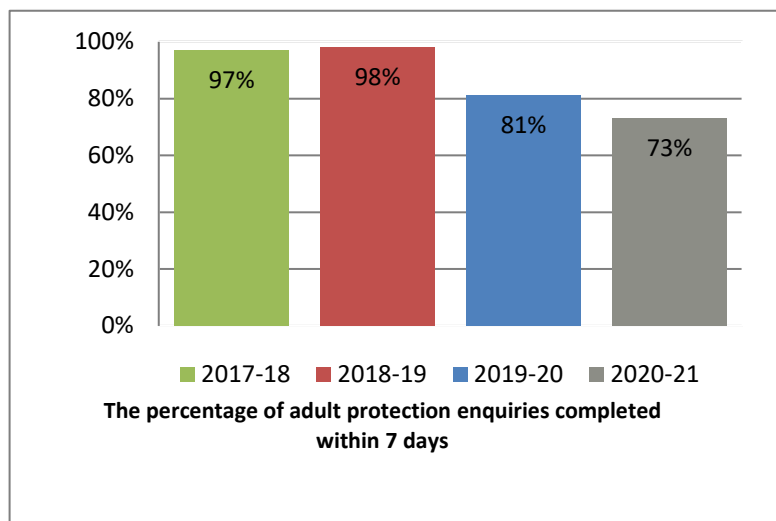
Adult and Commissioning Services Summary

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



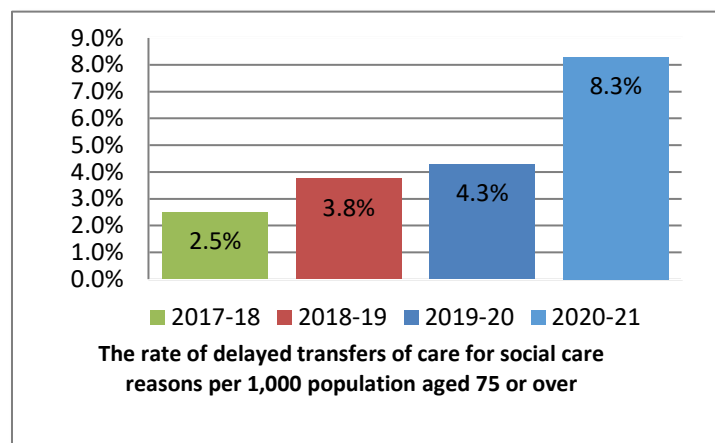
for carrying out safeguarding duties to adults at risk during the pandemic. Risk assessments were completed for all necessary visits and virtual working was implemented whenever possible. This measure shows the percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days. There has been a reduction 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

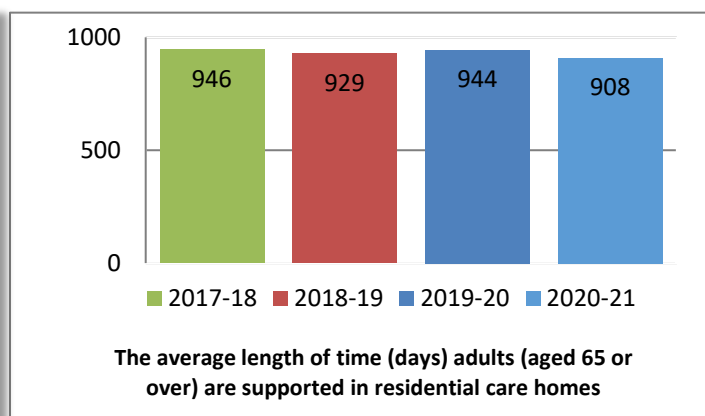
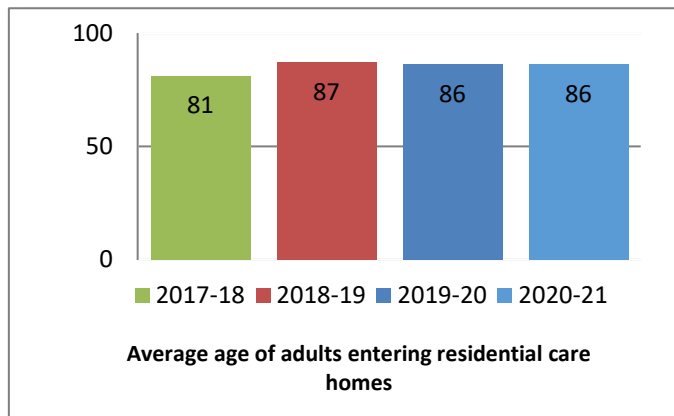
A total of 4072.38 hours of Enablement service was provided in 2020/21. A total of 336 individuals were re-abled and discharged from the service.

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 20201-2021, the service also expanded its staffing capacity to include the provision of support for longer term domicilliary support utilizing specific Covid 19 funding and in order to address the impact of increased pressures on the independnet providers of domicilliary 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.

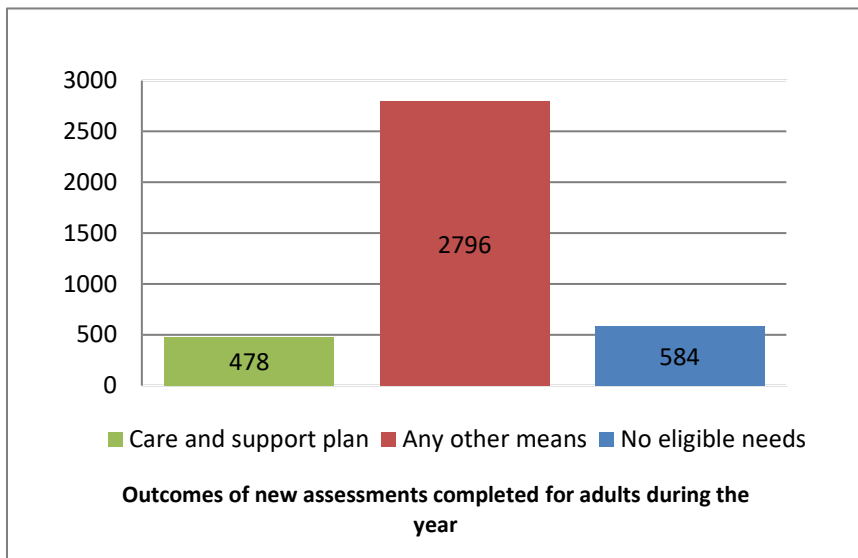
Daily SitRep across all care homes have been completed 7 days a week in order to identify potential issues or concerns so that issues were actioned quickly.

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.

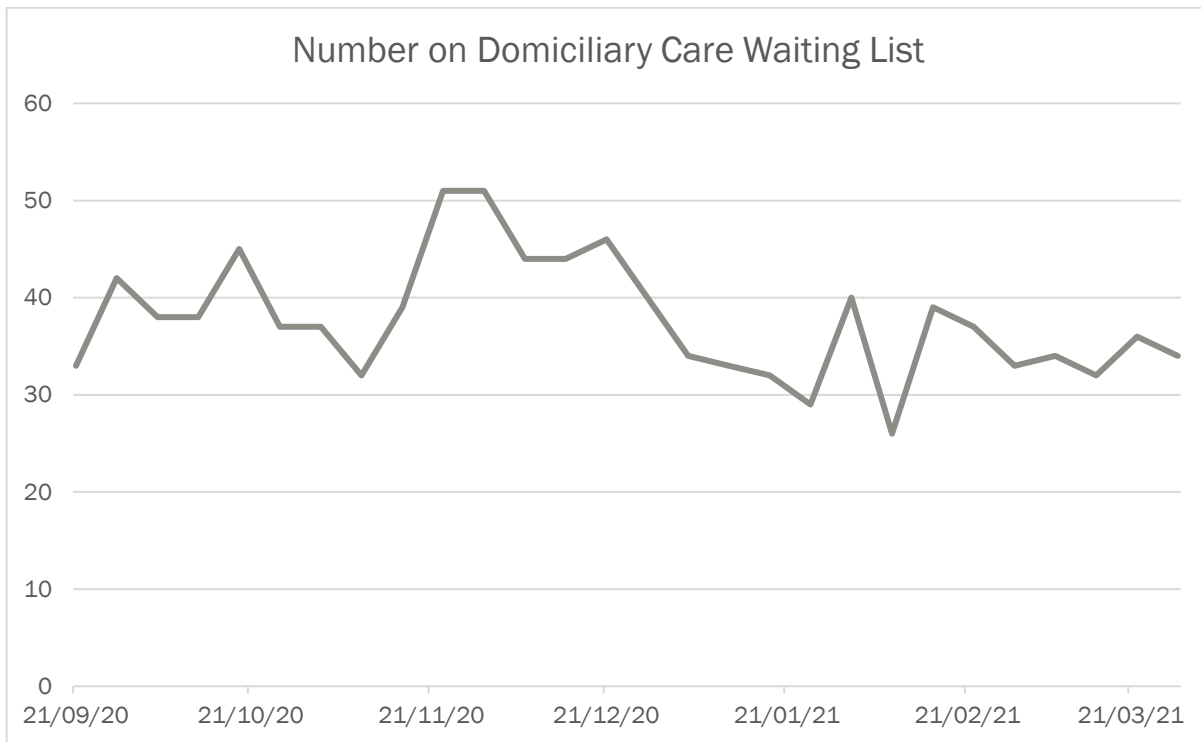
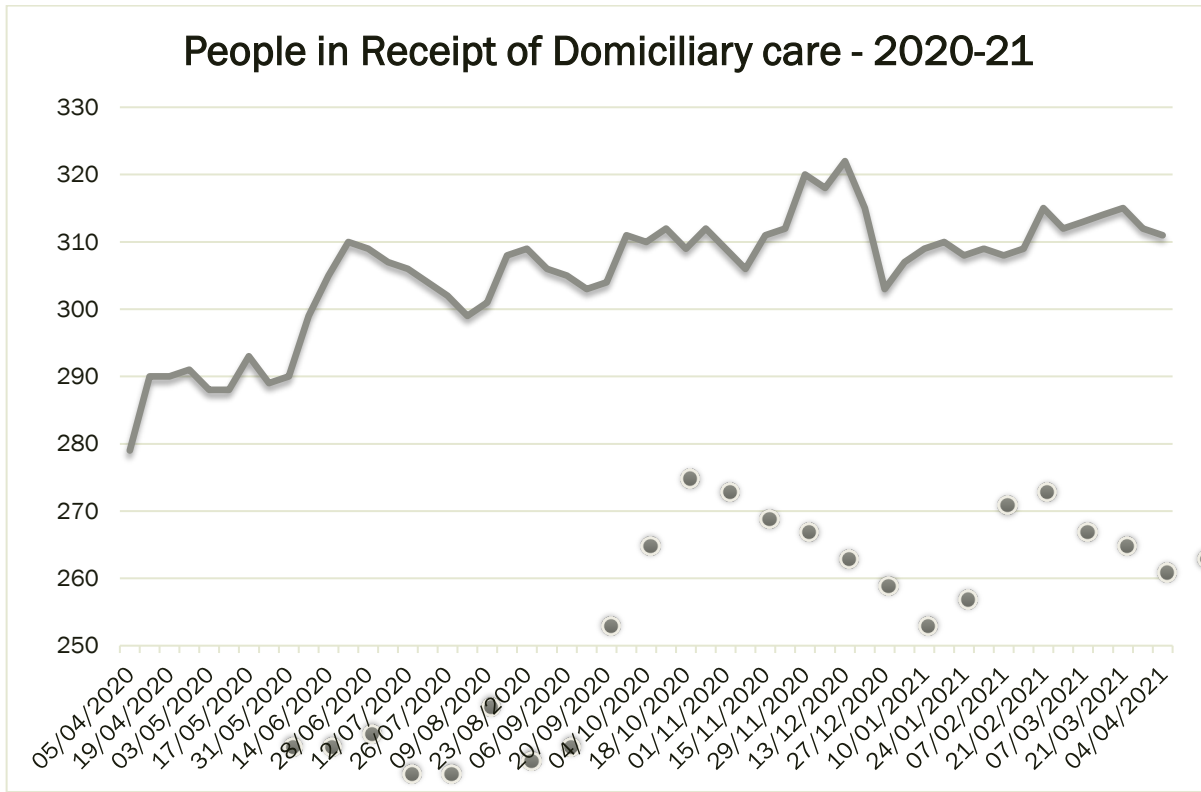
Advice and Assistance for adults

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.

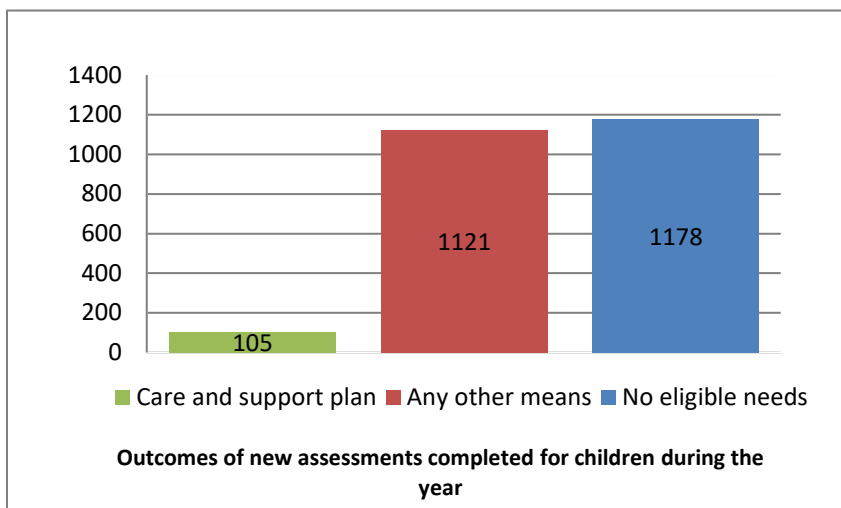
The Child Protection Register has fluctuated during 2020/21, the Child Protection Register with 29 children as at March 31st. This is a reduction on the end of year figure for 2019/2020.

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.

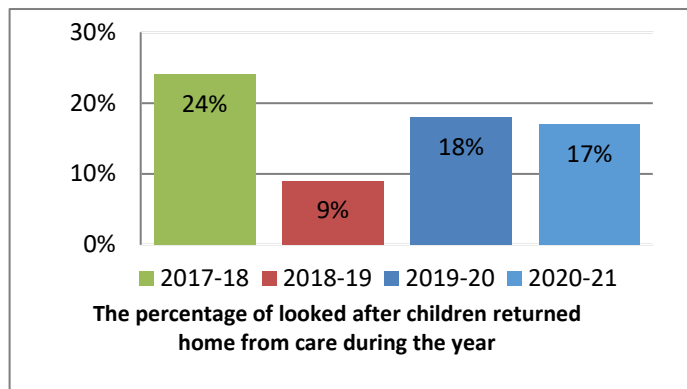
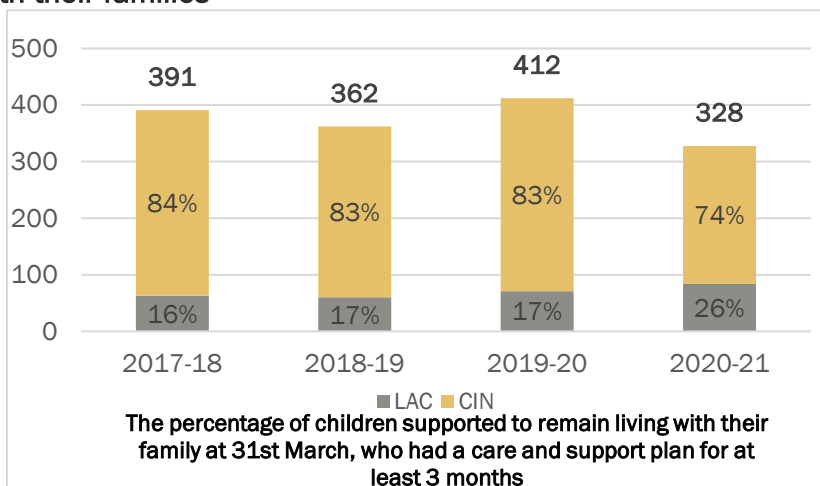
Outcome of Assessments

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.



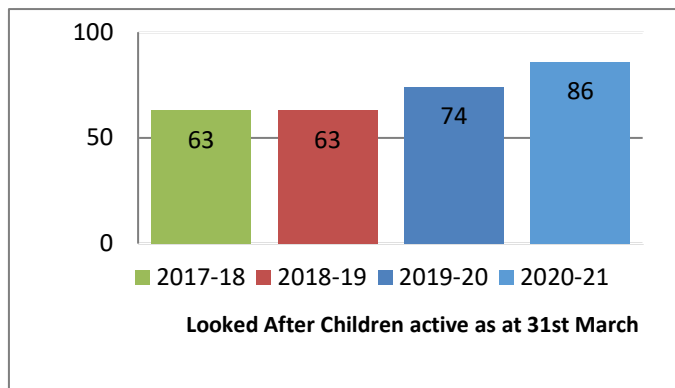
Supporting Children to remain living with their families

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.



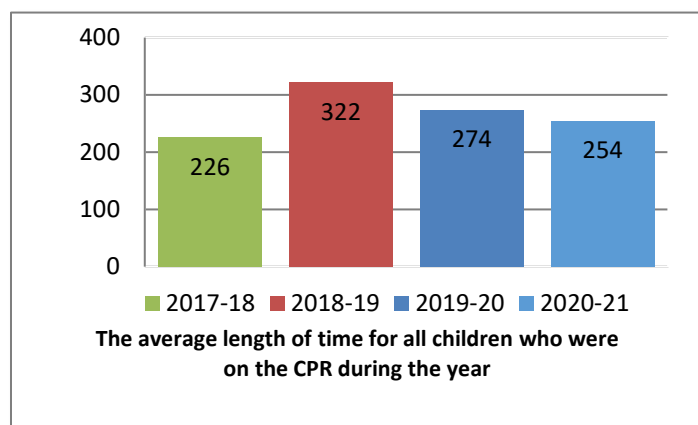
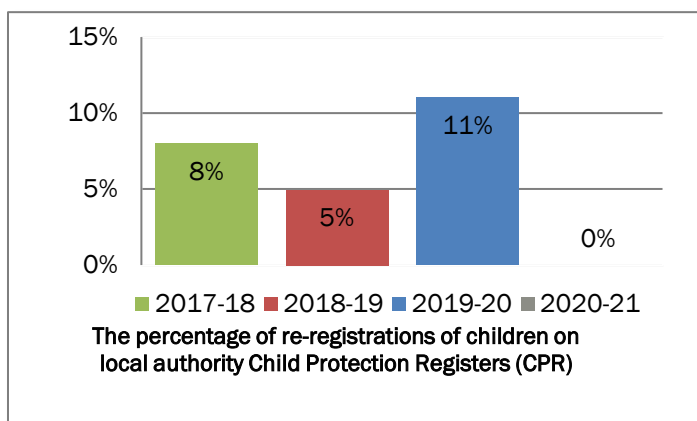
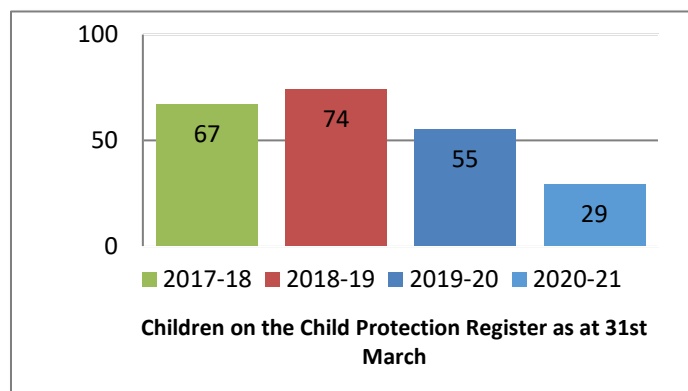
In 2020-21 we saw a further increase in the number of Looked After Children generally and a slight decrease in those returned home from care which reflects the increase in complex cases that are having to be managed and Covid 10 impact. The Edge of Care service continues to provide a key service with 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)

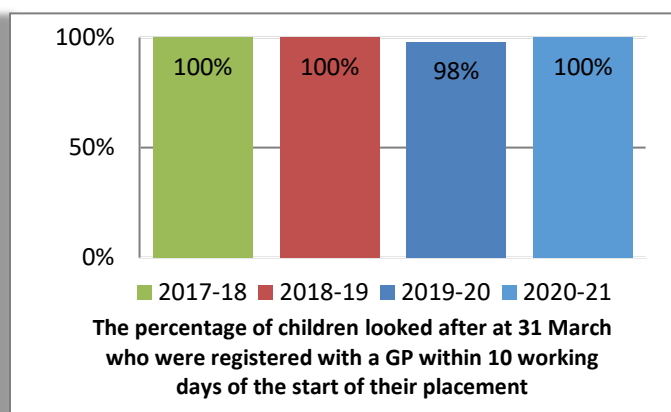
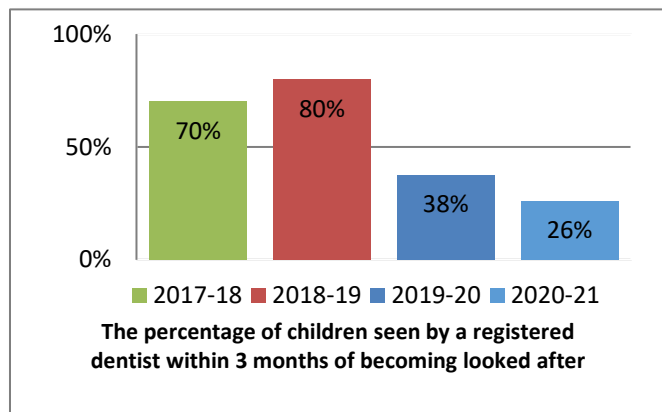
The child protection register provides a record of all children in the area with unresolved safeguarding issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency safeguarding plan. The number of children on the child protection register at the end of the year has decreased, with a reduction in the 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.

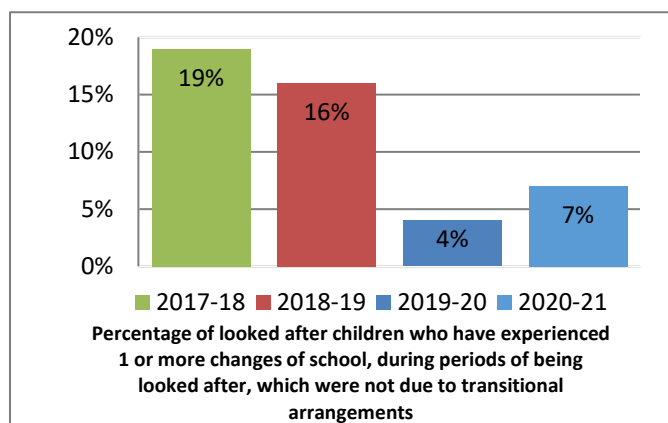


NICE Clinical Guideline [CG19] – ‘Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews’ sets out the guidance on the frequency of dental checks. This is based on the individual patient’s risk factors for dental disease. Looked After Children are generally considered to be at increased risk of dental 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.

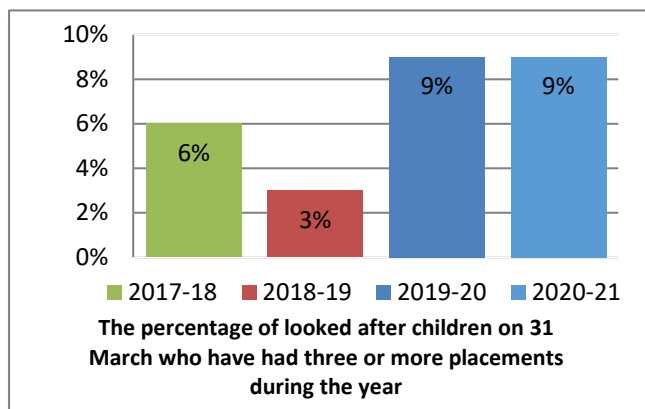
These regulations also state that responsible authorities must ensure that a looked after child is registered with a GP as soon as is practicable and in any event not later than ten working days after the placement is made. As you can see from the graph in 2020-21 we met our target of 100% of Looked 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

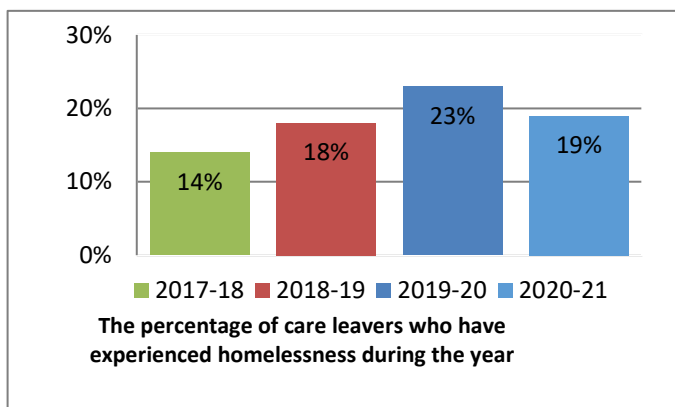
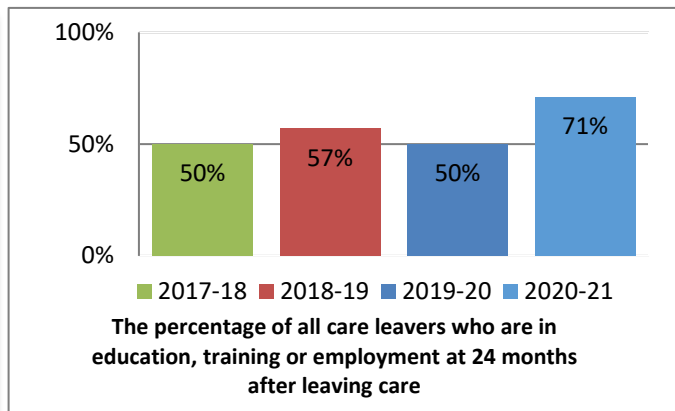
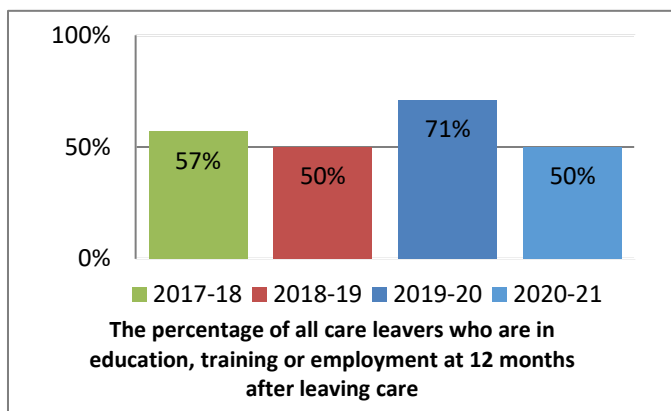


consequence of Covid and the difficulty of trying to place the children with different carers when the children have complex needs and due to restrictions only being able to offer limited/online support as well as the carers having the children at home even on school days. With regards to the low percentage 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.

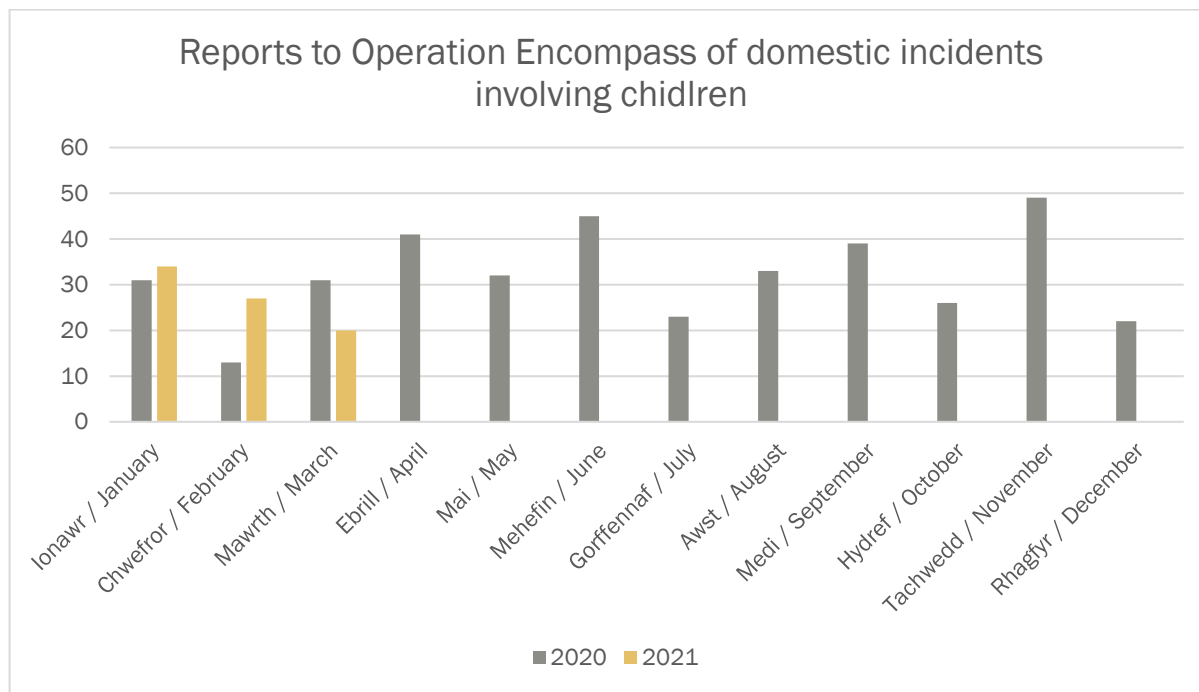
Young People Leaving Care

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.

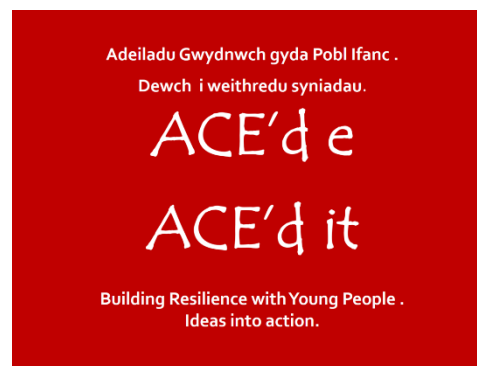
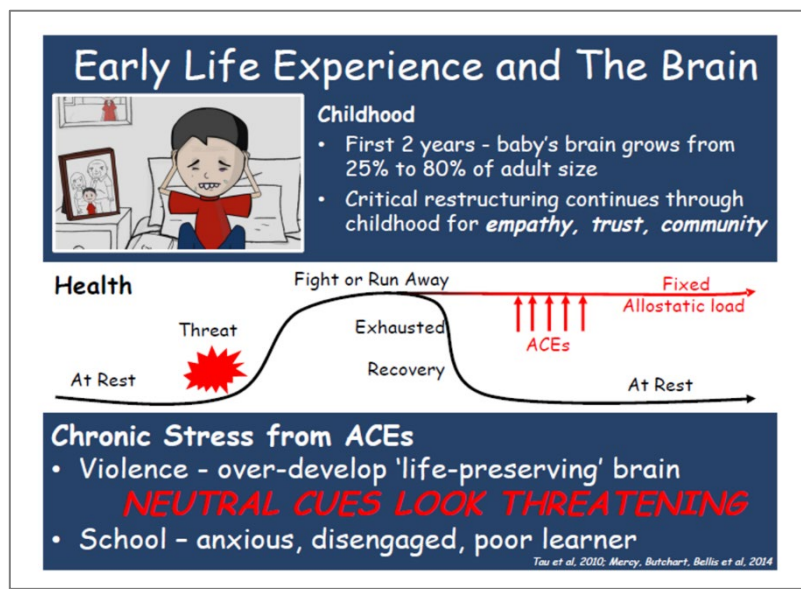
Progress on the Action plan

- 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



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

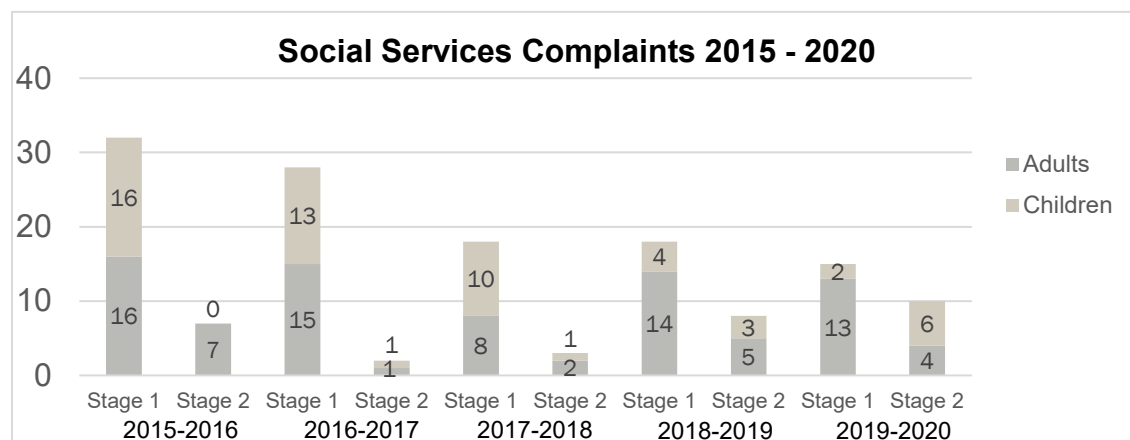
A total of 24 complaints were received in relation to Social Care Services in 2020-2021. In comparison, 25 complaints were received across Social Services in 2019-2020, which demonstrates a slight decrease in the number of complaints received during this reporting period.

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).

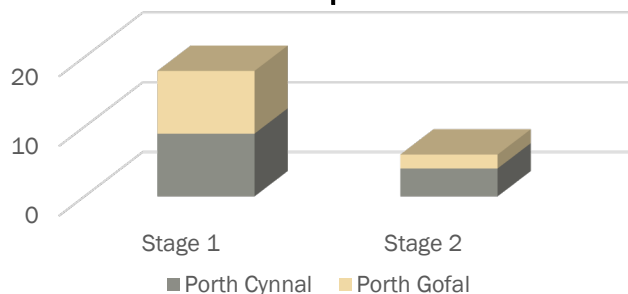
Comparative data

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

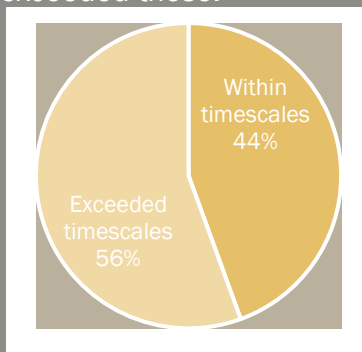
A breakdown of the number of complaints and their outcomes is provided below, in accordance with the relevant service areas:

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 Outcomes

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 'Click' 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

- 599 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 door step 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

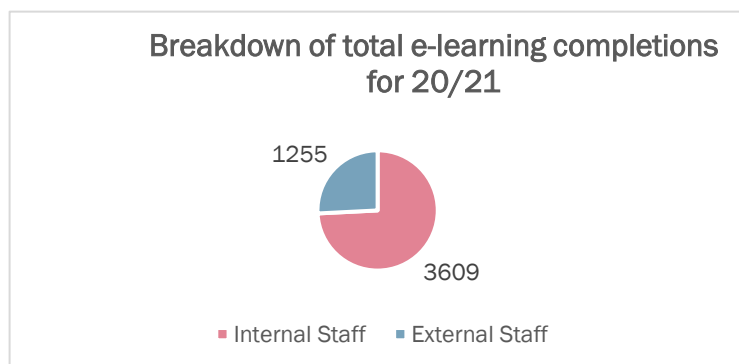
How we have supported the professional development of the Social Care Workforce

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.



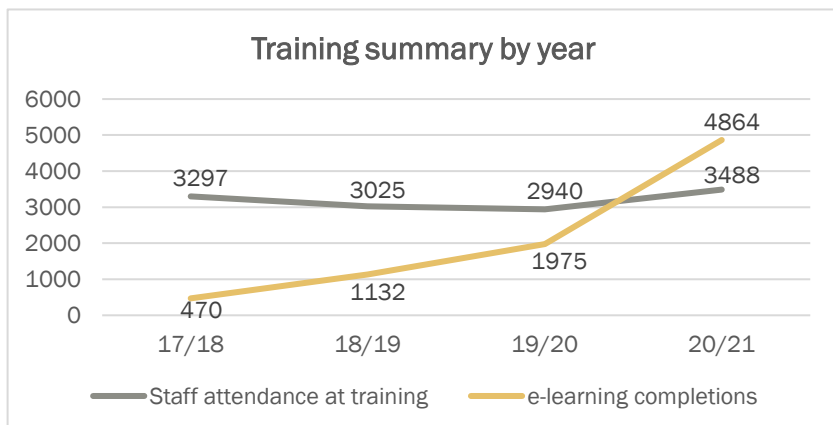
E-learning completions increased by a remarkable 59% on the previous year, with a total of 4864 completions. The opposite graph shows the breakdown of internal and external social care completions:

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



Cyngor Sir
CEREDIGION
County Council



Caru Love
Ceredigion

**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

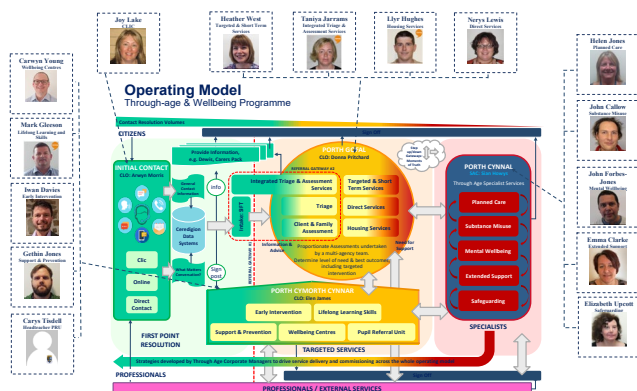
The six quality standards used to measure the Local Authority’s performance against the wellbeing outcomes are:

- 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

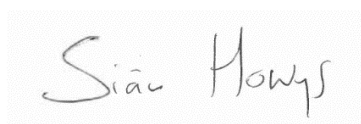
In April 2021, Phase 3 of the consultation got under way and by June 2021, Team Managers were appointed and commenced in post in most services across the Pwrth. December 2021 saw the commencement of a significant staff consultation on the redesign of teams and roles across the Pwrth’s services except 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

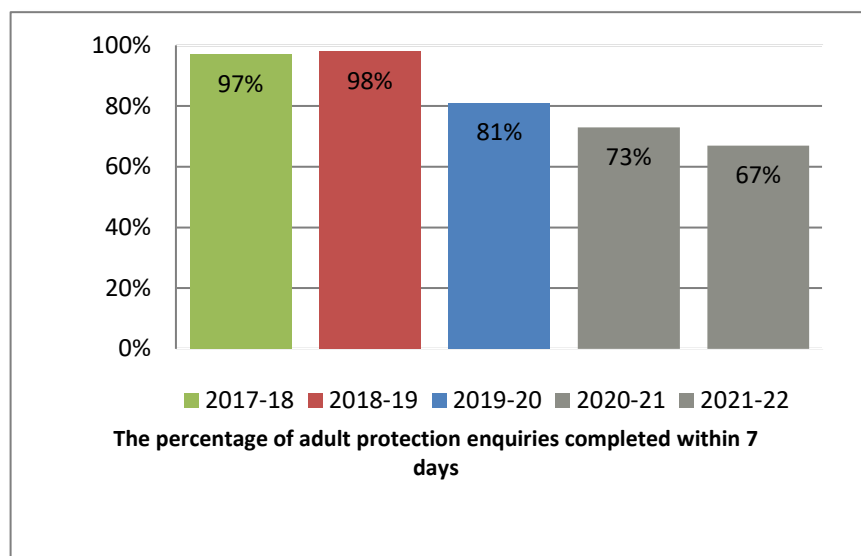
As laid out under section 145 of the Social Services and Wellbeing act, the Performance Measurement framework is used as a gauge of performance of local authorities’ social services functions. This section will illustrate how the service has performed over the past year. It must be noted that following 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



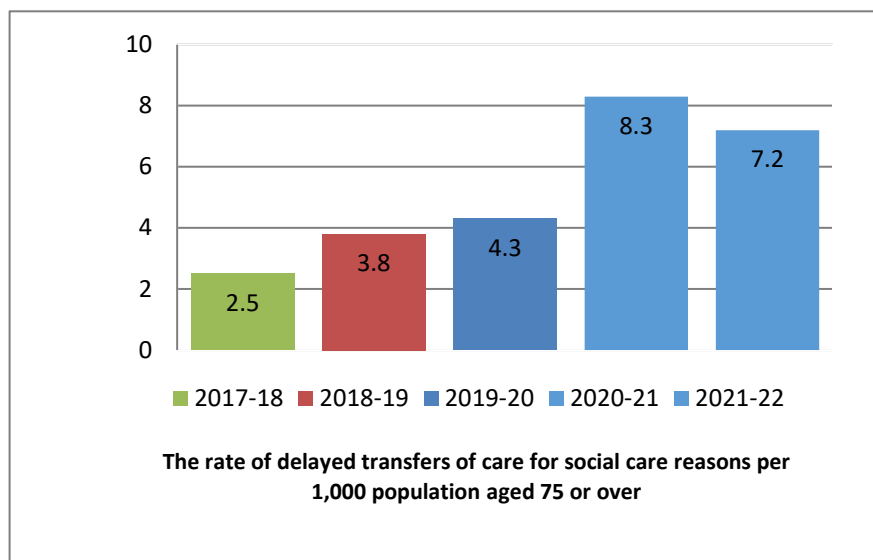
There has been a decrease in the percentage of Adult Protection enquiries completed within seven working days during 2021-2022.

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



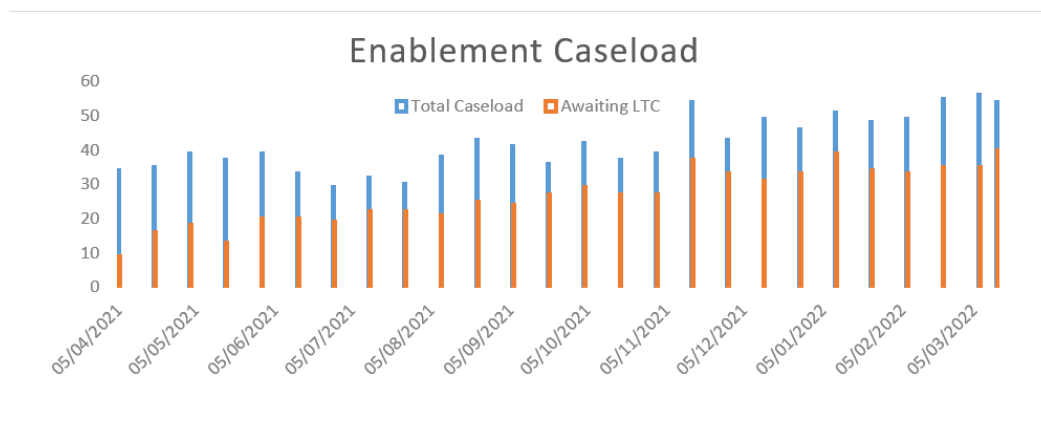
the next stage of care but is prevented from doing so for one or more reasons such as service provision due to the need for care and support. Hospital discharges continue to be a high Priority for Porth Gofal Integrated Triage who work in close collaboration with health colleagues to coordinate and facilitate 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

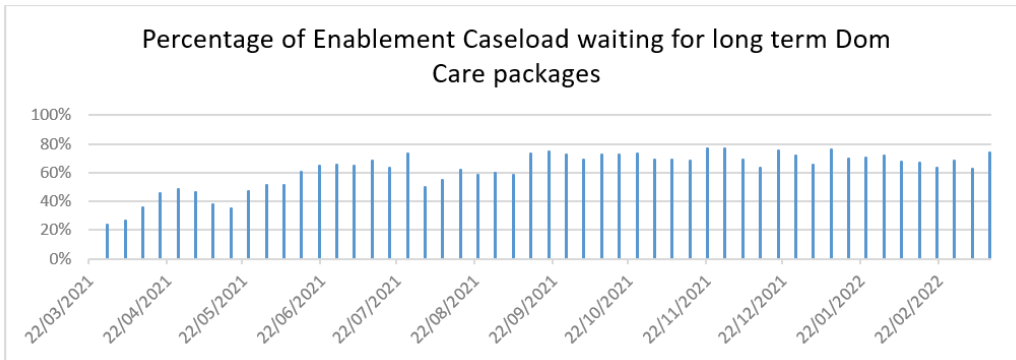
and the Enablement service bridging long-term care packages in the community. The Domiciliary care market has had reduced and limited capacity with the impact of Covid 19 as a contributory factor especially for those who have complex needs who require high level of support such as double-handed care. 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%





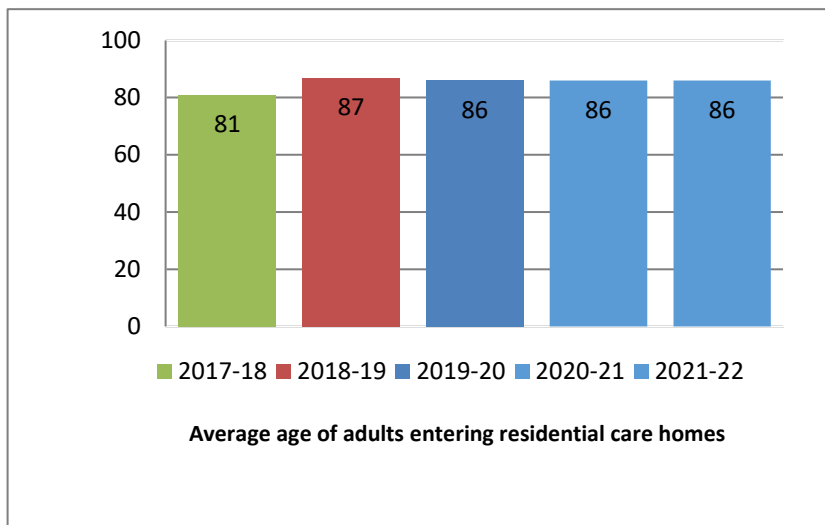
The Enablement team were bridging 34 clients who were awaiting long term care at the end of March 2022. This was over 80% of their total caseload

As the chart shows, 42% of the people waiting for domiciliary care were being supported by the enablement team.

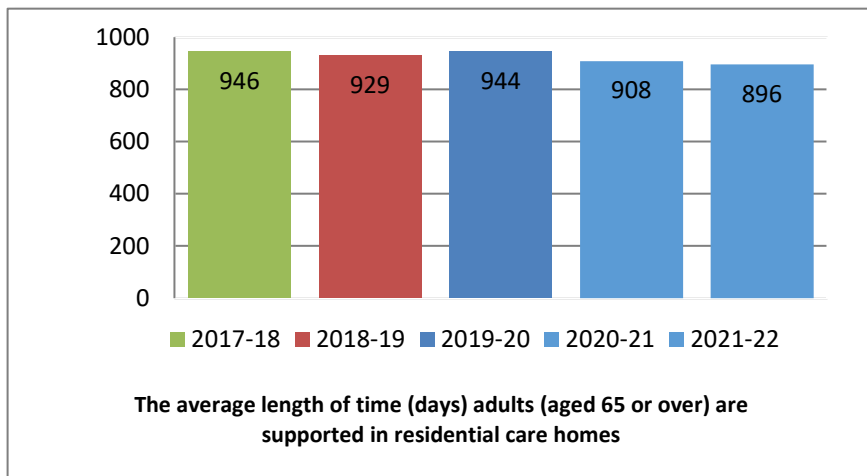
35% of people were waiting whilst living in their own homes.

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.

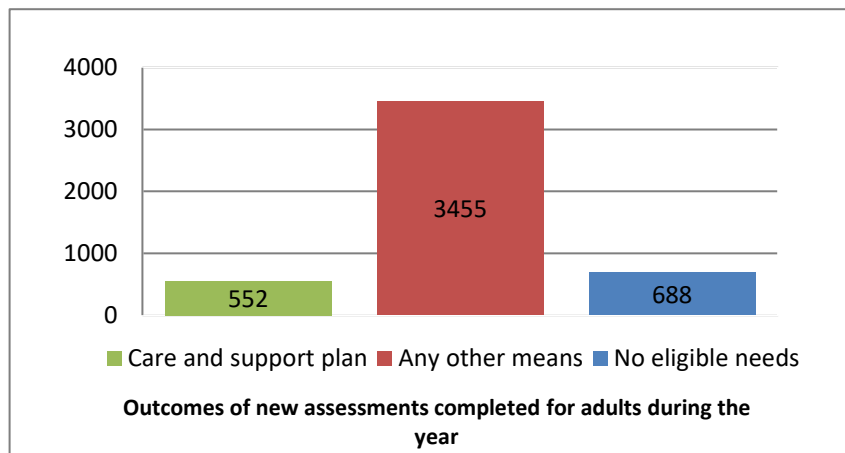
Throughout this service during Covid 19 we have ensured multi-professional and clinical support via technology to support communication with professionals or safe visits from GP’s, mental health, dementia, OT/allied health professions

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.

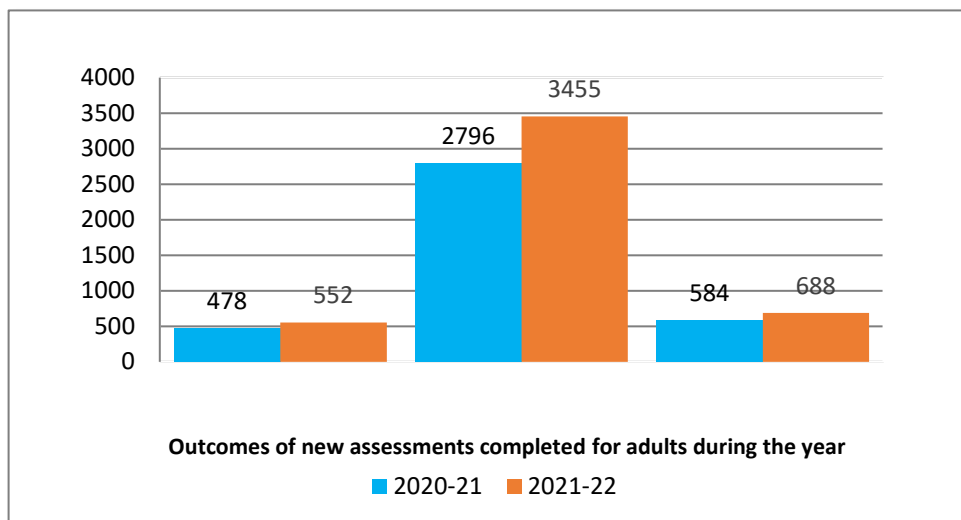
The local authority invested at a very early point in conferencing facilities to ensure that families could have access technology to maintain contact whilst face to face visiting was suspended. Later in the year, the Council supported the implementation of outdoor visiting facilities when alert levels 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

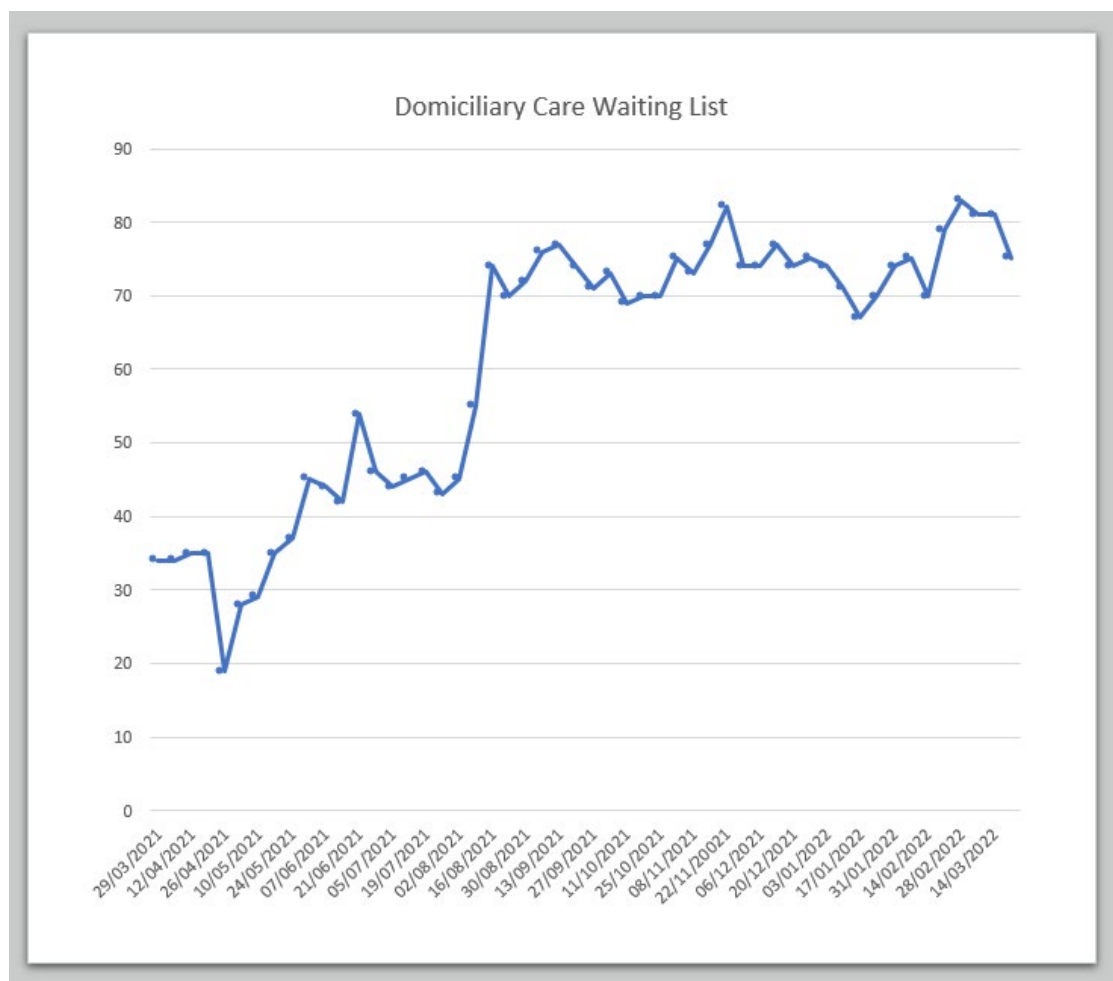
- Help information and advice about community health and social care services for adults and improve the connection between people and their communities.
- Encourage a balanced approach to the assessment of need ensuring that citizens are at the center of conversations and decisions and the “what matters” 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.

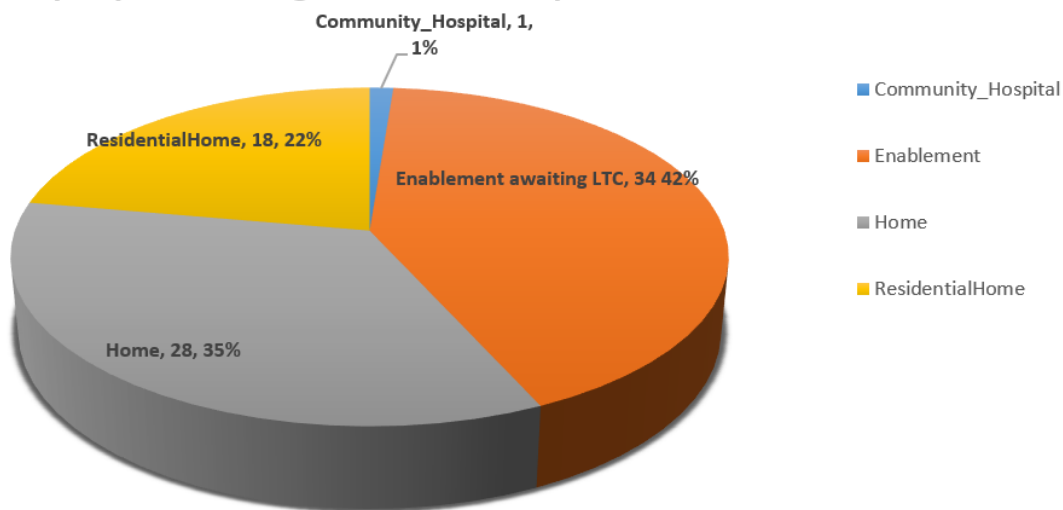
In June 2021, several domiciliary care providers attended a workshop facilitated by Lucy Richardson, Policy Officer, National Commissioning Board (Welsh Local Government Association) looking at a new Business Continuity Plan template. The workshop provided a good opportunity to look at the template BCP 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

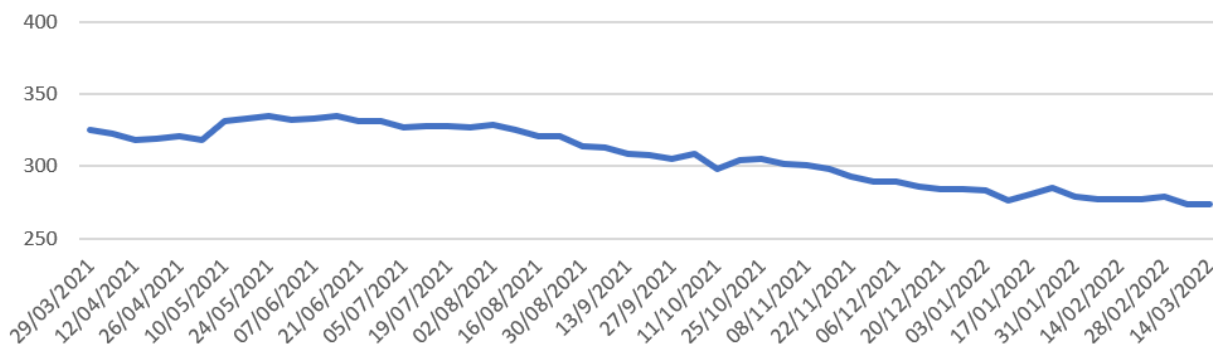
Total people awaiting dom care - snapshot as of 2022-03-14



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.

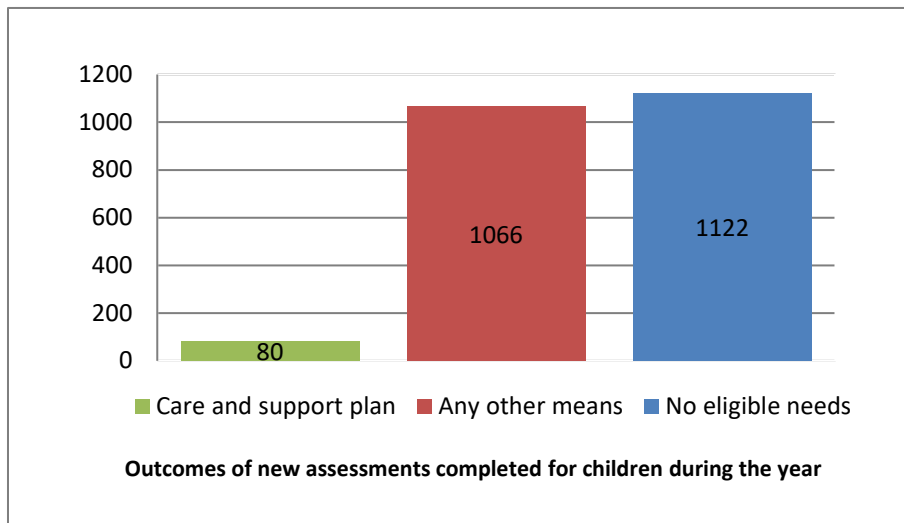
The Child Protection Register has fluctuated during 2021/22, the Child Protection Register and is at 45 children as at the end of the year. This is an increase on the end of year figure for 2020/2021 and in part can be attributed to the greater visibility of children towards the latter part of the year 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.

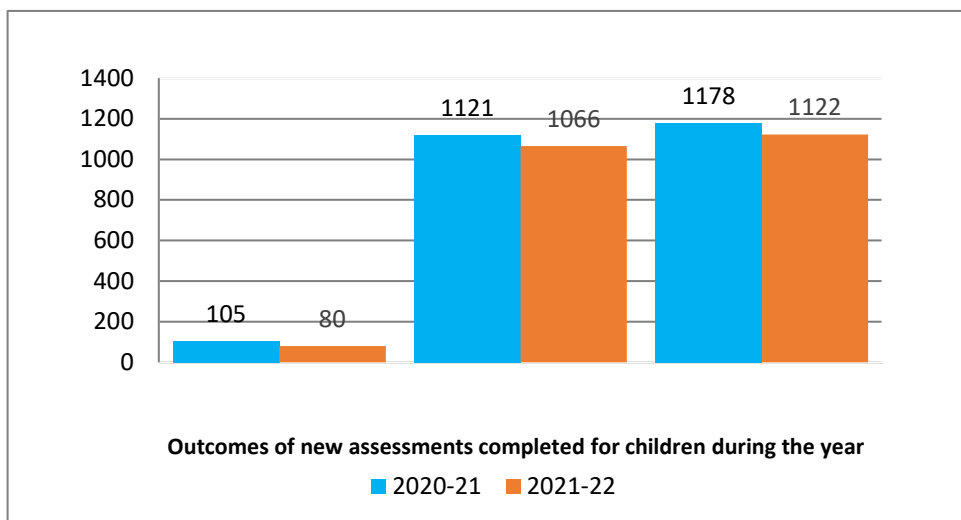
The availability of Early Intervention and Prevention activities have been affected greatly by Covid 19. Wherever possible support services have been offered virtually.

Outcome of Assessments



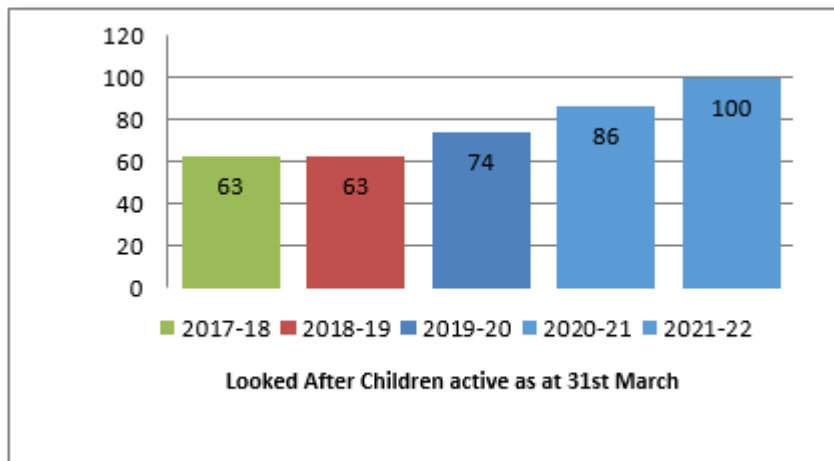
Risk assessments have been completed for all necessary home or face to face visits. Virtual working was implemented for multi-agency meetings with support provided for families to participate.

There were 4056 contacts made with Porth Gofal/Porth Cynnal for children during 2021-22.

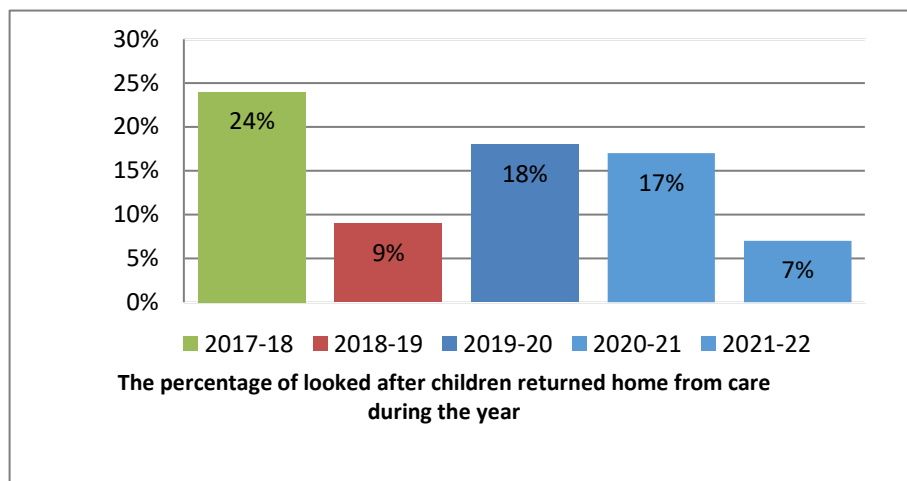


Looked After Children

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.

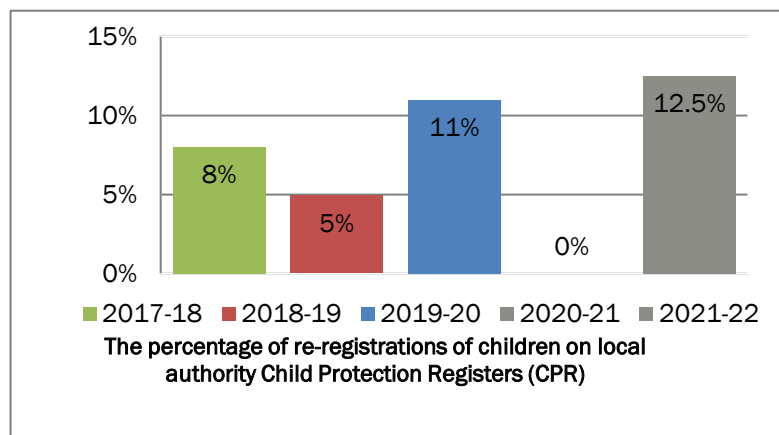


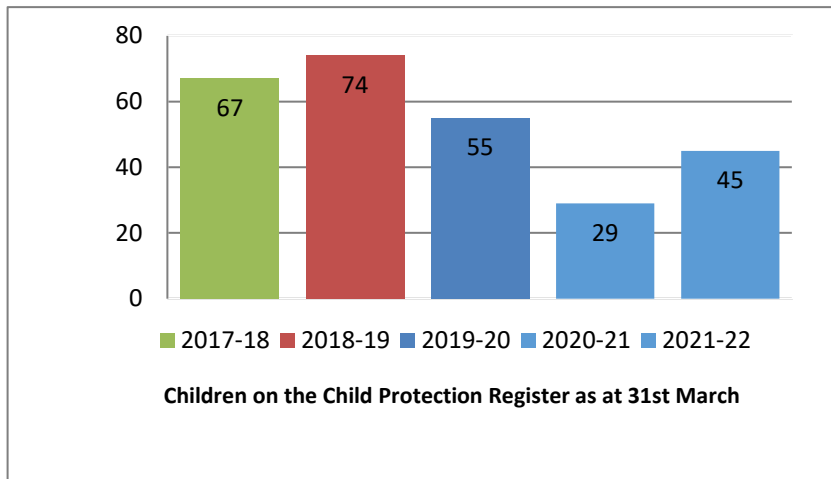
I



The Child Protection Register (CPR)

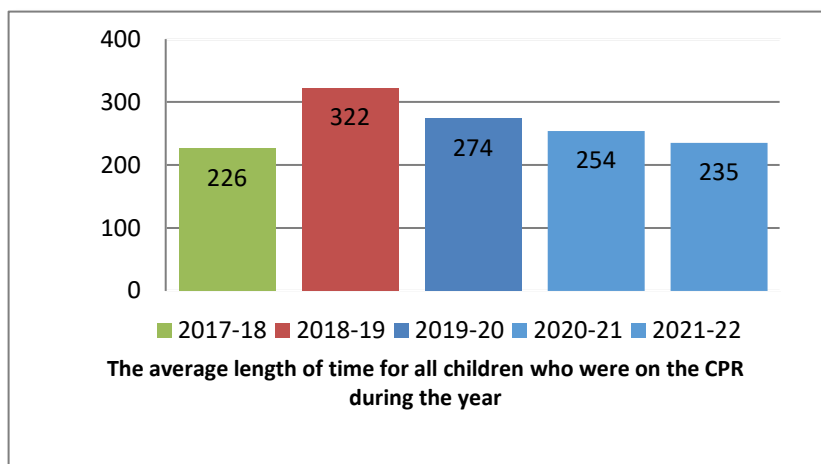
There has been a 12.5% increase in the re-registration of children on the local authority’s Child Protection Register During 2020-21, a period of which was during the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions, children and young people did not have a great deal of access to support and contact outside of their 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

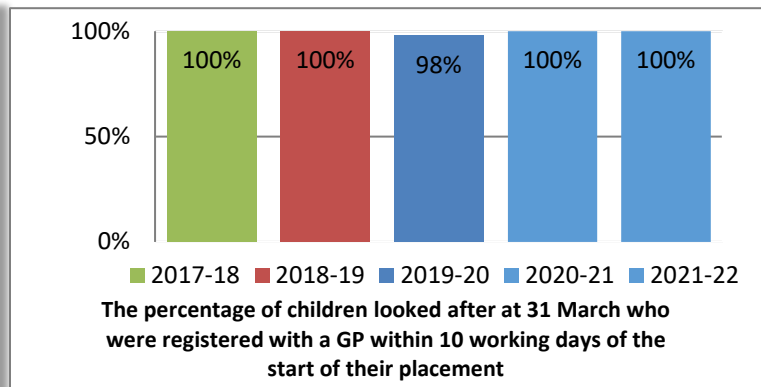
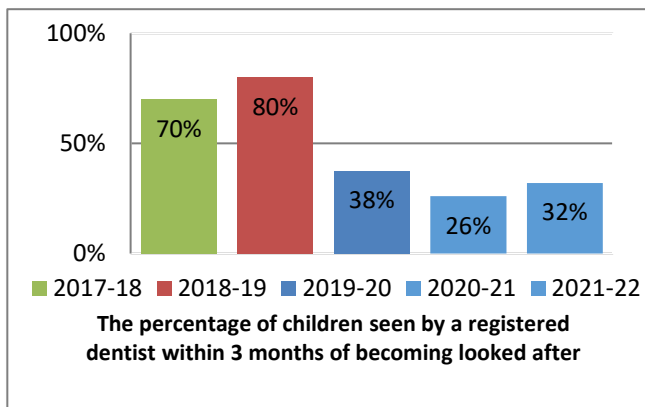
at the end of the 21-22 was higher than at the end of 2020-2021 but not as high as at the end of 2019-2020



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

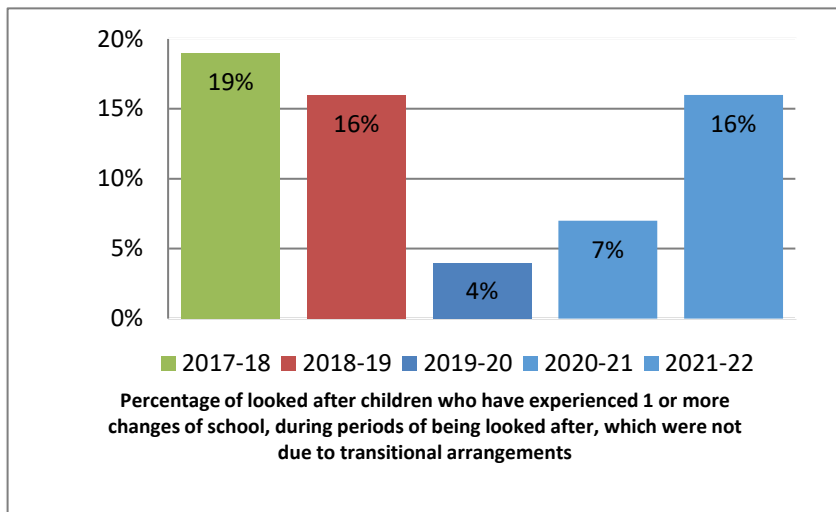
The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 state that the responsible authority must ensure that a looked after child is under the care of a registered dental practitioner as soon as practicable and in any event not later than 20 working days after the placement is made.



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.

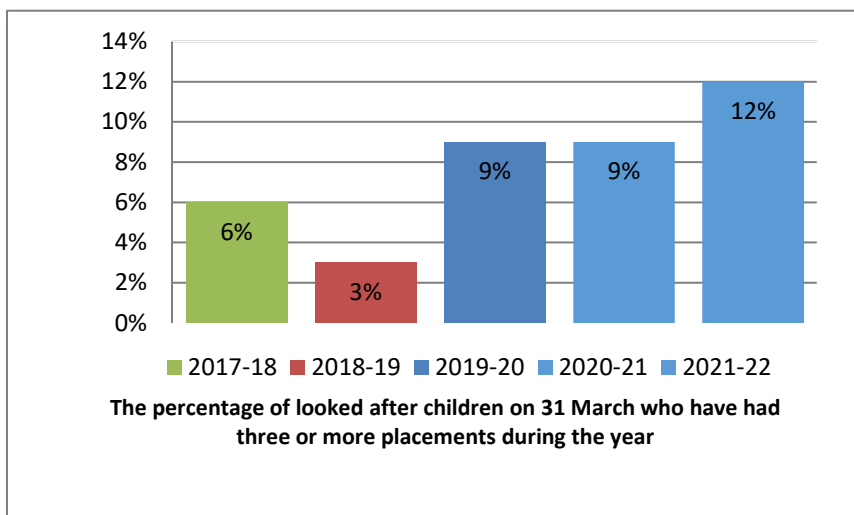
Looked after children – stability of placements



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

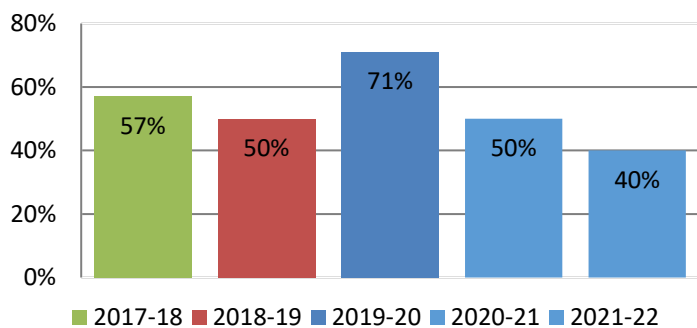


different carers when the children have complex needs and due to restrictions only being able to offer limited/online support as well as the carers having the children at home even on school days. With regards to the low percentage of children having 1 or more changes of school as a service we continue 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.

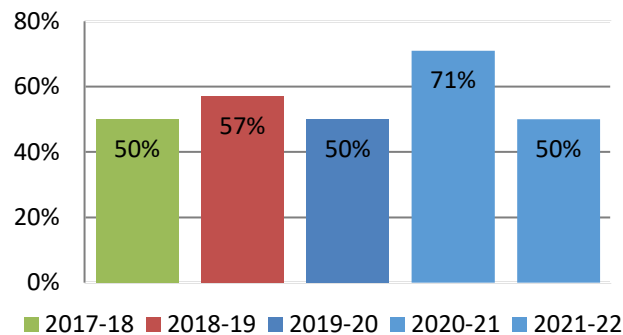
Young People Leaving Care

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.

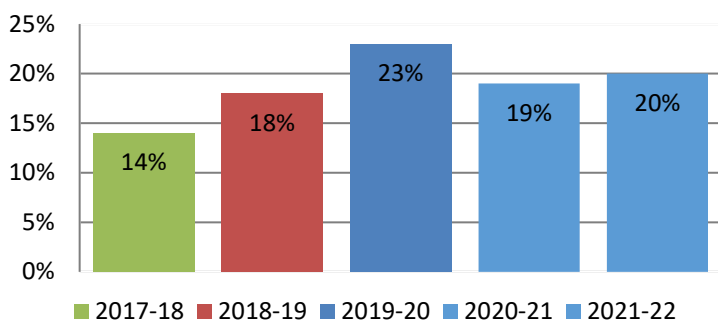
For this cohort of young people Covid has been a particularly difficult period with challenges for some with loosing employment and accommodation and increased isolation during lockdown. It is disappointing to see a drop in the percentage of young people within 12 months of becoming care leavers who 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

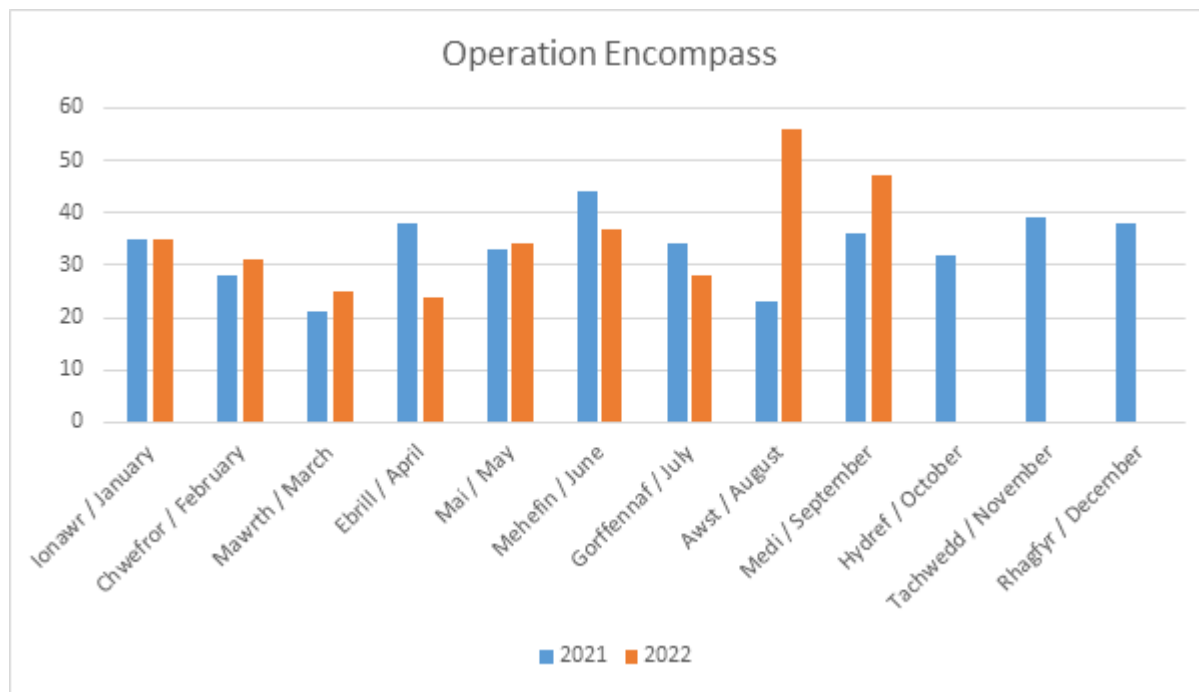


The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 24 months after leaving care



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

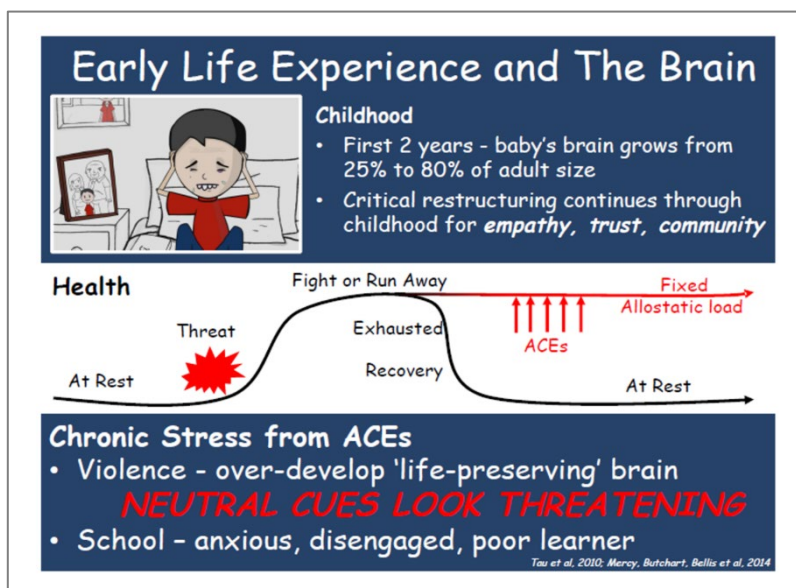
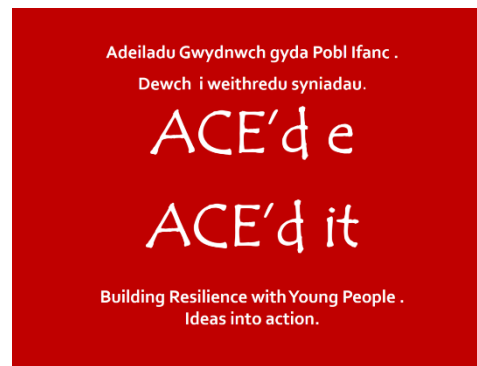
- 1.2 Equip and support staff to identify assess and provide support when required for carers in accordance with statutory requirements.
 - Staff identify carers and offer carers support needs assessment
 - Staff training re carers assessments has been completed.
 - Staff will record reason for refusal 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.

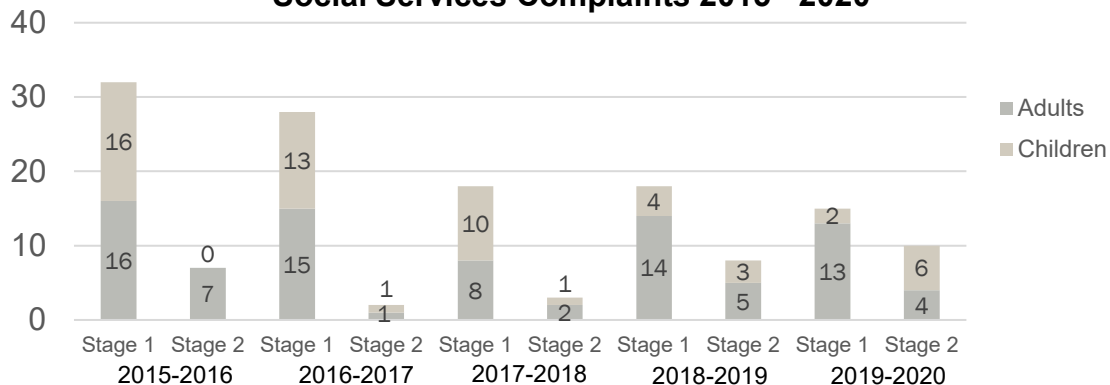
Social Services staff continue to work closely with the Complaints and FOI Team by adopting an early-resolution approach to incoming concerns and queries, which is proving to be an effective strategy. This can be demonstrated when comparing the number of enquiries/concerns against the number of cases 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

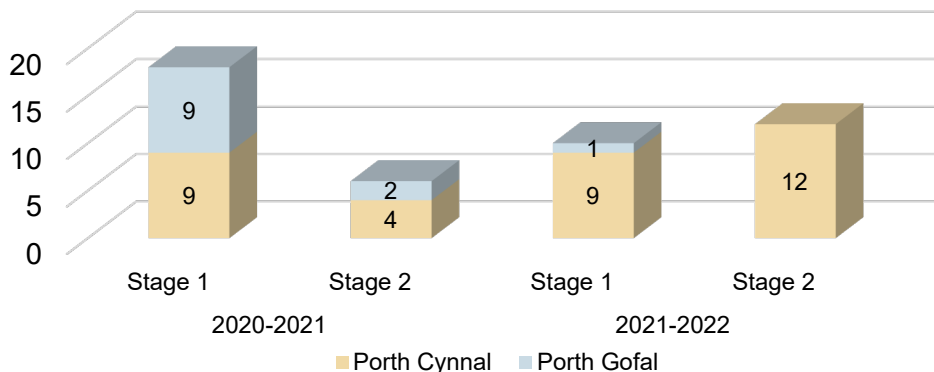
As referred to in the Introduction, the Complaints and FOI recording systems were only aligned with the service structures implemented as part of the Council’s Through-Age and Wellbeing Strategy at the start of 2020. It is therefore only possible to make a direct comparison between the performances of 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

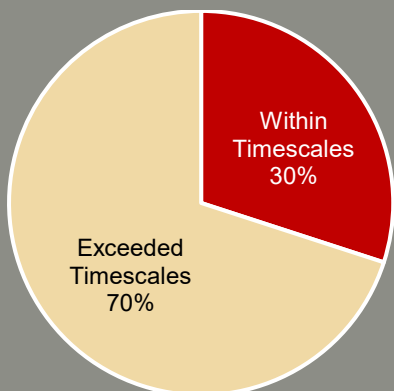
A breakdown of the number of complaints and their outcomes is provided below, in accordance with the relevant areas:

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

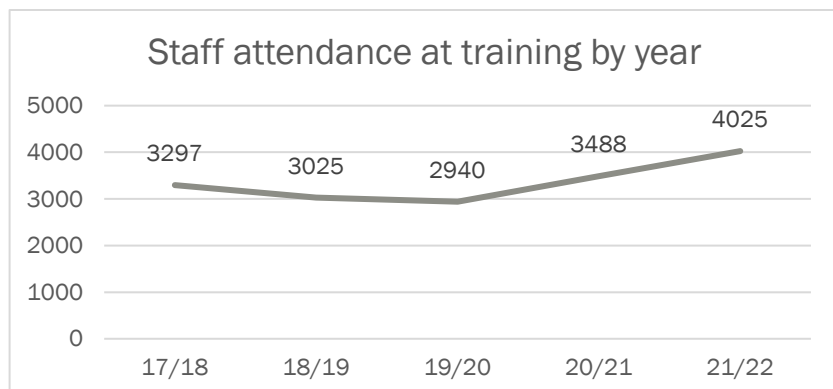
This year has again been challenging for the social care workforce, facing staff recruitment and retention challenges alongside the impact of Covid. It is, however, a testament to the commitment and professionalism of the workforce that whilst maintaining operational service delivery the numbers undertaking 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.

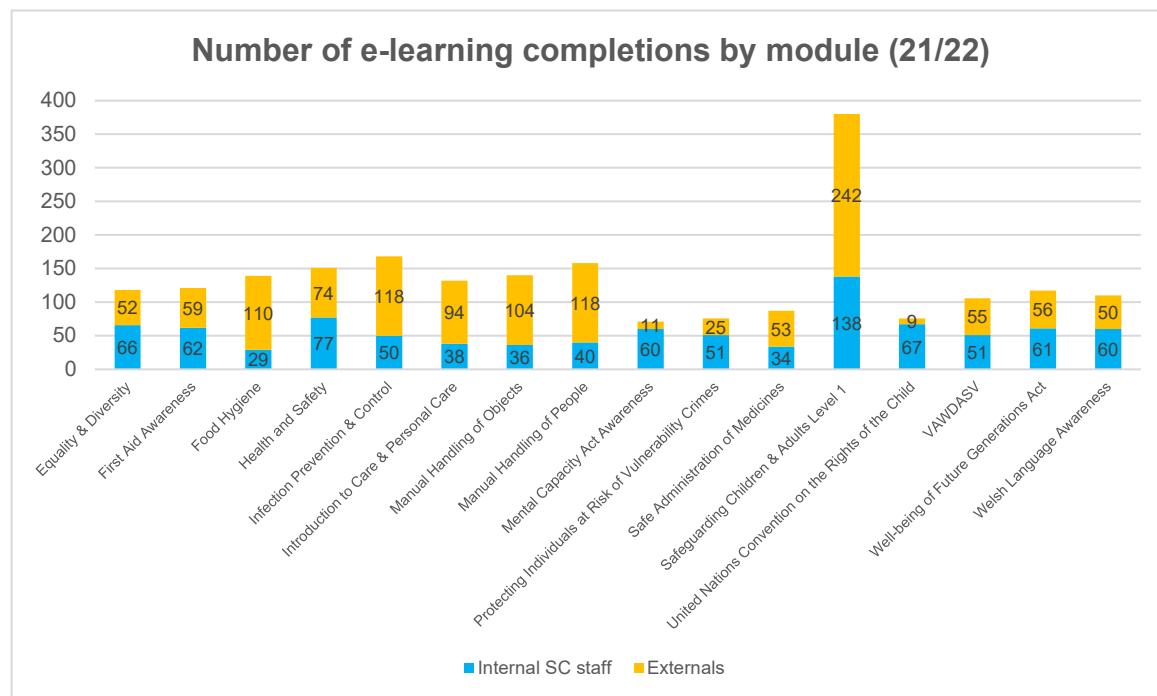
Positive working relationships have been maintained with external social care providers supported by annual engagement events that encourage dialogue around forthcoming priorities and training needs. This allows the needs of the whole sector to be taken into consideration in planning the annual training 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)