

Ceredigion County Council

Sian Howys

DRAFT



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:

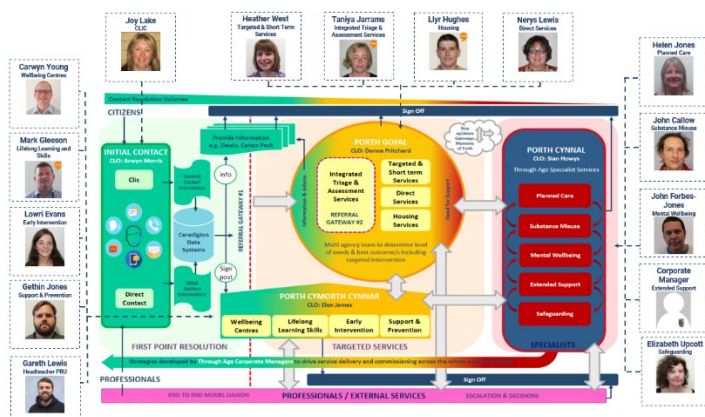
- Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
- Working with people and partners to protect and promote people’s physical and mental health and emotional well-being

- 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.

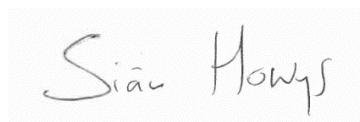
- Clic Customer Contact – Initial point of contact and referral
- Porth Cymorth Cynnar – Early intervention and Prevention
- Porth Gofal – Triage, Assessment, Targeted Intervention and Direct Services
- Porth Cymorth Cynnal – Specialist Care and Support Through Age Services

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sian Howys". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sian Howys
Statutory Director of Social Services
Corporate Lead Officer – Porth Cynnal

2. Summary of Performance

As laid out under section 145 of the Social Services and Wellbeing act, the Performance Measurement framework is used as a gauge of performance of local authorities’ social services functions. This section will illustrate how the service has performed over the past year. It must be noted that following Welsh Government direction minimal reporting was completed due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the report reflects this.

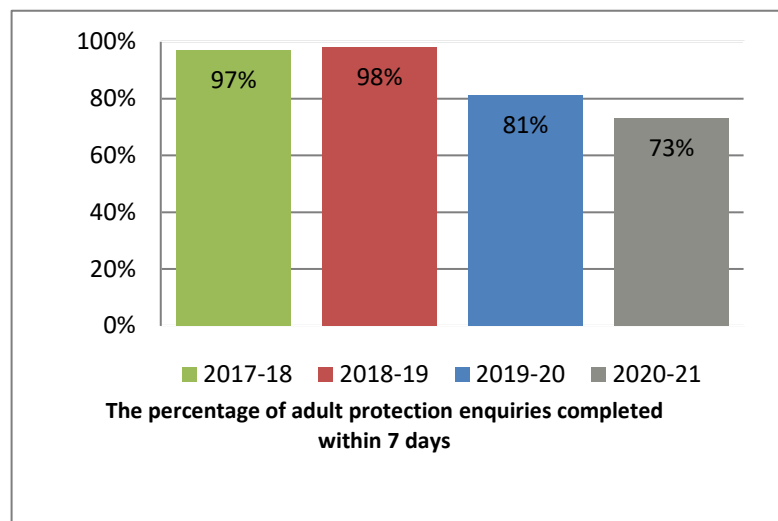
Adult and Commissioning Services Summary

The performance of services for adults is satisfactory with priority given to adhering to local, regional, and national Covid 19 regulations, guidance and protocols in collaboration with partner agency whilst participating fully in all multi -agency forums dealing with the pandemic.

The continued development of key service areas such as Clic for initial contact and signposting to Porth Gofal for advice and assistance, triage and proportionate assessment forms the basis of our future model. Opportunities for developing and enhancing prevention services within Porth Cymorth Cynnar continues as another key element with Covid 19 adjustments such as Community Connectors providing online support and welfare phone calls.

Adult Safeguarding

Ceredigion Adult Safeguarding Service complied with the regionally and nationally agreed protocols



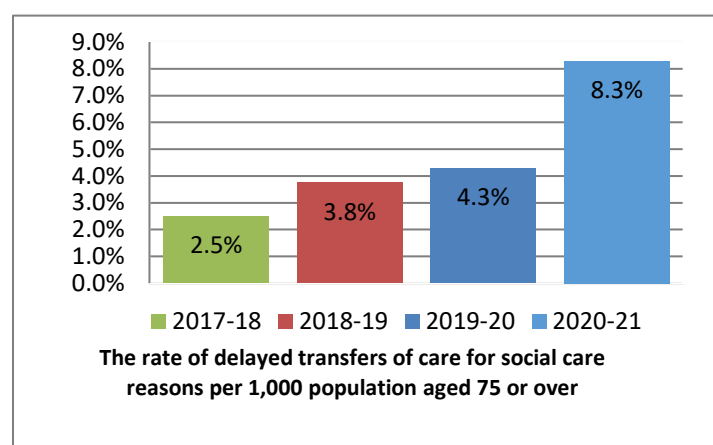
for carrying out safeguarding duties to adults at risk during the pandemic. Risk assessments were completed for all necessary visits and virtual working was implemented whenever possible. This measure shows the percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within 7 days. There has been a reduction in 2020/2021 which relates to the impact of Covid on staff sickness and absence rates and the need to prioritise high risk cases. An enquiry should normally be completed within seven working days of the report. This of course would not prevent

immediate action being taken when necessary to protect an adult at risk.

Delayed Transfers of Care

This year, the delayed transfers of care measure has significantly increased due to the impact that COVID has had on services such as the availability of residential placement and domiciliary care with lockdown and infection outbreak control measures. A delayed transfer of care is experienced by an inpatient in a hospital, who is ready to move on to the next stage of care but is prevented from doing so for one or more reasons such as service provision due to the need for care and support. Ceredigion County Council made the decision in April 2020 to adopt the COVID-19 Hospital

Discharge Service Requirements (Wales). However, it also decided that by adhering to the Guidance in its entirety it would potentially expose the residential care homes to risks of infection that could have catastrophic consequences. In order to mitigate this risk and protect the service users and staff within the homes, the decision was made that new admissions to residential care homes would only be accepted following a negative Covid 19 test result, proof of testing and the result will need to be provided prior to accepting the admission. For service users who needed to return to the home following a period of acute care the same arrangement was applied.



Porth Gofal has strong connections with 3rd Sector Services which have been utilized whenever possible to support those who have low level needs for support following discharge from hospital. Porth Gofal’s ethos is one of integrated working with our Health colleagues with triage being the main hub for coordination of hospital discharges. This has ensured that the person has the right support at the right time by the right professional, building on the person’s strengths and network and promoting self-resilience to regain their

independence. Hospital discharges continue to be a priority within the Porth Gofal service and for that to happen safely within the confines of nationally and locally agreed Covid protocols.

Enablement

Enablement is ordinarily a short and intensive service, usually delivered in the home, which is offered to people with disabilities and those who are frail or recovering from an illness or injury.

2020-2021 Referrals received actioned and closed by Enablement

2020/21	Total Referrals	Enablement	Long Term	Closed	Started
Apr-20	28	23	5	7	21
May-20	55	45	10	14	41
June-20	42	28	14	9	33
Jul-20	41	31	10	11	30
Aug-20	34	23	11	13	21
Sep-20	33	19	14	16	17
Oct-20	59	33	26	32	27
Nov-20	52	27	25	22	30

Dec-20	53	34	19	7	46
Jan-21	43	27	16	21	22
Feb-21	52	31	21	24	28
Mar-21	60	49	11	32	28
TOTAL	552	370	182	208	344

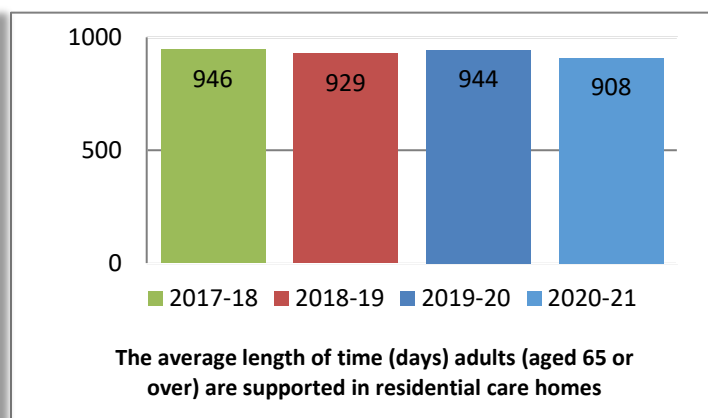
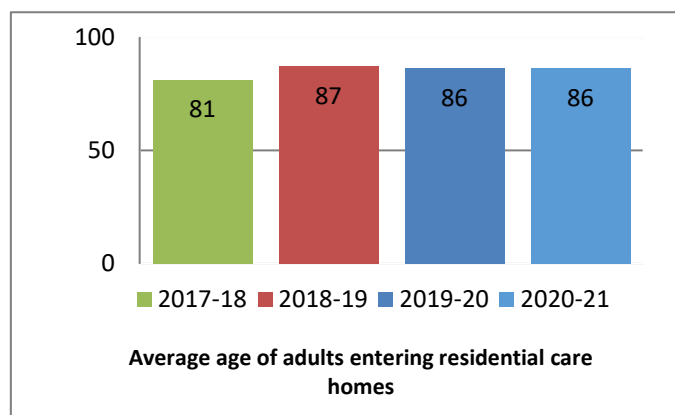
Totals per month of individuals in receipt of Enablement and hours delivered

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

In January 21 – March 21 of the 24 long term care bridging cases that were accepted, 8 were reduced by Enablement intervention by 45.75 hours. This has reinforced our new model of development to assess long term needs through the lens of an enablement focus.

The service has continued to deliver an important service in promoting early discharge from hospital and promoting independence within the Covid control protocols. The service has been able to deliver positive outcomes for individuals despite significant pressures in our commissioned domiciliary care services. The in-house enablement service has continued to help hundreds of people regain their independence and live at home with little or no need for support from statutory services. The underlying principles of early intervention, de-escalation and reablement continue to be part of the golden thread of our transformation of social care services.

During 2020-2021, the service also expanded its staffing capacity to include the provision of support for longer term domiciliary support utilizing specific Covid 19 funding and in order to address the impact of increased pressures on the independent providers of domiciliary care in the county

Adults supported in residential care homes

Residential care provides a range of options for individuals who require 24hour care. These include short term, temporary and permanent placements. There are various residential care options available, depending on the needs of the individual. Ceredigion operates five residential care homes itself and commissions with several private companies both in Ceredigion and further afield.

This year there has been a decrease in the average amount of time spent in residential homes and that could well be attributed to the Pandemic and the impact of the infection outbreaks. Very early on, the Local Authority developed an Infection, Prevention and Control Protocol. This ensured that the workforce and health colleagues had clear guidance to follow in relation to minimizing the opportunity for the transmission of the virus within the care homes.

A protocol was also developed to ensure that key communication could be shared with the social care independent sector.

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

A Regional Escalation Policy was developed with local arrangements agreed and this was shared across the sector.

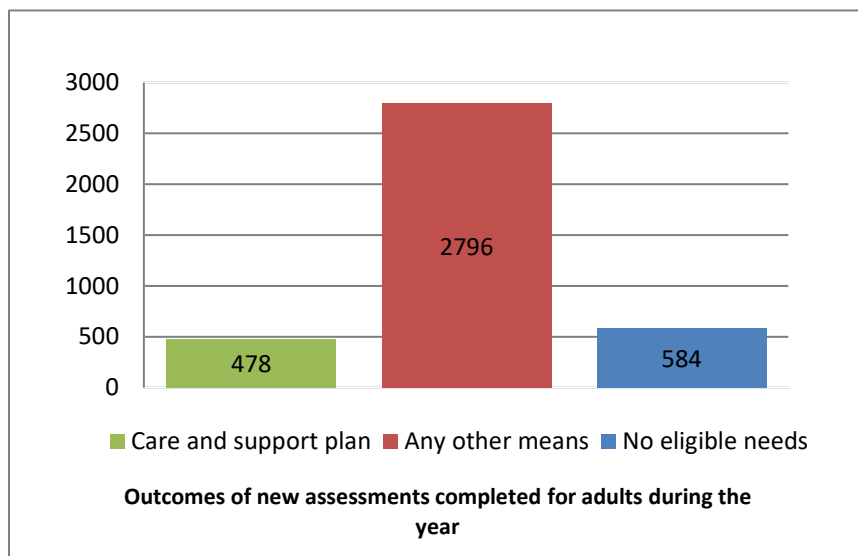
Daily SitRep across all care homes have been completed 7 days a week in order to identify potential issues or concerns so that issues were actioned quickly.

The local authority invested at a very early point in conferencing facilities to ensure that families could have access technology to maintain contact whilst face to face visiting was suspended. Later in the year, the Council supported the planning and development of outdoor visiting facilities when alert levels were reduced. This also progressed with the Independent Sector through the assistance of the Wales Co-operative Centre who have provided equipment, training, and support to enable technology to be accessed and used. This programme of work received national press coverage.

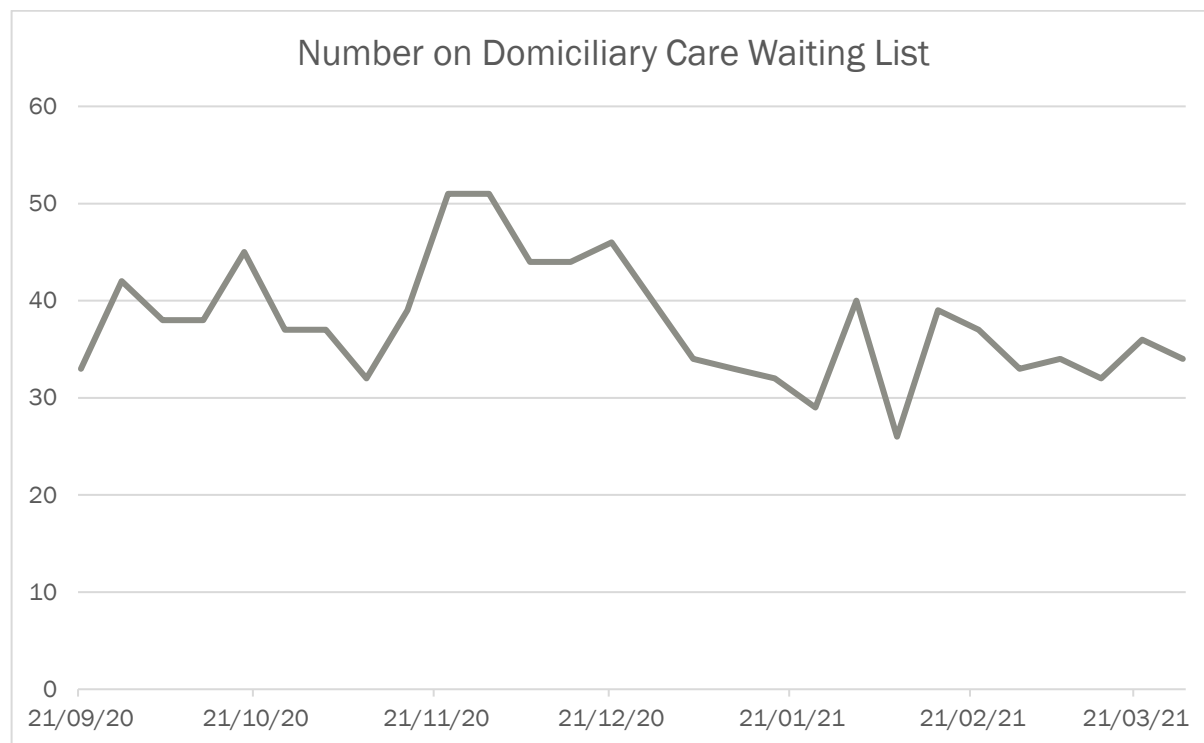
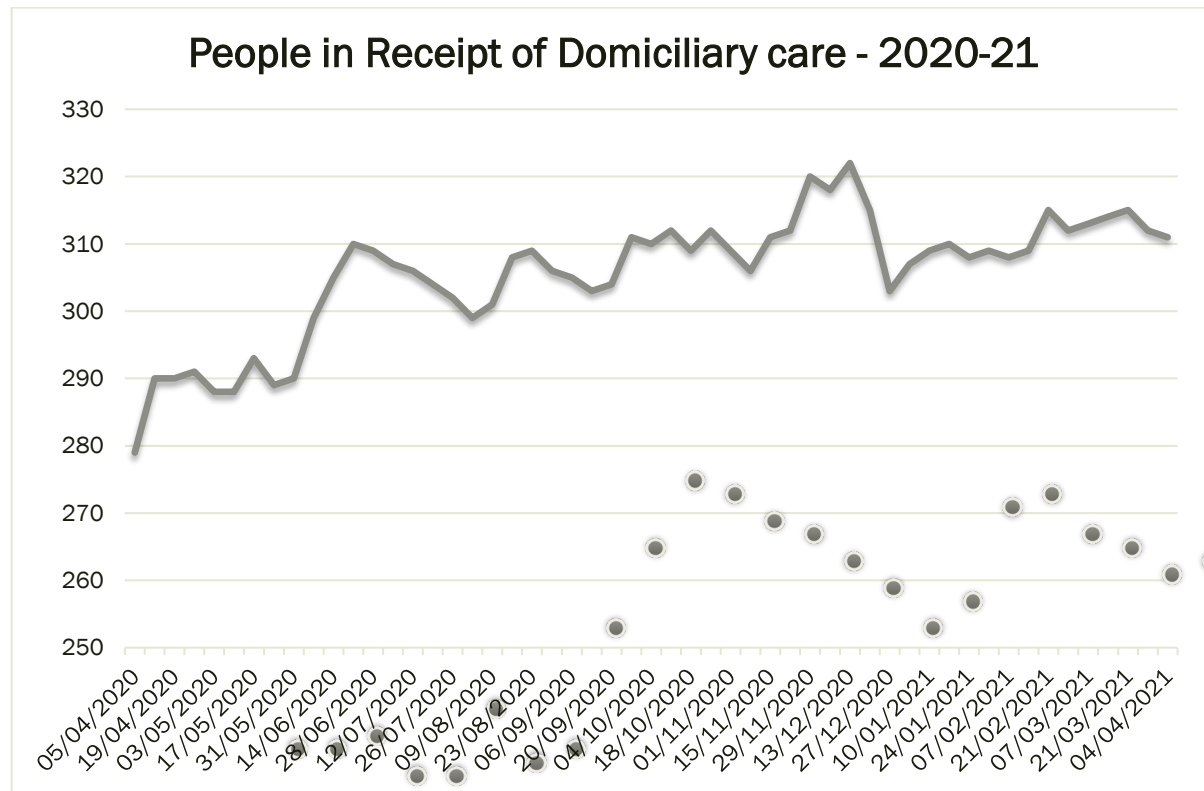
Advice and Assistance for adults

Section 17 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to secure the provision of an information, advice, and assistance (IAA) service. The Porth Gofal team are trained and have a high knowledge of preventative 3rd sector services within the local area. The team also works closely with Porth Cymorth Cynnar to address and de-escalate those with low level needs at the first point of contact in collaboration with the person.

All referrals that are not deescalated by information only are passed through to the integrated triage team for a proportionate assessment. The Multi -Disciplinary Team (MDT) will provide a holistic assessment using SOS to identify what advice and assistance is required to support and deescalate the situation further. The MDT can provide specialist professional knowledge which includes OT, Physiotherapy, Nursing and Social work. The MDT will also refer on to other professionals within the Health Board for support if required. With the Covid 19 restrictions, the team have been working virtually with risk assessments completed for all face-to-face contact.



Provision of Domiciliary Care



During the period 2020-09-21 to 2021-03-21, the number of people waiting for domiciliary care fluctuated between a low of 26 and a high of 51 but has been between 30 and 40 since December 2020.

We continued to enjoy good working relationships with most providers which gives us a good basis on which to build, allowing us to work closely with the market through the peaks and troughs and in the face of all the challenges of the impact of Covid 19. Providers continue to feedback that their regular meetings with Ceredigion County Council have been beneficial and informative in terms of implementing local and national Covid protocols on the safe delivery of personal care and infection control and the distribution of PPE. Providers can raise important issue and trends can be identified and escalated when necessary, ensuring their voices are heard regionally.

We have several remote, isolated areas in which it is very difficult to procure care, and this became even more of a challenge during Covid 19 with providers facing significant staffing challenges. In order to facilitate the release of pressure in certain areas and to aide hospital discharges we during the pandemic utilized our in-house Enablement team to support with the demand for services.

	Total hours of home care purchased from independent sector	Comments
2017/18	239470.73	551 individuals received commissioned dom care
2018/19	241300.18	571 individuals received commissioned dom care
2019/20	234499.18	540 individuals received commissioned dom care
2020/21	209780.61	487 individuals received commissioned dom care

A number of our providers offer care services to Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Powys and are able to fill the gaps in their rotas across county lines. There are currently 14 main providers operating within the main domiciliary care market in Ceredigion at 31st March 2021.

Day Services

The Day Centers were closed during this period and the Centre based services to Disabled Adults and Older Adults were suspended. Service Adjustments were made with Porth Cynnal and Porth Gofal Teams, Social Care and Health and Safety Risk Assessments were completed and Infection Control Measures adhered to in order to ensure safe respite and support arrangements for the most vulnerable supplemented with regular virtual and keep in touch calls.

Mental Wellbeing Services

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed by the Porth Cynnal teams staff and infection control measures adhered to with continuation of Mental Health Act assessment and statutory support for people experiencing mental health difficulties and illness and their carers.

Substance Misuse Service

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and

statutory care and support for people experiencing difficulties and dependency with substance misuse and their carers.

Extended Support

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for people with disabilities and their carers.

Planned Care

Risk assessments and Health and Safety Assessments were completed, and infection control measures adhered to by the Porth Cynnal Team staff with continuation of assessment and statutory care and support for adults with longer term care and support needs.

Children and Families Services

During this year, Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar teams collaborated closely with schools service and key partner agencies to safeguard and support Children and Young people in Ceredigion and continue to meet statutory duties within the requirements of regionally and nationally agreed Covid 19 protocols and guidance, The significant impact of Covid 19 on children and families has been evident in terms of the reduced visibility of children and lack of access to community support and an increase in support needs for children and young people’s mental and emotional wellbeing .

During the lockdown periods and closure of schools, services worked closely with Schools Service to ensure that children at risk of harm and in need of care and support were able to attend the School Hubs for support.

Respite and support arrangements were prioritised for disabled children and families and looked after children within the confines of the Covid 19 restrictions

With the easing of restrictions during the summer, children in receipt of care and support or of preventative services were able to access summer of fun activities arranged by Porth Cynnal and Porth Cymorth Cynnar services in collaboration with partners whilst adhering to Covid 19 safety measures.

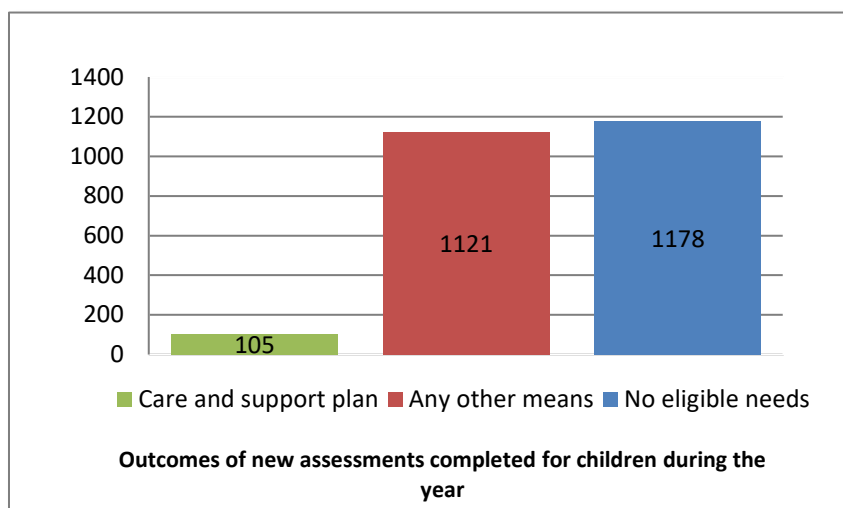
The Child Protection Register has fluctuated during 2020/21, the Child Protection Register with 29 children as at March 31st. This is a reduction on the end of year figure for 2019/2020.

The number of Ceredigion Looked After Children has increased to 86 as at the 31 March 2021. This increase is being closely monitored and the impact of Covid 19 on the ability to keep children safe within their homes and in the community has been evident.

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

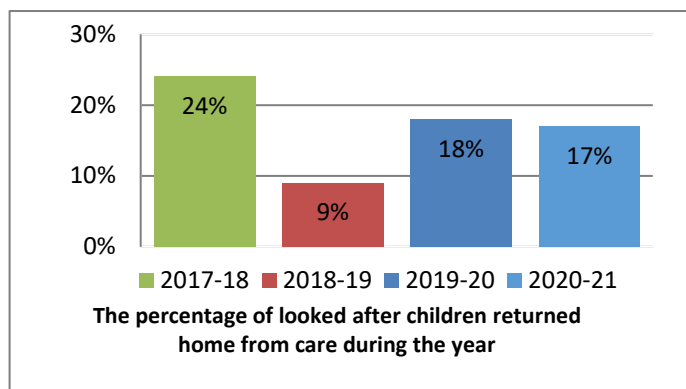
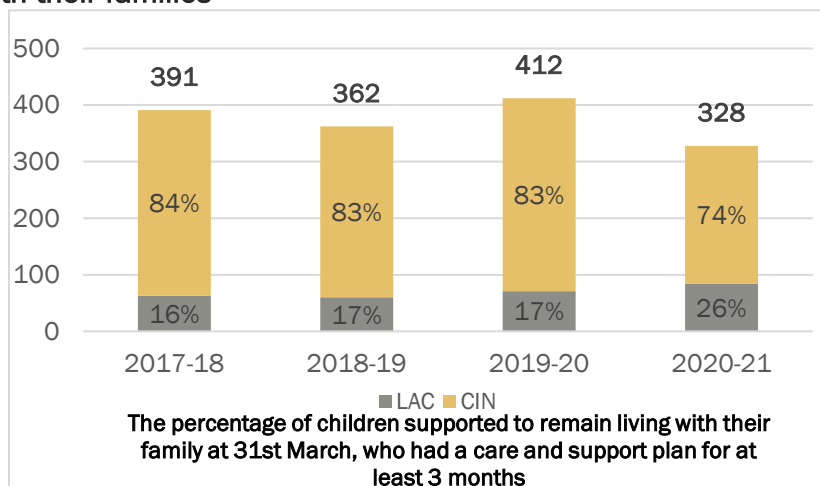
Outcome of Assessments

Risk assessments were completed for all necessary home or face to face visits. Virtual working was implemented for multi -agency meetings with support provided for families to participate. Cases were prioritized with regard to risk of harm from abuse or neglect. Staff worked within the risk and practice framework developed by Welsh Government and with other local and regional protocols.



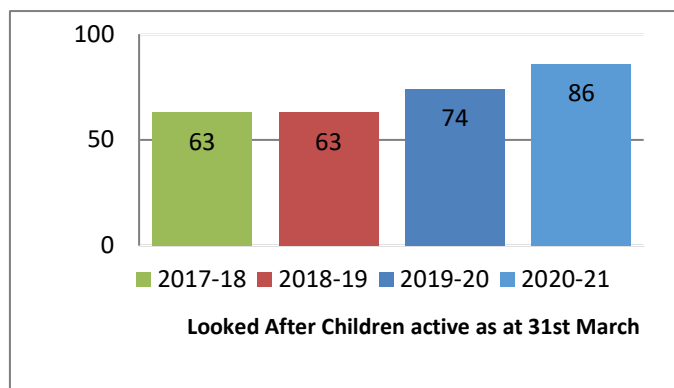
Supporting Children to remain living with their families

Supporting children to live with their families is one of the main goals of the Porth Cynnal services. Wherever possible, it is considered the best outcome for children. This measure compares the number of children supported as Looked After Children (a child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours) to the number of children who are supported outside of these types of arrangements.



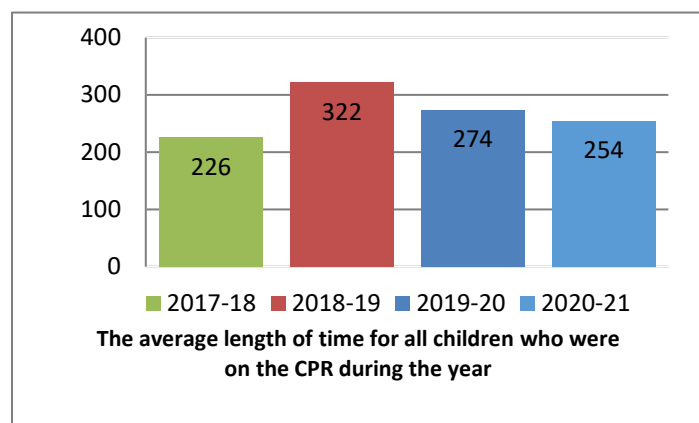
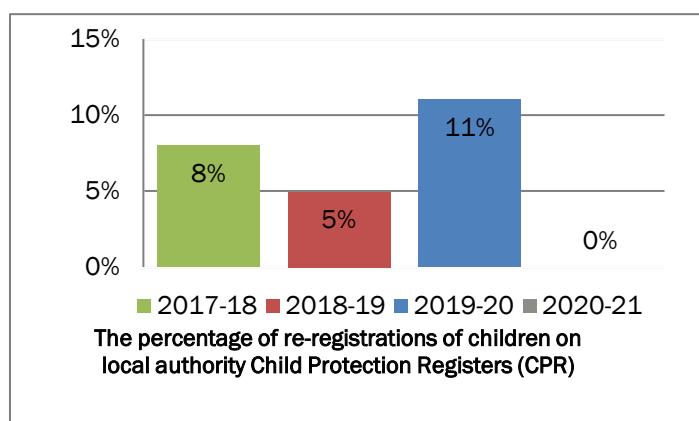
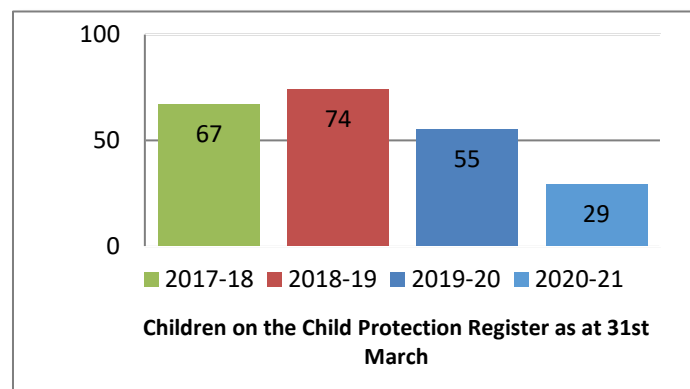
In 2020-21 we saw a further increase in the number of Looked After Children generally and a slight decrease in those returned home from care which reflects the increase in complex cases that are having to be managed and Covid 10 impact. The Edge of Care service continues to provide a key service with practical support for safer parenting. However, this area of work has been impacted by the Pandemic with less easy access to support in the community and greater difficulty to manage risk of harm

in the child’s home or in the community.



The Child Protection Register (CPR)

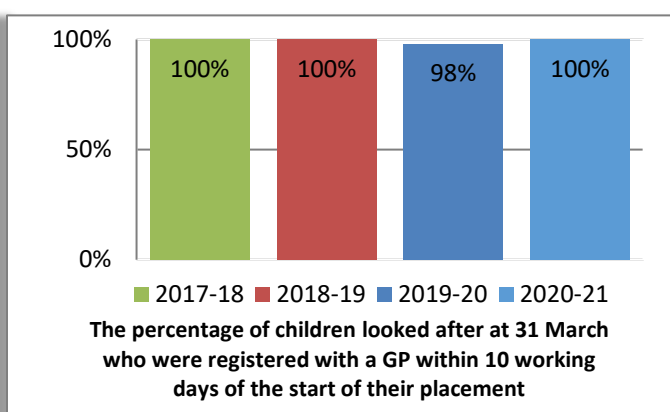
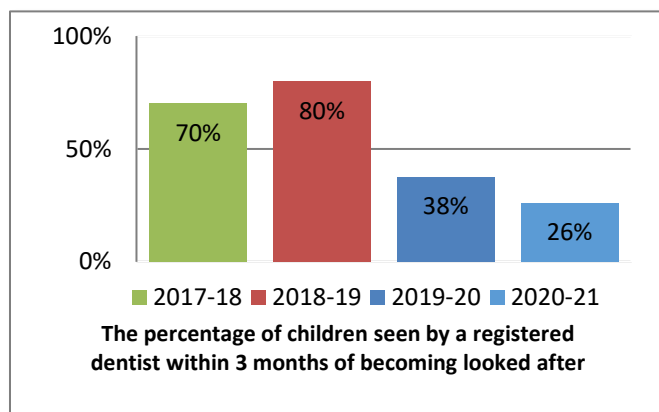
The child protection register provides a record of all children in the area with unresolved safeguarding issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency safeguarding plan. The number of children on the child protection register at the end of the year has decreased, with a reduction in the time that the child remains on the register and there were no re-registrations during this year.



During this year, the Safeguarding Service have worked closely with Police to ensure the safe completion of child protection enquires and investigations within Covid 19 requirements.

Health of our Looked after children

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

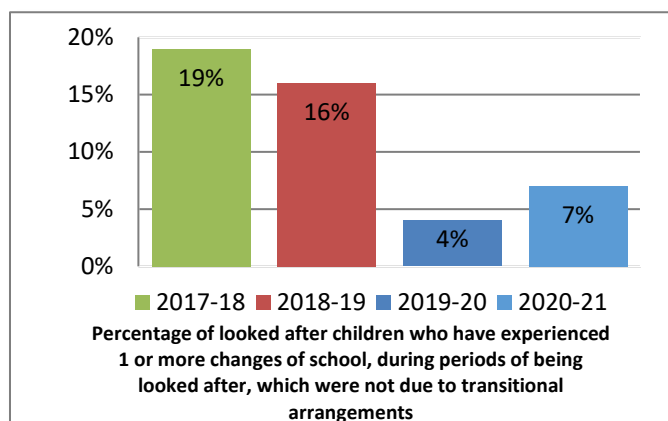


NICE Clinical Guideline [CG19] – ‘Dental checks: intervals between oral health reviews’ sets out the guidance on the frequency of dental checks. This is based on the individual patient’s risk factors for dental disease. Looked After Children are generally considered to be at increased risk of dental disease and it is, therefore, expected that most Looked After Children would be put on recall for either three months or six months. In 2020-21 we saw a further drop in the percentage of children seen by a dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after and this is an issue that is being considered and addressed by Hywel Dda University Health Board as there have been difficulties due to Covid and staffing of dental practices.

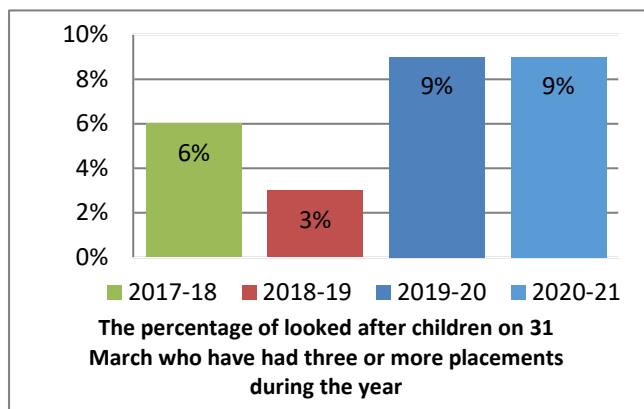
These regulations also state that responsible authorities must ensure that a looked after child is registered with a GP as soon as is practicable and in any event not later than ten working days after the placement is made. As you can see from the graph in 2020-21 we met our target of 100% of Looked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

Looked after children – stability of placements

Research has shown that frequent moves can negatively affect children. Breakdowns, or unplanned moves, are much less likely in younger children. In comparison, ‘teenage’ placements have a higher chance of breaking down.



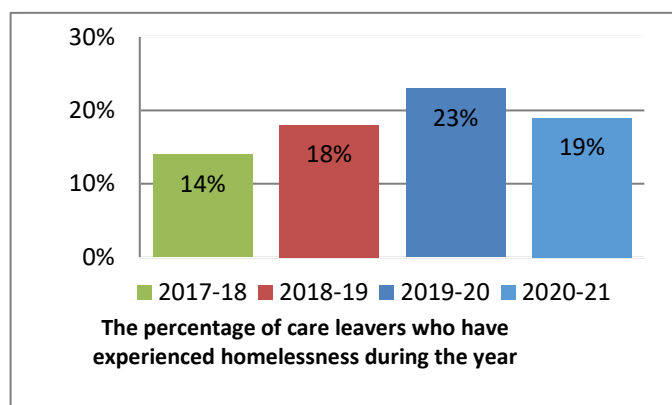
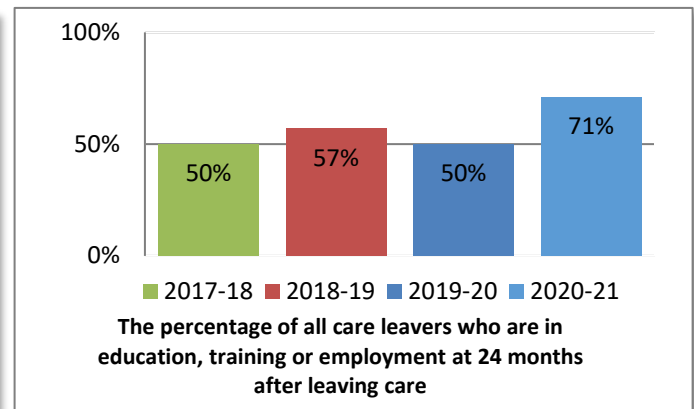
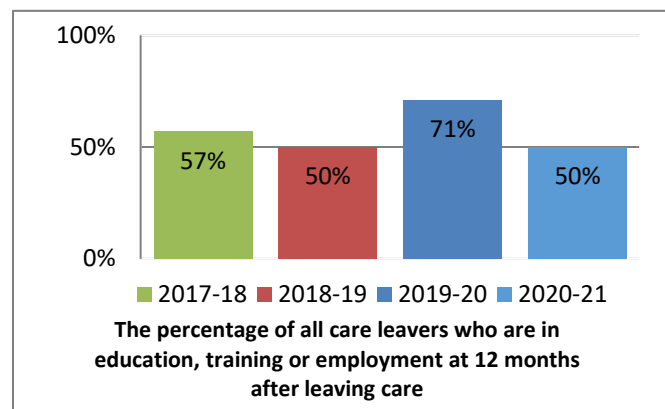
It is not fully understood whether placement moves themselves produce poor outcomes for children or whether this is due to children’s previous experiences and difficulties. There are two main measures which try to illustrate placement stability. The first looks at the number of times a child has had to change school (not including where a child moves from primary to secondary school) and the second looks at how many times a child has had more than two changes of placement. These measures are long-standing and can give an insight into the long-term performance of a service. The downside of both measures is that they are particularly susceptible to change due to the low numbers of children included in them. The increase evidenced in 2019-20 and remaining at that percentage in 2020-21 regarding children having 3 or more placement moves is what we believe to be a consequence of Covid and the difficulty of trying to place the children with different carers when the children have complex needs and due to restrictions only being able to offer limited/online support as well as the carers having the children at home even on school days. With regards to the low percentage of children having 1 or more changes of school as a service we continue to work closely with our education colleagues and try to ensure that a school move is only ever considered when appropriate for the child i.e. moving to their local school having stabilised in placement, or where we have been unable to successfully identify a placement where it is manageable to support the child continuing to attend their school. However the low measure taking into consideration the increase in the number of Looked After Children is again illustrative of the success of the work being undertaken within our Planned Care Service.



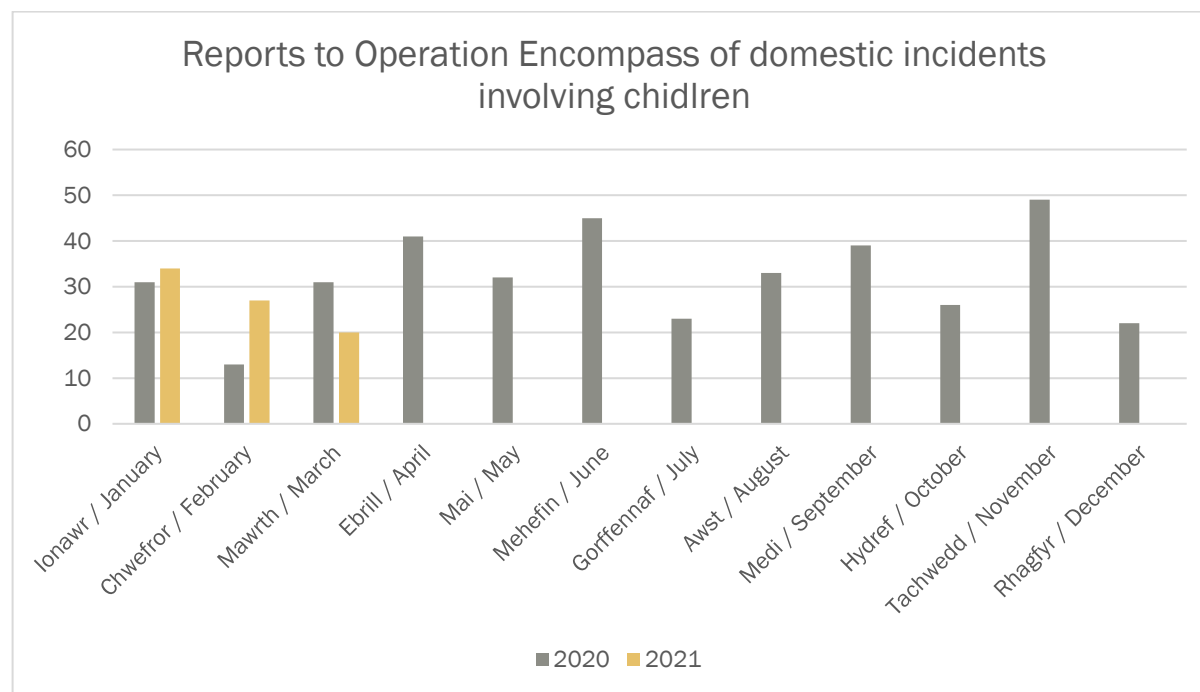
Young People Leaving Care

Leaving care is a term used to reference a group of children who are between 16 and 18 yrs old and have previously been in care but are no longer legally “looked after” by the Local Authority. When children leave care, we still have a duty to support these people until the age of 21, or 25 if they are in full time education or have a disability.

For this cohort of young people Covid has been a particularly difficult period with challenges for some with losing 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.

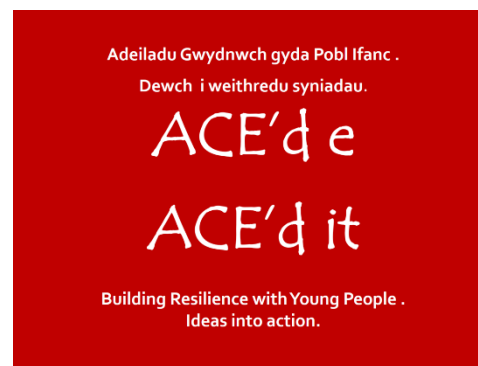
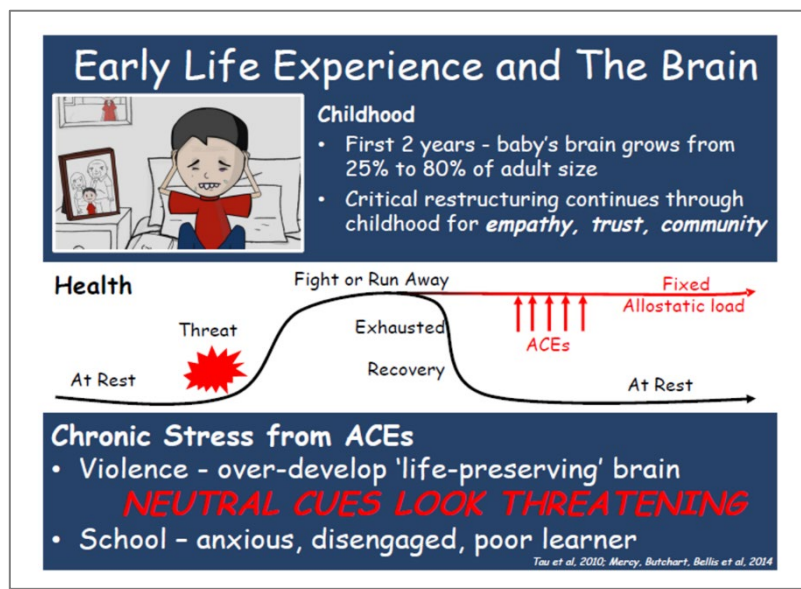
Progress on the Action plan

- 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
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?	<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</p> <p>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</p> <p>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

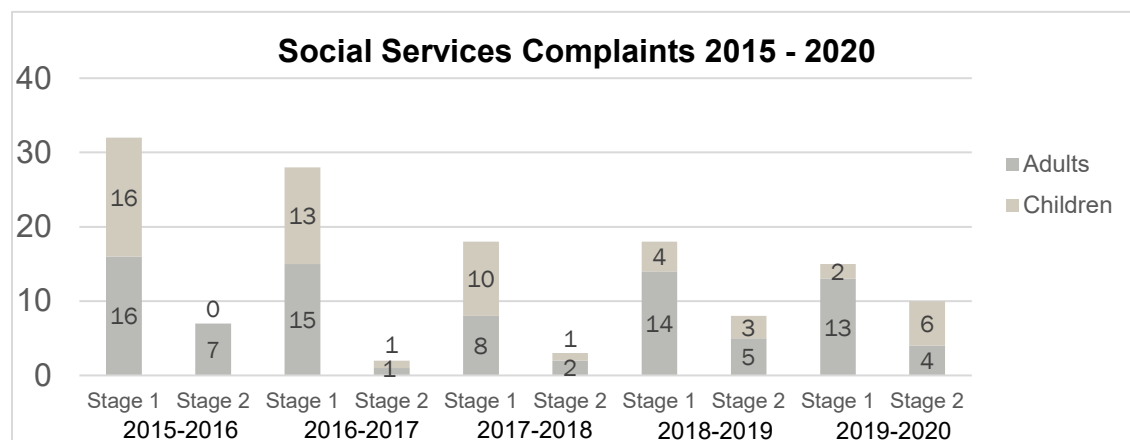
A total of 24 complaints were received in relation to Social Care Services in 2020-2021. In comparison, 25 complaints were received across Social Services in 2019-2020, which demonstrates a slight decrease in the number of complaints received during this reporting period.

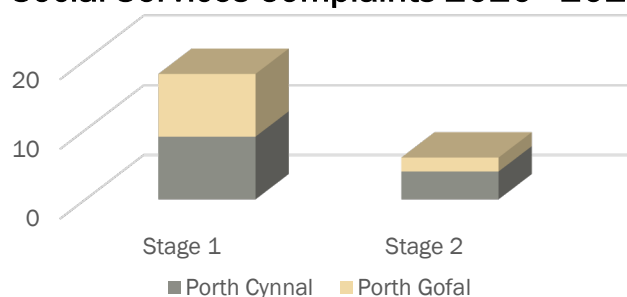
Social Services staff continue to work closely with the Complaints and FOI Team by adopting an early-resolution approach to incoming concerns and queries, which is proving to be an effective strategy. This can be demonstrated when comparing the number of enquiries/concerns against the number of cases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

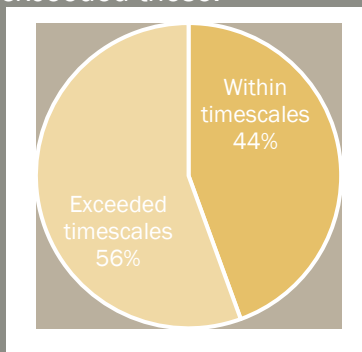
A breakdown of the number of complaints and their outcomes is provided below, in accordance with the relevant service areas:

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.

Tackling Hardship Strategy

On July 7th 2020, Ceredigion Cabinet members approved the Tackling 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.

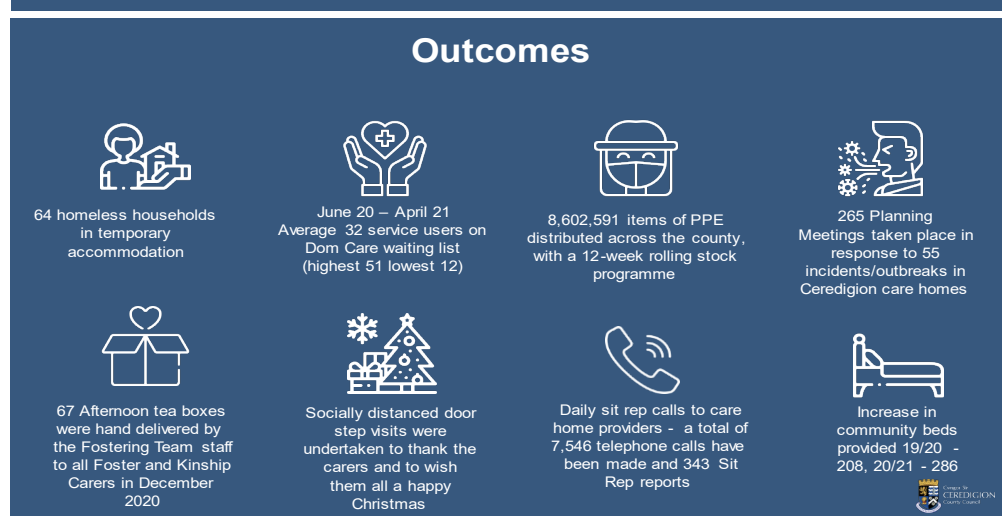
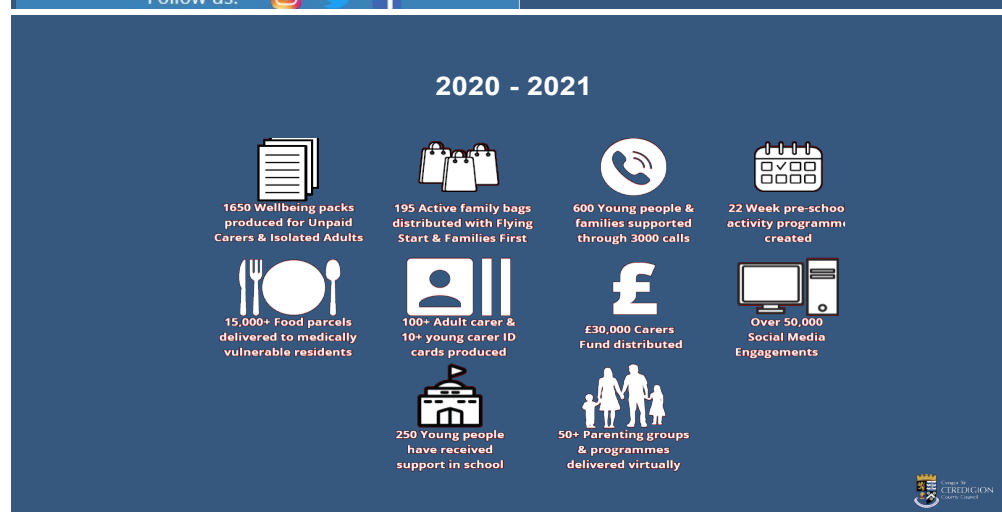
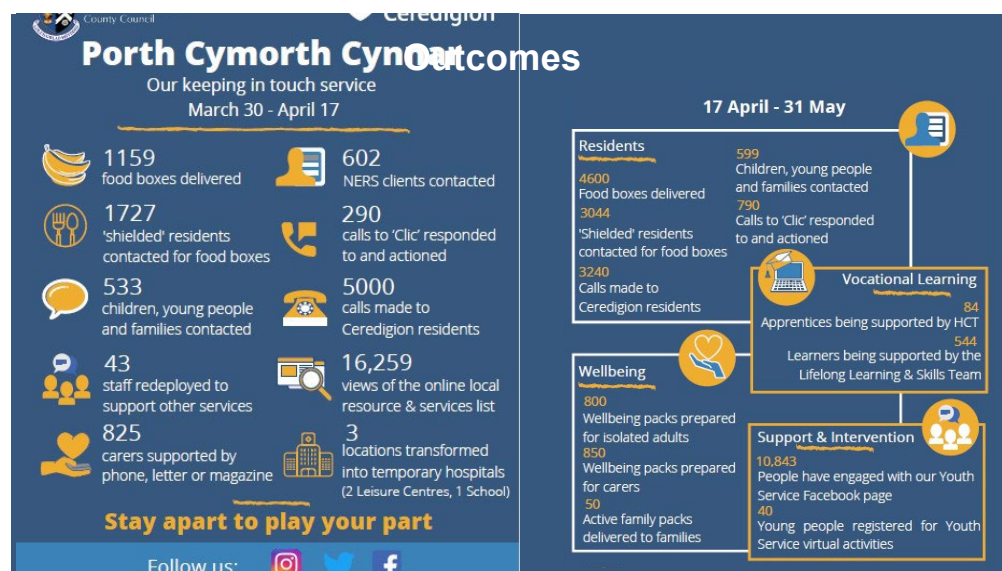
Ensure that the accommodation needs of residents are met

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:



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

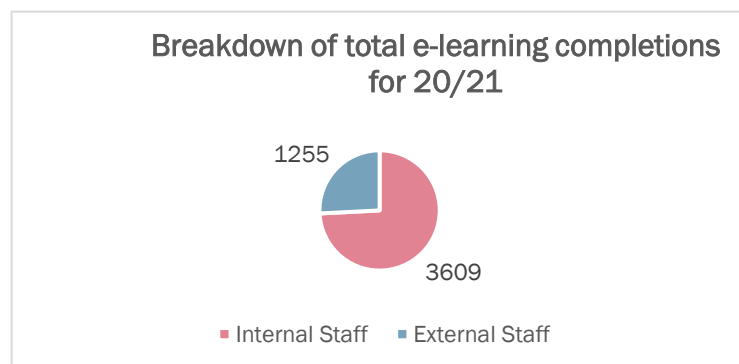
How we have supported the professional development of the Social Care Workforce

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.



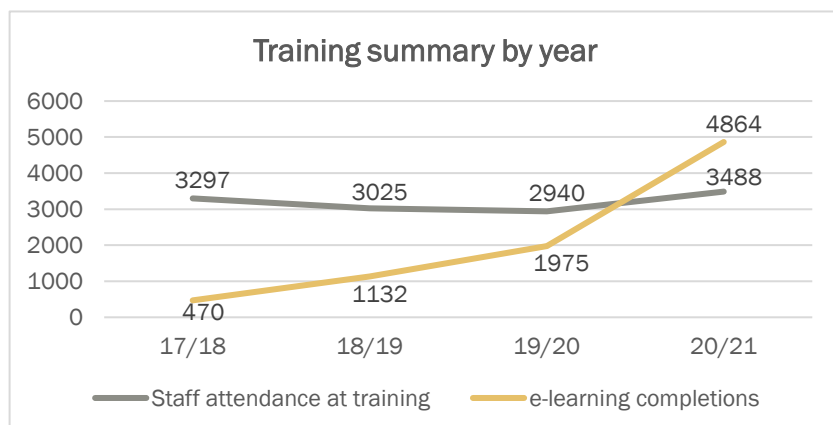
E-learning completions increased by a remarkable 59% on the previous year, with a total of 4864 completions. The opposite graph shows the breakdown of internal and external social care completions:

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