



Social Care & Health: Director's Report 2021/22

Foreword

This report reflects the activity within Social Care and Health between the period April 2021 – March 2022.

It is my first annual report as a new Chief Officer having come into post in October 2021 following Julie Boothroyd's retirement. I have chosen to continue with Julie's now established tradition of using 'Sway' to present the material, primarily because it offers such an accessible and flexible platform for the reader. I have collated the report with the assistance of many contributors and I am extremely grateful for input from the various teams and services within the Social Care and Health directorate.

The overall purpose of the report is:

- To evaluate progress against our social care priorities during the year
- To inform Members and residents about the effectiveness of social care and health in Monmouthshire and identify key risks and challenges.
- To inform Members and residents about the progress made towards meeting the standards set out in Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
- To set out actions and priorities for 2022 – 2023

The annual evaluation report forms an integral part of the continual development of social care and health practice. It is an opportunity to take stock, reflect and re-calibrate; to celebrate achievements, as well as being honest about some of our very real areas of challenge and concern.

The value-base of the service aligns to Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (referred to as the SSWBA) where putting individual people at the centre of what we do and practising with care and compassion is what really counts. Supporting citizens to live their own best lives has been the mantra for Monmouthshire Social Care & Health over many years, and is still at the heart of what we do. Without a doubt, we don't always get it right; we work in constrained circumstances, often with the odds against us and where, more than ever before, 'firefighting' seems to best characterise day to day team life.



There is no denying that this has been a particularly challenging year for social care and health. The Covid pandemic took an immense toll on the residents of Monmouthshire and on the workforce who worked tirelessly to support those who were the most vulnerable. As COVID restrictions gradually lifted across the nation the consequences of the pandemic on people and on services became clearer. With deep-rooted challenges well before the pandemic hit, the health and social care system is now described by many as 'in crisis' and 'broken'. Together with the impact of global instability, this affects us all at a very local and real level. With fragility across the workforce, increased demand, and significant budgetary pressures, the spotlight on social care is inevitable and justified. We are working in uncertain times, where policy frameworks and expectations on services are shifting and where change is one of the only constants.

However; it is times such as these where the importance of holding our values close is critical. We need to understand where and how our social care and health system can be re-balanced and strengthened;

listen, and stay focused on people and outcomes and look to strengths within partnerships. My intention is that this report speaks to all these elements.

At the centre of this, though, is the social care and health workforce. Essentially, the workforce is the service and beyond doubt is our greatest asset.

In many ways, this report, in and of itself, is a celebration of the workforce and an expression of my heartfelt gratitude for everything they do.



Basis for the report

Social Care and Health operates within the legal framework set out within the SSWBA. Preparing and publishing an annual report that charts our progress in delivering against the principles and quality standards of the SSWBA is one of the statutory requirements.

The four key principles of the Act are woven into every section of the report:

- Voice and control
- Prevention
- Well-being
- Partnership

The six quality standards inform our operational activity and set out the ways in which we should be providing services and orientating social care practice. I have illustrated the standards through a range of case examples throughout the report and specifically within section 5. For reference the standards are provided in this stack.



We will work with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes

We will work with people and partners to protect and promote physical and mental health and emotional well-being

We will support people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

We will encourage and support people to learn, develop and participate in society

We will work with and support people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

We will take steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm



Supporting people to define and achieve personal outcomes with regard to wellbeing is a key concept running through the Act, and similarly features highly in the case material within the report.

Although the SSWBA is the primary legislative framework, the report is written within a wider statutory and policy context including:

- Programme for Government
- The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA)
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- A Healthier Wales June 2018
- Strategic Programme for Primary Care Nov 2018
- Equality Act 2010
- “More than Words (Welsh language) Strategy” (Mwyna Geiriau),

At a more local level, social care is delivered in the context of the Council's corporate plan (2018 - 2022) particularly Goal A *Best Start in Life* and Goad D *Lifelong Wellbeing*.

I have deliberately provided information and description within the report, as I am aware that in Social Care we are not often provided with opportunities to share *good news stories* or show-case what we do. I have attempted to balance descriptive passages with honest self-evaluation using a range of methods drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, triangulated where possible through external sources including direct feedback from people.

Information sources include:

- Illustrative information directly from teams and services
- Self-assessment and challenge processes within the social care and health leadership team including self-assessment material under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
- Internal documents such as corporate plan, strategic risk assessment, and service business plans
- Internal Quality Assurance reports

- Complaints and compliments and direct feedback from people using social care and health services
- Performance framework data and analysis
- Regulation 73 reports and Quality of Care reports under RISCA
- Contract monitoring and performance reports (commissioned services)
- Regional documents and performance information associated with the Regional Partnership Board and Gwent Safeguarding Board
- Regulatory reports from Care Inspectorate Wales specifically Assurance Check [February 2021](#) and Performance Evaluation Inspection [July 2022](#). See powerpoint for a summary.



Performance Evaluation Inspection of
Monmouthshire County Council

The Inspection

- Care Inspectorate Wales undertook a Performance Evaluation Inspection of Monmouthshire Adults Services
- 5 CIW inspectors undertook the inspection and they were 'with' us for 4 days (virtually) in early July 2022
- Many of the cases they inspected related to work that had taken place within the evaluation period of this Director's report.

Purpose

- To review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation
- Alignment under the principles of the Social Service (Wales) Well-being 2014 Act: People (voice and control), Prevention, Wellbeing, Partnerships
- Particular focus on **adult safeguarding** and whether people and their carers are able to access **appropriate and timely care and support**

Lines of Inquiry

- Evaluation of the experience of adults using services
- Evaluation of the experience and outcomes people achieve through their contact with services
- Evidence of the local authority and partners having learnt lessons from their recent experiences and plans for service developments and improvement
- Consideration of how the local authority manages opportunity and risk in its planning and delivery of social care at individual, operational and strategic levels

Methodology

- 30 Cases were inspected
- Interviews and focus groups were held with stakeholders including service users, members of the workforce, partner organisations and commissioned services
- Surveys were sent out to carers, service users, partners and the workforce
- Practice was observed in action
- Key documents were inspected including policies, practice guidance and internal reports.

Our view

Overall, we felt that the report was fair and balanced, took good account of the challenging context we are working in and identified areas for improvement that we agree with.

"In common with many other local authorities in Wales, MCC is experiencing a challenging time in relation to the provision of social care. Many of the pressures currently experienced by the local authority's adult services reflect the national pandemic recovery context including high levels of demand and increased complexity of people's needs."

Strengths

- People's voices are heard and people are supported to achieve their personal outcomes
- Strong strategic focus on prevention aligned to place-based working
- Effective partnership working
- Working in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- Flexible integrated teams, where different professionals work together, to provide tailored support
- Proactive monitoring and managing of waiting lists
- Effective and timely adult safeguarding

"We heard how staff morale was generally positive, managers were well regarded by staff, and managers in turn commented they have a committed and dedicated workforce. Workers valued the accessibility of managers and peer support from team members."

Areas for Improvement

- Shortages of Domiciliary Care
- Pressure on partnership work at critical points, e.g. hospital discharge
- Maintaining a sufficient and suitably qualified workforce to meet increasing demand
- Gaps and inconsistencies in practice particularly around the identification of risk, contingency planning and timeliness of reviews
- Quality of assessments, and consideration of eligibility criteria
- Quality assurance process and management oversight
- Consistency of the Welsh active offer and the offer of advocacy
- Recognising and responding to needs of carers
- Role of commissioning in brokerage

Overall Outcome

"During this inspection we found progress has been made in several areas. This has resulted in developments to practice and better outcomes for people. This progress has been achieved against a backdrop of the additional pressures and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic."

"CIW expect MCC to consider the areas identified for improvement and take appropriate action to address and improve these areas. CIW will monitor progress through its ongoing performance review activity with the local authority."

The report relates to the period April 2021 – March 2022; however, I have not stuck rigidly to this and where it feels relevant and pertinent I have referred to the current position or used more recent information. This felt sensible and natural to me, as 6 months is a long time in social care, especially given the current climate.

There are 9 sections within the report:

Section 1 - Overview against the priorities from 2020 - 2021

Section 2 - Overview of Children's Services

Section 3 - Overview of Adult's Services

Section 4 - How People Shape our Services

Section 5 - Promoting and improving the Well being of those we help (the quality standards)

Section 6 - How We Performed

Section 7 - Finance

Section 8 - Workforce

Section 9 - Priorities 2022 - 2023

1. Priorities

In her final director's report this time last year, Julie set out some key opportunities for the year ahead. I have provided below some headline comments regarding our progress against these, with reference to where further details can be found within the body of the report.

Priority	Progress	Section
Building early help and preventative approaches to supporting children and families, developing placement sufficiency when required.	The emphasis on building coherent early help services has continued. There has been an additional focus on services and practice aimed at preventing family breakdown. Ensuring that there are sufficient, appropriate placements for children who are looked after remains a very real challenge for the Service. We continue to turn our energy and resources into recruiting carers and developing placements. We are working in partnership to develop bespoke placements for Monmouthshire young people, but overall progress is limited.	See Section 2
Continue the reduction in Looked after Children population in line with Welsh Government guidelines.	The year end figure for the number of children looked after by the Local Authority showed the second consecutive slight decrease from 213 at year end 2021 to 208 at year end 2022.	See Section 2
Paying attention to support required for the whole sector workforce to deliver and adapt to the pandemic conditions.	The workforce showed true resilience and flexibility in responding to the conditions created by the pandemic. This was recognised and applauded within our CIW assurance check in Feb 2021. There continues to be a genuine emphasis on looking for ways in which we can support the workforce through what continue to be very challenging times.	See Section 8
Enabling a Place based approach across health social care and community to continue managing demand.	This has remained at the forefront of strategic development work within MCC with on-going conversations with health and our third sector partners specifically around early help and prevention within communities. We are now at an early stage in setting out some steps in terms of how we might be able to expand and develop the provision of direct care by adopting a more place-based approaches.	See Section 3
Extending further the ideas of 'front doors' in the community	The concept of creating visible and accessible 'front doors' into social care remain strong. We continue to have a social care workers embedded into the council's community partnership teams. We have opened our social care hub in Abergavenny and 'The Cabin' in Chepstow community hospital opened in May. Our third sector partners contribute to providing accessible advice and support around social care too, for example MIND MONMOUTHSHIRE is commissioned to provide vital 'front-door' services to people with mental health problems.	See Section 3
A developing workforce strategy to account and plan for changes ahead.	The toll the pandemic has had on our workforce, together with other factors such as the rising cost of living and fuel costs, is having a significantly negative impact on recruitment and retention. It is an extremely competitive place. We have worked hard to develop recruitment strategy and to review roles - but this priority remains as a central focus moving forward.	See Section 8
With building commencing on the new care home for people with Dementia on the Crick Road site, opportunity to profile care work as a positive career choice.	Building plans and partnership working in the development of Crick Road continue as planned. By way of update a 'spade in the ground ceremony' was held on 6 th July	See Section 3

2. CHILDRENS SERVICES: Overview

Over recent years Monmouthshire Children's Services has built a strong identity underpinned by a consolidated set of values aligned to the principles of the SSWBA. These include:

- Keeping children at the centre of everything we do, and striving towards a single service ethos so that the child's experience is coherent and seamless
- Practice that is values driven, family focussed, strengths-based and relational
- Ensuring services are appropriately aligned so they add value to each other
- Harnessing the power of early intervention
- Recognising the importance of preventative family support at every tier of need
- Maintaining a strong focus on workforce as our most valuable asset and proactively supporting a positive learning culture and practice development

- Embracing integrated and multi-disciplinary approaches
- Proactively seeking opportunities for participation and engagement within a culture of learning
- Seeking ways of releasing resources and money from the system to get better outcomes and reduce need

These values drive our activity and help us ensure that our service development themes and priorities remain as coherent as possible.

Child Centred	Focus on the child's experience of services & using participation to shape & improve services & inform practice
Workforce	Develop practice & support confident & competent practitioners across the service who are passionate about Children's Services
Quality Assurance	Facilitate a culture within Children's Services which promotes transparency, reflection, learning and review to drive continuous improvement towards achieving the best outcomes for children, young people & their families
Services	Ensure that family support services are in place & sufficient at all tiers including services for children who are looked after & care experienced young people Ensure that all services focus on prevention & de-escalation & build on individual, family & community strengths
Integrated Working	Harness and embrace the power of integrated / partnership working to maximize access to resources and improve outcomes for children, young people and families

It would be fair to say that this year has been a challenging one for Children's Services. Supporting the wellbeing of our workforce and difficulties in recruitment, particularly into child protection services, is a constant factor requiring considerable investment of time and resource. The pandemic has taken its toll too, with the service seeing increased demand pressures, complexity, and concerns around the emotional and psychological wellbeing of children and young people.

One of the most significant and impactful challenges for the service this year, however, has been the lack of suitable placements for children with complex needs. Good placement options are a crucial component of how we keep children safe and help them recover from any trauma or abuse they may have experienced. Not having placements available is potentially harmful for children, puts additional pressure on resources and is incredibly demoralising for our workforce. I fully anticipate that sufficiency of placements will remain a feature of children's services over the coming years and one of our key strategic risks.

Never-the-less, despite the challenges the service continues to develop. Looking back at our priorities from last year, whilst there remains plenty to do and as new challenges emerge, key achievements are discernible.

Follow this stack to see some of our highlights.



Learning from the pandemic we continue to ensure that flexible working arrangements are in place for individuals, balancing this with creating opportunities to come together as teams to maintain a positive culture of learning and support. We ran 3 whole service events over the year; a summer picnic, a virtual Christmas party with special guest appearances and a conference to launch our participation strategy.

Our participation programme continues to develop at a team level. We have run activity days for children who are looked after and listened to how important it is for children to share experiences with their social workers to help develop trusting relationships.

We were really proud to launch our Participation Strategy via a virtual conference on 30th September. The conference was attended by the then Children's Commissioner, Sally Holland, who commended the strategy and included it on the national website.

Follow this link to see read the strategy. [Participation-Strategy-v5-003.pdf \(childcomwales.org.uk\)](#) The strategy ensures that everyone who works in Children's Services has a common understanding of, and is confident in their approach to, children and young people's participation and that our work is rights-based, inclusive, respectful and safe. The strategy underpins our approach to children's participation across the service.

We continue to run a comprehensive training and development programme based on core skills including working with risk and using strengths-based approaches.

Working with our housing association partners, Pobl, we have re-designed a supported accommodation option for care leavers and homeless young people that supports progression planning and a pathway to independence.

With the involvement of children and their families, we have undertaken a review of respite services for children with disabilities and will be taking the outcomes forward over the next period.

Following our successful partnership with Blaenau Gwent, we have now developed our own therapeutic fostering service (MyST) so that the team can focus specifically on Monmouthshire's needs. MyST continues to work with our most complex children to reduce and prevent residential placements.

Along with the rest of Wales MCC launched FOSTER MONMOUTHSHIRE in July 2021. We will continue to build on the Foster Wales brand in our on-going endeavours to recruit local foster carers.

We have continued to develop our family support offer through maximising our partnership working through Regional Partnership Board and Children and Families Partnership.

We are developing a framework for Children's Services to promote a shared understanding and coherent approach to all quality assurance activity.



1 - Our lovely summer picnic as restrictions lifted



Can you spot the special guest appearance at the Children's Services virtual Christmas Party?

And in case you were wondering.... he didn't tell jokes; he just thanked the children's services workforce for everything that we do. It was off the cuff and heart felt. What a lovely man!

In this next section, I have provided commentary on various aspects of the service, show-casing where positive outcomes are being achieved; where key developments are in progress; and where there are specific challenges and opportunities.

The focus and emphasis on **early help and prevention** for children and families has continued through out the year. Our ethos is to use a partnership approach via our Early Help Panel in ensuring that families get the help and support they need at an early stage when vulnerabilities first start to emerge. People are experiencing delays in accessing family support services including from partnership organisations, and waiting lists are in operation in several parts of the service. We continue to seek opportunities of addressing these.

Our offer of family support underpins the entire services and at every stage is focused on prevention, de-escalation of complex or risky situations, and on increasing family and individual resilience. Our services run from school-based counselling, to providing parenting support, through to services aimed at long-term sustainable change for families with complex challenges, therapeutic support for children, as well as services aimed at re-uniting and strengthening families in situations where children are looked after. Our suite of early help and family support services share a common theory base resting on attachment, relational, strengths based, trauma informed and developmental approaches so that they provide a coherent approach.

Please follow our slide deck to learn more about our early help, therapeutic and wellbeing services.



SPACE Well-being & Family Support Panel

Referrals to Early Help Panel

- Weekly, multi-agency single point of entry for referrals for non-emergency support which enables families to access family support, preventive & early intervention support services including Primary Care, Mental Health, non-urgent Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) & a wide range of other services so that families get the right support more quickly.
- Works to a 'no bounce' principle, so referrals are not 'bounced' between services reducing duplication & multiple referrals.
- In 21/22 MOC saw the highest increase in referrals in Owent, an increase of 37%. Majority of referrals are from GPs (45%) & schools (20%) for children aged 11-15 (50%) and 5-10 (28%).

Family Advice Service

- A telephone advice service has been operating since 2020 offering a first point of contact for very early support often offering light-touch support and reassurance with the intention of meeting needs as early as possible in order to reduce the need for escalation at a later stage.
- This will be a major development in 2022/23 with additional funding to develop a place-based model of working taking early support & advice in relation to family support & children's emotional well-being into communities.

Building Strong Families Team (TAF)

BSFT is a small team who provide short-term support for families who want support with the most difficult job in the world, parenting. It may include help with routines & boundaries or managing children's emotions or behaviour. Referrals have increased since the pandemic & there was a lot of sickness in the team in 21/22 so there are waiting lists but we are working to reduce these.



Referrals to BSFT

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
% of families reporting a positive outcome	78%	75.5%	84%	84%

Testimonials:

- "BSFT has assisted my son on the road to recovery in dealing with separation & anxiety" - Parent
- "BSFT has really helped us to work together as mother & daughter over the last few months. Although we (TA) have some way to go we have now built a good foundation & can build on this. Thank you" - Parent
- "The worker so lovely, I felt so comfortable with her straight away. My confidence has gone up a lot & my anxiety is a lot easier to manage & happens less often. I'm able to look on the bright side of things much more now & get rid of negative thoughts." - young person
- "I hope you never lose your smile, enthusiasm & genuine care you show for the children" - Child

"The techniques given to me with controlling my anger helped a lot, such as breathing exercises and doing certain stuff to maintain my anger really helped control it Young Carer"

Monmouthshire Young Carers

- The Young Carers Service has been delivered by MCC since April 2021. It is a small team who work alongside the Carers Team with young carers.
- There are 254 young carers known to MCC & who are receiving information & access to activities, information & support including support with grants & ID cards
- 95 young carers came on trips & activities in the year ranging from bowling & paddleboarding to farm visits and pantomime.
- 21 young carers received one-to-one support, 18 of whom evidenced successful outcomes.
- 13 group sessions were run in two schools. This was run as a successful pilot & will be developed into a full programme next year.
- Awareness raising sessions were run in 5 schools.

"Thank you, I have learned techniques to help my anger & the sessions for my CV was really helpful as I can now apply for part time work. Young Carer"

"I'm very pleased how much my child has changed & improved. & I am very thankful for that. He is a lot calmer & more open about his feelings, he could not have said what he said to me yesterday without your support." Parent

Face to Face - Creative Therapies Team

- Small team of play & family therapists who deliver one-to-one & group based support to families & children.
- Average length of play therapy is 20 sessions, average length of family therapy can be much longer

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Referrals received	46	71	36
Referrals accepted	50	71	36
Referrals declined (waitlist)	0	0	0
Number of sessions delivered (one to one)	414	19	1
Number of group sessions	1	1	1
Number of family sessions	4	10	1
Family therapy sessions	26	10	21
Family therapy sessions delivered	4	26	28
Family therapy sessions delivered (one to one)	410	41	4

"Navigating your way through dealing with your child's mental health is so challenging, frustrating & upsetting. I only wish we'd accessed your service sooner. I'm sure it would have been hugely beneficial... to my sanity for sure!!!!" Parent

"Thank you so much for the work you have done. We have noticed a huge improvement in her self-esteem and confidence." Parent

"There have been tears & laughter & I would recommend any parent to give it a chance." Parent

"A lot has changed since we started this... & it has taught me to think about how I speak to my daughter & how to deal with her anger." Parent

"The sessions were an environment which was safe... Taking together has brought us closer together. Once coming to see you, it has forced us to be more open... We were keeping big secrets from each other... We are in a much better place as a family because of the intervention." Parent

Face to Face (School Based Counselling)

- Referrals & waiting times are increasing. Work has been ongoing with schools on Emotionally Based School Avoidance & a Wellbeing practitioners team has been introduced as well as volunteers who can work with young people to promote wellbeing as part of Whole School Approaches.
- During the 21/22 school year the service delivered the following:
 - 428 referrals, 231 children offered appointments, 167 children seen (at DNA)
 - 1888 counselling sessions delivered
 - Waiting times - 18 weeks (an increase of 2 weeks from last year)
 - YP Case indicates a 4.5 point positive change
 - 16 young people supported through critical incidents
 - 200+ young people supported through the Wellbeing Practitioner team
 - Increasing opportunities to connect on-line, via phone & in group work
 - Training opportunities for schools - Trauma Informed, Mindfulness, Emotional Literacy

"I get closer for certain situations that I have talked about. I get support from people I trust & I can talk to the worry of rumours etc. I can get professional help from people that understand how I'm feeling."

"It is a safe space where I can be myself without judgement. I can have the right support for all situations I encounter."

"When I did get a counsel for it was great. I cannot fault them."

"Because of the huge demand on your service found it initially quite frustrating that it would take a while to access the service." Parent

"My child found it easy to talk & share their feelings with you. They were worried that adults would either not believe them (past experience) or go against their wishes & make things worse... My child never shows the extent of their anxiety at school... It's a great relief to have my child's true feelings shared." Parent

Achieving Change Together Team

- Psychologically & systemically informed team working intensively with families who have children on the edge of coming into care. Intensive intervention (up to 12-18 months) based on families setting their own goals, relationships, self-efficacy, trauma/attachment informed
- 47 families with 144 children have been engaged, 33 families have completed intervention, 4 disengaged, 10 are on-going
 - 79% children remain at home at closure, of these 80% remain at home 6 months post closure
 - 91% have been supported to improve school attendance
 - Average increase in resilience of 30%
 - 50 children have come off the Child Protection Register
 - 22 children closed to Children's Services at case closure with a further 6 closed at 6 months
- Approximate annual cost avoidance of £460,876

"You don't know how much you have helped us, you really have!" Parent

"We don't fight a dog as much" Child

"I have overcome so much working with the ACT team. Thank"

"My biggest fear was I was never thought I was able to turn my life around & my much bigger now & I see a future for myself." Parent

"When we are apart, she [Jesse] knows what to do!" Child

Family Group Conference & Mediation Service

Referrals to FGC

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Referrals	69	112	140
FGCs	52	42	21
Private FGCs	18	32	40
Family meetings	Not recorded	62	49
FGCs resulting in a positive family plan	58	78	69

- ▶ Referrals to the FGC service continue to rise - received 110 referrals & held 107 family group conferences and family meetings, 63% result in a successful outcome
- ▶ Mediation has taken 35 new referrals in 21/22 with 8 cases carrying over from the previous year. 6 families did not engage. All identified positive outcomes with 40% reporting significant improvement in relationships.

'I felt supported, I felt safe to talk, to be 'real'. No condemnation, no judgement or feeling like there's something wrong with me.' - Parent

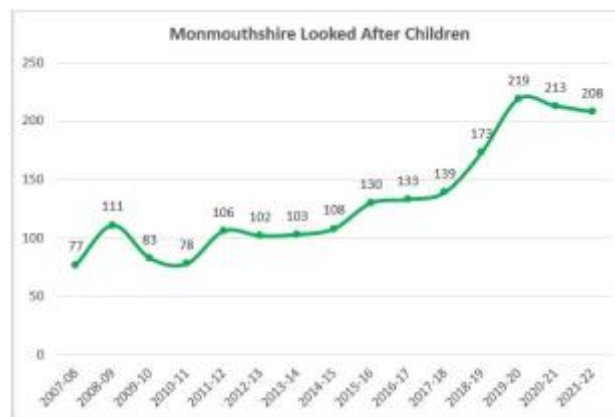
'Thanks also for our chat yesterday, I felt like a cloud lifted after talking to you ... Really don't know what we'd have done without you over the last 18 months.' Parent

'It's been beneficial for us to have someone who was willing to listen and help with such an awful situation for the children to be in.' - Parent

Challenges and Opportunities

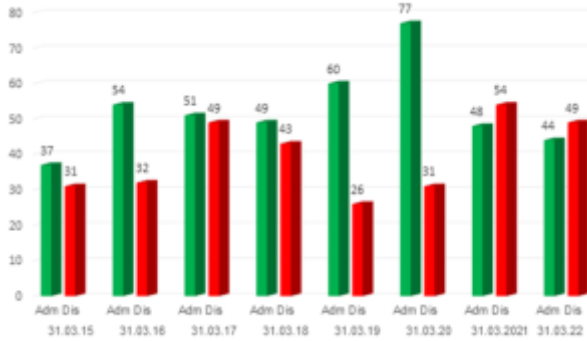
- ▶ Increased demand & complexity across all services - using volunteers & students to build up capacity & resilience looking for opportunities to grow teams & reduce waiting times
- ▶ All teams are working on their Participation Action Plans & we are working on improving systems for collecting children's feedback, use data to refine & improve services
- ▶ Group work approaches for children & families
- ▶ Development of the Advice Service to become embedded within community hubs to provide support at the earliest stage
- ▶ Work with schools to explore how young people might be better supported around particularly stressful times & work with partners to reduce the number of children whose school attendance is impacted by emotional based school avoidance (EBSA Project)
- ▶ Work with partners to develop integrated approaches to young people's wellbeing

Work on safe reduction of the numbers of children who are looked after



This year we showed a further slight decline in the number of children who are looked after from 213 to 208. The figure of 208 includes 2 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UA SC) and last year's figure

included 3 UASC. It is anticipated that responding to UASC, as well as the needs of unaccompanied children from Ukraine, is going to be a feature of the year ahead.



During the year 44 children entered care and 49 ceased being looked after.

The following table shows the number of children and young people ceasing to be looked after between 1st April - 31st March each year during the period 2013 to 2022 and reasons for ceasing using Stats Wales categorizations.

Leave Reason	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
When On Ready	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	3	2
Adopted	2	0	1	3	0	3	1	1	0
Case taken over by another LA in the UK	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Returned home to live with parents	17	13	12	18	24	7	16	17	13
GGO	21	3	6	7	1	2	0	11	11
Moved into independent living	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transferred to adult social services	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0
Ceased for other reasons	4	7	7	13	9	9	4	13	13
Sentenced to custody	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	45	23	27	45	45	26	31	54	49

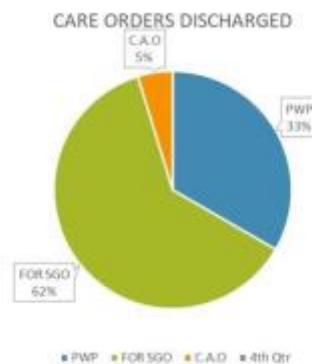
Our reduction strategy is supported by the work of the **Monmouthshire Families Together Team (MFT)** to progress discharges of care orders. This year is the 2nd year of the team's implementation and has

seen the team really bed-in and become an integral part of the service. Monmouthshire Families Together team work in an integrated way with the statutory social work teams and get directly involved in care planning for children. This has helped to maintain our reduction of children on care orders placed at home with their parents (PWP) and increased children in permanency arrangements through Special Guardianships.

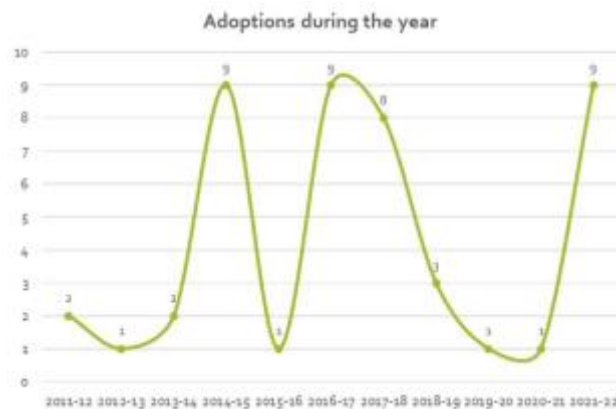
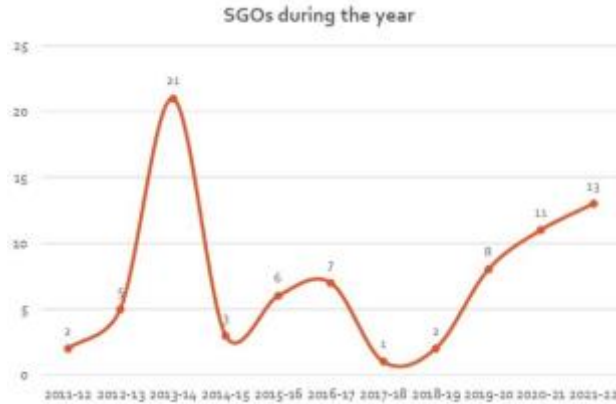
Where Care Orders are in place for children living with their parents (PWP) or with wider family members (kinship care), the Families Together Service provides intensive, targeted, interventions in an effort to develop parenting capacity to a level that ensures risks are managed and the child's needs can be safely met independent of statutory services. The success of this model can be measured by the number of Care Orders that are discharged or varied/replaced for a Special Guardianship Order.

From the 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 21 children's Care Orders have been discharged. This data can be summarised as follows; 13 of those Care Orders were replaced for Special Guardianship Orders for children who were placed with kinship carers (11 placements). 7 Care Orders were for children who were placed with parents (PWP) (6 placements). 1 Care Order was varied for a Child Arrangements Order following a positive intervention via the Families Together Team. Of the 7 PWP Care Orders that were discharged, 5 were via a direct application to the Court, the other 2 were agreed as the outcome of the ongoing care proceedings (Interim Care Order not felt needed to be extended).

Of the 21 Care Order discharges within this timeframe, Families Together delivered interventions with all of these cases.



Converting Care Orders to Special Guardianship arrangements is part of our strategy to ensure that children are in the right permanent placement for them, and where possible to reduce the numbers of children in care. We support carers through undertaking special guardianship assessments, and where required develop a special guardianship support plan, sometimes including life-story work for the child. We review all our special guardianship arrangements on an annual basis, and keep in touch with carers through training, newsletters, and support groups.

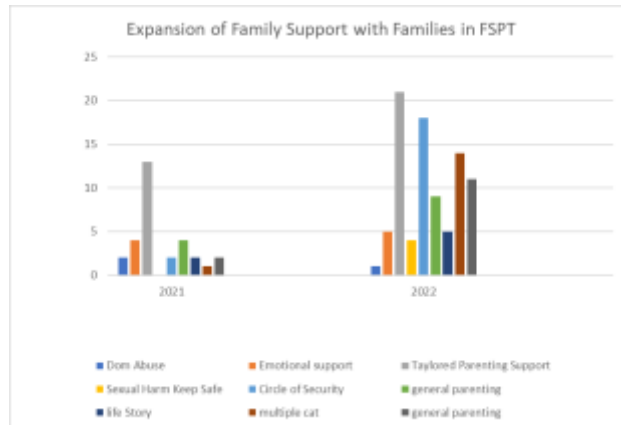


As expected this year, we have been pleased that the children whose permanency plan was adoption have been progressed. It can often be challenging to find the right adoptive placement for a child. We work with the South East Wales Adoption Service (SEWAS) and in partnership with Voluntary Adoption Agencies to secure suitable placements and provide support to new parents.

This year has seen a focussed drive on developing the right culture and practice to prevent and divert children away from court proceedings through a **re-focus on child protection planning and pre-proceedings work**.

By analysing reasons for previous increases we are beginning to tackle some of the underlying causes, where these are in our control, specifically around our approach to risk management; child protection planning and our use of the pre-proceedings framework.

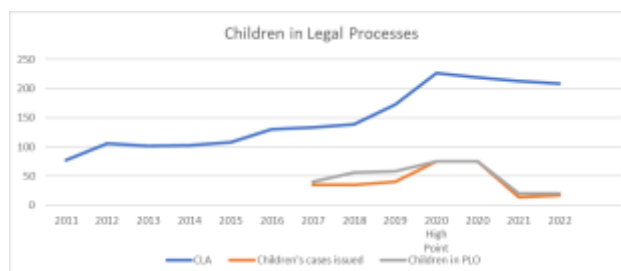
As part of ongoing improvement planning, we re-prioritised our “Practice and Culture Change” programme. A primary aim of the programme is to ensure that assessments, care planning and family support were robust at an earlier stage within the Child Protection process thereby ensuring children and families case work was managed within the “appropriate” arena, away from a legal process wherever possible.



The Family Support and Protection team were the central point for change within the service. Some of our work to date has included:

- Development of the Family Support Worker role within teams to support assessment of parental capacity to change, aligned with the concept of “prevention” within all tiers of the service
- Established of Practice Lead for ‘in-team’ Family Support Work
- Developed Family Support Work programmes with an average intervention of 12-26 weeks to compliment established family support services.
- Strengthened the leadership structure within the Family Support and Protection Team
- Developed a network approach to working with children pre-child protection to help manage demand

These changes in practice and culture within the teams has led to a reduction in the use of legal processes. This often supports better outcomes for children and families and represents a small reduction in spend for the Local Authority particularly in the legal costs of public law care proceedings.

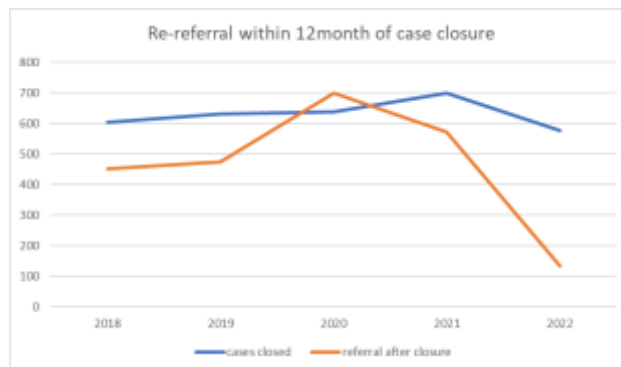




Correspondingly we have seen a rise in child protection registration figures. This is in line with our current practice objectives around retaining children within child protection planning and holding ‘risk’ differently.

The Quality Assurance report completed by the Child Protection Co-ordinator in April 2022 comments,

“The statistics would suggest that the children are remaining on the Child Protection Register to ensure the Child Protection Plan is completed in its entirety and the risks to children have significantly reduced. Most de-registrations in the last 6 months have resulted in a Care and Support Plan (24) opposed to Legal Orders being in place (9). Supporting the view that de-registration is based on work being completed and improvements being made rather than cases entering the Court Arena”



Data in regard to re-referral of families/children back into the Statutory Service supports the Child Protection Co-ordinator's position that families supported for longer via a child protection approach are less likely to be re-referred into the service, hence slowing the "revolving door" for families.

Placement Sufficiency

The Local Authority has a duty to provide sufficient suitable placements for children who are looked after. Placements should provide a warm and nurturing environment for children and ensure that the child's holistic emotional and physical needs are fully met. Placements should be available close to home and community to allow essential links and support networks to be maintained.

The lack of placement sufficiency has been an issue of growing national concern. Put simply, there are not enough placements for children who need to be looked after. The causes of this are twofold: i) Challenges in recruiting and retaining foster carers; some of these challenges are shared with other Local Authorities and some are specific to the demography of the County. ii) Increased instability in the provider market following the Welsh Government commitment to eliminate profit from children's social care.

The reality of this is that for some children, particularly those with the most complex needs, it can be extremely difficult to find any placement at all. There have been 4 occasions this year when the Local Authority has been required to look after a child without the benefit of a registered placement. This is of extreme concern to the service and presents legal and financial risks to the Council.

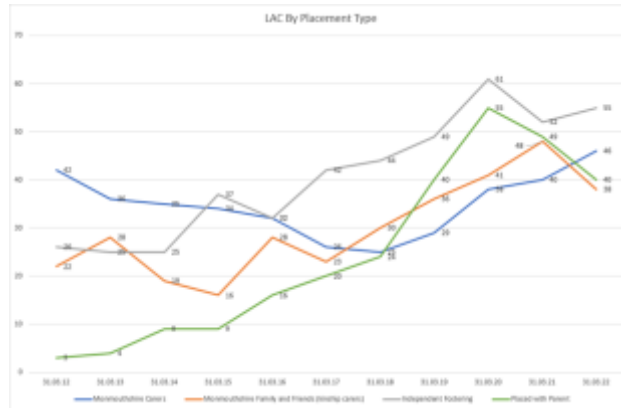
We are taking steps to address the issue of placement sufficiency by:

- Working in partnership with local providers to expand local residential provision
- Maintaining our focus on the recruitment and retention of foster carers in partnership with Foster Wales
- Working with our regional partners within Gwent to implement a regional sufficiency strategy including the expansion of Local Authority residential options.

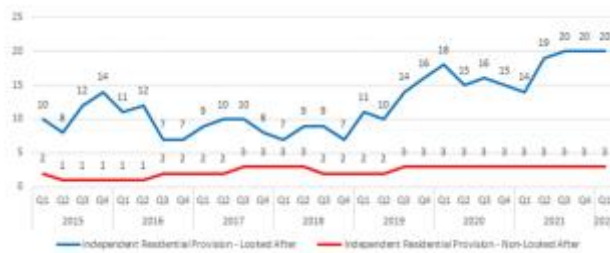
Placement Activity

When a child comes into care we always explore family options first. If a family option is not found, children are placed with Monmouthshire in-house Foster Carers unless it is identified that the assessed needs of the child cannot be met from this provision. This will be either because there are no vacancies or because there are no in-house foster placements that can match the child's needs. In these situations

we look to Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA), or residential provision, again depending on the needs of the child.



2 - The distribution of placements at year end.



3 - Numbers of children in residential placements at year end.

This year end data tells us that:

- Although the ratio of independent foster carers to in-house carers is closing we are still a long way from where we would like to be i.e. the majority of children placed with in-house carers.
- The decrease in numbers of kinship Foster Carers and children on care orders placed at home corresponds to our work on ‘safe reduction’.
- The use of residential placements for children is still too high.

With regards to the use of residential provision, this is partly attributable to the overall shortage of foster placements. Some children who could be better looked after within a fostering environment are in residential care because there are no suitably skilled foster carers available. Normally speaking it is children with the most complex needs who enter residential care. Sometimes the only placement option available for a child will be out of area, making it harder to support good outcomes. The cost of residential placements is extremely high, and represents the most significant pressure on the Children’s Services budget.

Where we can we continue to reduce or prevent residential placements through our MyST service. We ensure that each child in a residential placement has an appropriate progression plan to return to family

based or supported living whenever possible and continue to tailor our support and development offer for carers to increase options for more specialist foster care.

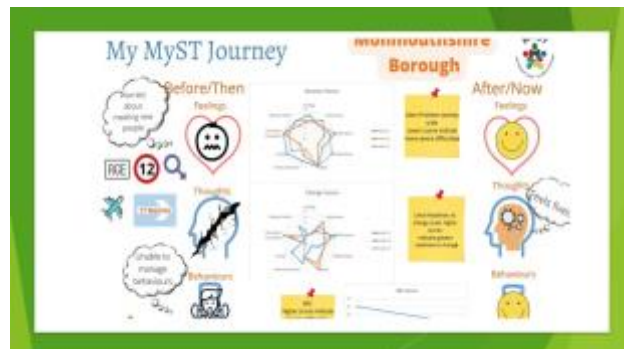
MyST is a multi-disciplinary team that provides 24 hour attachment and trauma based support to young people and carers in a way that allows a child to learn and develop through a dynamic approach to risk. This is long-term work with some of our most vulnerable and complex children. It is a well-established service regionally, and has been externally evaluated to show that it releases both cost savings and cost avoidance to the Council. Frustratingly, for Monmouthshire however; MyST is currently hampered by the overall lack of specialist foster carers.

MyST provides individual consultations to help carers and teams understand children and care for children who have disrupted attachment and have experienced trauma through adversity, abuse or neglect. This helps to reduce the risk of placement breakdown and builds knowledge and skills across the service.



MyST - what we do

- ▶ Intensive - 24 hour support to a small number (15) children/young people & their caregivers
- ▶ Consultation to foster carers, parents, kinship carers, social workers & direct workers to help them understand & meet children's often very complex needs
- ▶ Long term direct work with children/young people & their caregivers





- ▶ 55 consultations were undertaken with 77 individuals, 63% attendees said consultations were extremely valuable
- ▶ 100% of those using the service said they would recommend the service
- ▶ Out of hours on-call was used 113 times with calls taking between 10 minutes to over 4 hours
- ▶ 13 individual children/young people were worked with over the course of a year



Monmouthshire Foster Carers are a highly dedicated and skilled group of people, who are the very heart of our services for children who are looked after. Foster carers provide stability, nurture, care and support to some of our most vulnerable children and deserve the highest praise.

The Placement and Support Team work incredibly hard to recruit, assess and support foster carers. They work closely with carers to support applicants through a challenging assessment process; understand

their development and training needs and provide carers with personalised supervision and support. Overall, the number of in-house foster carers has increased over the last 4 years from 24 to 40.

Follow this stack to read some of the compliments that have been received over the year.

Compliments

"the assessment process has been lengthy but thorough. At times it has been uncomfortable thinking about things that have happened in the past, but overall, it has been a positive experience."

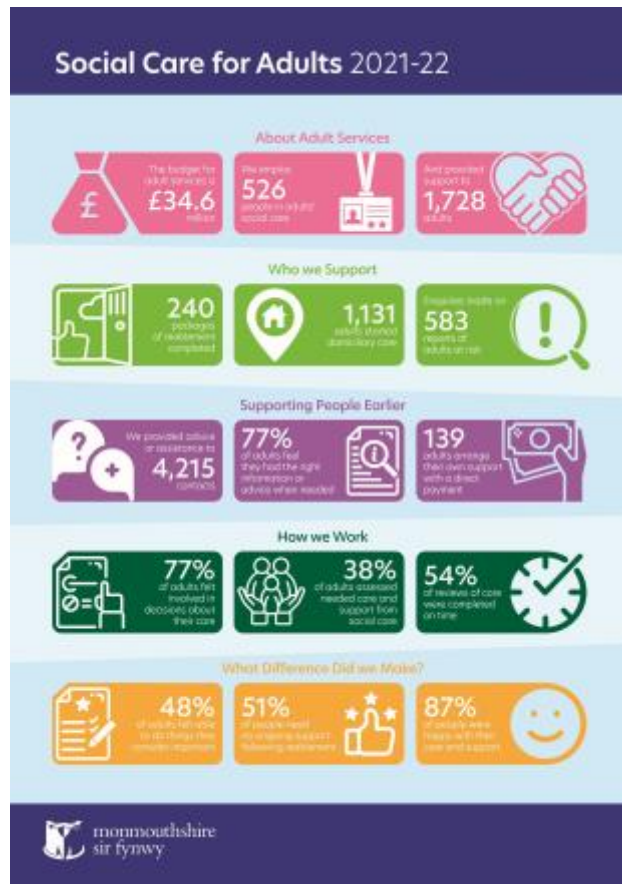
We have always been a 'talk a lot' family but this whole experience has made us think deeper and made us realise that we are really strong as a family with a lot to offer. We are really pleased that we are going to be recommended by K who has made us feel comfortable and supported and has made our journey to becoming Foster Carers as smooth as possible.

In the initial skills to foster sessions we thought 'what are we doing' as everything seemed so alien. But with every session getting to know the other potential Foster Carers things started to fall into place and gave us a deeper insight into what fostering is all about. We know now that it is not about giving a child a roof over their heads and caring for their needs, but it is also about looking at things from a child's perspective, the individual child's perspective. It has seemed to take an age to get to the review panel but it has brought us closer together in the Agreement that it is the right way forward for us whether it be long term, short term or respite fostering. Our assessing Social Worker Kathryn O'Keefe has a gift of mixing formal with the informal making us and our family at ease and we are pleased that she has recommended our approval as Foster Carers".

"I have just spoken to B and just wanted to thank you for your support at this time. Much appreciated!"

The team has numerous emails from Foster Carers thanking us for their gift boxes for various events. For example, Christmas and 'Fostering Fortnight gift boxes' *"Could you please pass this thank you on to Llinos and the Fostering Team? What a lovely surprise to come home to today, a lovely afternoon tea for two! Thank you so much! Wishing you all a peaceful and Happy Christmas!"*

3. Adult Services: Overview



Monmouthshire Adult Services comprise of a wide range of social care and health services for individuals aged over 18 who have care and support needs.

During 2021 / 22 Adult Services dealt with 6,633 contacts into the service regarding Monmouthshire residents and provided advice or assistance to 4,215 adults who were not already in receipt of care or support, and undertook 2,177 assessments.

The purpose of Adult Social Care and Health in Monmouthshire is to **help people live their own lives**. Key to this is the ability to understand what matters to people and to identify the support and or services required to find solutions to the issues they face.

Adult Social Care and Health is available to people aged 18+ for both short or long term interventions.

We know that at times of need, health and social care systems often seem complex, confusing and hard to navigate and we have worked over many years to establish an integrated and seamless approach to make this easier.

Across the county we have 3 integrated “hubs” – Abergavenny, Monmouth (which includes Raglan and Usk) and Chepstow (which includes Caldicot). Each hub has a single management structure and brings together a variety of resources e.g., Social Workers, district nurses, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, support staff, facilities, day services (some hubs also have in-patient community wards, and some have rehabilitation beds).

This integrated approach helps both the people and families supported by the service as well as the people working within it. We are developing this further by designing more local teams using a place-based approach.

Anyone can access Adult Social Care and Health – there is no specific criteria, and we receive referrals from many places, such as hospitals, GP’s, families and of course the person themselves.

Our mental health and learning disability services also work in teams with their health colleagues across the North and South of the County.

Adult services also includes:

- Commissioning – working with the independent sector (domiciliary, residential, third sector)
- Commissioning also manages our My Mates and My Day My Life services which are mentioned within the report.
- Severn View – residential home for people with dementia
- Monmouthshire Meals
- Carers Team – supporting people who have caring responsibilities
- Changing Practice, changing Lives – working closely with the third sector and community teams to support people to be part of their community



Monowvale
Health and Social Care Centre



Mardy Park Resource Centre

Although the services are wide ranging and varied, they have in common a set of values that are rooted in social care practice and epitomise the principles of the SSWBA such as *choice, voice and control*. We believe that services should be designed around 'what matters' to an individual, supporting people to live their own best lives, as defined by them.



4 - Click play to see how we work



We understand that defining personal outcomes and helping people to reach their own wellbeing goals will look differently for everybody.

To help us express this idea we have developed our 'Wellbeing Tree' in partnership with Swansea University and community groups.

Our practice is strengths-based and seeks to build on the personal resources and assets that the person has, alongside what is available within families and communities. This is because we understand that individual, family and community resilience is more valuable and certainly more sustainable than statutory support.

BASIC FLOW

- Multiple-front-doors
- Community Conversations
- FISH
- Assessment
- Care and Support
- Review



Hierarchy of Support



: Strengths Based Practice

- Outcome focused public services
- Collaborative communication
- Exploring personal outcomes
- Supporting a skilled workforce

Skills: engagement to outcomes

- A shift from a process supported by conversations...
- To a series of empowering conversations supported by a process.

- The key elements of good communication.?

Empathy

Warmth

Clarity about concerns

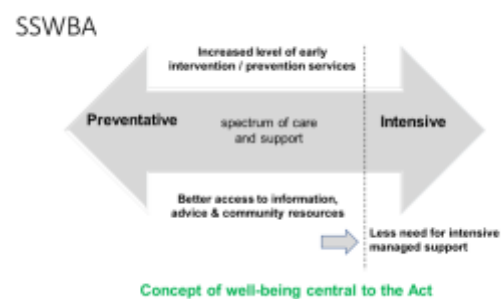
Recognition of strengths

What is the transformation we are trying to achieve ?

Challenges	Solutions
Difficulty engaging some individuals/families	Skills and approaches that lower natural defensiveness
Increased dependency on services by some individuals/families	Clarification of goals and realistic outcomes, recognition of strengths, knowing when and how to leave
Levels of 'red alert' - making people avoid the system	Confidence in skills able to deal with a range of cases effectively
Prohibit specialist assessment and advice needed resulting in families moved about in the system, wasting resources	Confident skills listening ability and understanding key underlying issues, getting to the heart of the matter more quickly, saving resources
Service users who have lost confidence in the system	Listening ability, Empowering service users to be central to their care plans

To support our workforce to practice according to our values we continue to embed Collaborative Communication training across the service.

Prevention and Place-Based Working Through a Partnership Approach



Over recent years we have remained constant in our belief that providing support as early as possible and working preventatively helps people stay independent for longer and can delay or prevent the need for more complex care and services.

We also know that we can't provide early help services alone and work closely with our partners both within and outside of the council including many third sector and voluntary organisations. Together with our Gwent partners, particularly ABuHB, we are refining our concept of 'well-being networks' and developing what this means for Monmouthshire. A good example of this is our wellbeing link workers, employed through GAVO, and embedded within community health settings. Similarly, responding as we did to the COVID pandemic helped us cement our collaborative relationship with the Council's Partnership Teams and volunteer networks giving us even more experience of working together within communities and creating opportunities to increase involvement and social connection for people.

To help us understand and facilitate community networks we have invested in a system developed by Hitachi during the pandemic called Community Links. This will, in time, enable various teams supporting people and community groups to use the same platform and should provide invaluable information around provision and gaps within a community. It is already allowing our wellbeing link workers to support people by linking them with appropriate community resources.

We recognise the importance of place and community and have continued to develop our concept of '*place based working*'. In essence this means a way of working that builds a network of community support to help people remain connected to things that matter to them supporting their health and wellbeing. By bringing a range of agencies together across social services, primary and community health services, and the third sector, with a shared purpose of supporting people's wellbeing, we are

able to share skills, expertise, time and increase the opportunities for people to access support in the community without needing formal services.

“Place-based working is a person centred, bottom-up approach used to meet the unique needs of people in one given location by working together to use the best available resources and collaborate to gain local knowledge and insight”.



Mr Thomas' 'Community Conversation'

Background

- Mr Thomas was brought to community conversation by the social care assessor at Mardy Park in Abergavenny. A year ago Mr Thomas had lost his wife and since then had been feeling very low in mood, lonely and feeling very isolated. He used to do everything with his wife. They would both work in their large garden in the spring and summers and go to the Abergavenny Market every week together.
- Mr Thomas had been referred to social services after his son had called to say that they were worried about him as he wasn't looking after himself well and had started to drink alcohol more regularly. After speaking with Mr Thomas, the social care assessor found out that he was feeling very lonely and disconnected from the things that made him happy. He wanted to do some of the things he did before his wife died, and feel more connected to his neighbours and wider community. He gave permission for the assessor to talk about his situation via a community conversation.



We are currently using a practice model called 'Community Conversations' to facilitate living well through community and connection. Mr Thomas's story is a great example of this.

We are embracing developments and advances in digital technology to support people with their independence and reduce isolation. Some case examples of how we use digital technology to support people can be seen in section 5.

In the year ahead our aim is to develop integrated approaches based within communities even further, working together to understand local needs and priorities, coordinating services and using local resources to promote the wellbeing of individuals. We will be supported in this endeavour through the national approach to Neighbourhood Care Network (NCN) development and locally under the auspices of the now well-established Monmouthshire Integrated Partnership Board.

We continue to develop our social care hubs to maximise opportunities to provide advice and support to people *where they are* and to make services visible and accessible within the community.

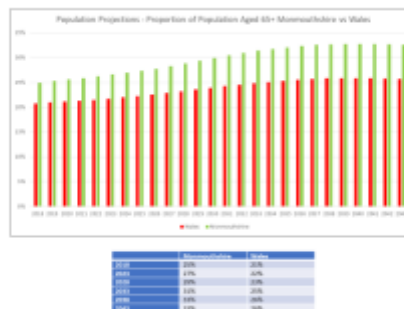


Statutory Care and Support

Although we have remained steadfast in our commitment to developing our early help offer in Monmouthshire, the demand for statutory care and support continues to rise within our Integrated Teams. In every aspect of our Integrated Teams over the last year, *DEMAND* has outstripped *SUPPLY*.

Broadly speaking this can be explained in three words: demographics, COVID, workforce.

Census data tells us that the age demographic in Monmouthshire is increasing i.e. overall the population within the County is ageing, as illustrated by the graphs.



In headline terms the 2021 census data shows that:

- The largest age group in Monmouthshire (and Wales) was those aged 55 to 59 years

- 25.8% of Monmouthshire's population was aged 65+ (24,000), higher than Welsh average (21.3%)
- In Monmouthshire, the total number of people aged 65 years and over increased by 26% between 2011 and 2021, the highest increase of all the Welsh local authorities. This compares with a 17.7% rise across Wales.

The older people are, the more likely they are to need care and support due to frailty, illness, dementia, disability and isolation.

In the context of this demographic, the impact of the COVID pandemic, particularly on our most vulnerable residents and carers, has been considerable and the effects continue to generate powerful demand pressures across the system.

Over the last two years, many people have not been able to access the medical attention or care and support they require resulting in delayed and more complex presentations. Added to this is the increased care and support needs of people whose health has been compromised by COVID.

The third element impacting the supply - demand equation is the workforce. Growth in demand is not aligned to a similar growth in the workforce with significant recruitment and retention challenges across all posts. Occupational Therapy is particularly affected as well as all direct care posts both within Local Authority services and those of our third sector partners, such as domiciliary and residential care. The social care and health workforce, whilst showing such incredible fortitude and resilience, has been under sustained pressure for over two years now without let up. The workforce as a whole could best be described as fragile. Given also the indications that decreasing numbers of people are choosing careers in care, sustaining an adequate, skilled and resilient workforce remains one of the top priorities for the service.

These demographic, demand and workforce pressures were clearly in evidence and of significant concern pre-2020. It is understandable, therefore, that COVID is viewed by many as a *crisis within a crisis*.

Impact on our service

In the context of increasing demand and a depleted workforce we are experiencing delays in provision. In many instances this has created situations where we have struggled to meet the care and support needs of our residents and where 'voice, choice and control' for some of our most vulnerable individuals and their families has been compromised. These issues challenge us at the very heart of our practice and value base.

We have completed fewer number of packages of reablement, started less domiciliary care services and our weekly unmet need within home care has reached 2000 hours. There are waiting lists being operated for both social work and occupational therapy. All of this clearly impacts on our ability to respond preventatively to people's needs and over time both exacerbates demand and has a demoralising effect on the workforce.

Reflective of the challenges we are experiencing, whilst our Adult Social Care service user questionnaire shows a high proportion, 86.9%, of services users who are happy with their care and support, this represents a decrease and is below levels seen in previous years. Feedback from services users also shows a slight decrease in other areas including communication and involvement in their care and whether care and support is meeting their needs.

Delays across the health and social care system is creating challenges and tensions within partnership and integrated working, particularly in the area of hospital discharge arrangements. The impact on individuals remaining in hospital longer than they should, are, at best, not conducive to achieving positive outcomes and at worst, can be devastating.

Notwithstanding the scale of the problems, it is incumbent on us to work strategically and operationally with our partners to seek solutions. Aligned to the 6 goals programme at a national level, this work includes:

- Working closely with our partners to better understand and manage demand at a preventative level.
- Working with partners to develop services, practice models and multi-disciplinary working to reduce unnecessary admissions;
- Working with partners to manage the flow through health care settings using a social care perspective, that puts individual rights and choice, including positive risk taking, at the centre of effective discharge planning
- Continue to take steps to address the fragility of the social care provider market,
- Continue to work with others around the recruitment and retention of the social care workforce.

Our award winning **Community Nights Service** is a great example of how we are beginning to address the second bullet point.

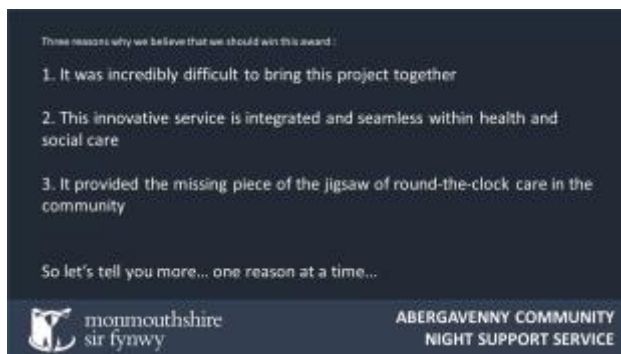
Community Night Service

The team originally started in August 2020, generated from the idea of one of our Occupational Therapists who had a 'vision' about domiciliary night care. It started with a team of three members and 1 bank staff who covered 7 nights a week and covered the North of Monmouthshire. It has since grown to cover the whole of Monmouthshire with 4 teams out each night. The team is currently supported through partnership grant funding (the Regional Integration Fund).

The LGI (Local Government Innovation) award ceremony was held in London on November 4th 2021 where the service was given a 'Highly Commended' in the Health and Social Care category.

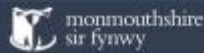
Here is the slide show that was presented for the award.

The Community Night Service currently supports around 50 people a night throughout Monmouthshire including scheduled home visits, adhoc visits, phone calls, and careline responses.



2. This innovative service is integrated and seamless within health & social care ...

- Now established as part of the Abergavenny Integrated Services Team
- Existing staff seconded to night-time roles
- Worked with what was there and adapted existing systems
- Now an integral part of the wider integrated team's assessment and support planning
- Working to the principles of Abergavenny Integrated Services Team



ABERGAVENTNY COMMUNITY
NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

Feedback from a Paula Holborn, Social Care Assessor:
"With the night support team it is definitely NOT one size fits all. They are tuned to the individual's needs."



ABERGAVENTNY COMMUNITY
NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

3. It provided the missing piece of the jigsaw of round-the-clock care in the community



ABERGAVENTNY COMMUNITY
NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

This small piece of the jigsaw has a huge effect on people's lives

Feedback from Angela Jones, Occupational Therapist:

"People can sleep in their own beds and not have to go into care – that is worth everything. We can thrive so much at the day time but overnight the gaps appeared people risk having to leave their homes if we can't make sure they feel safe and cared for. Not everyone can afford live in care and so this service provides equity and everyone gets a chance to stay at home."



ABERGAVENTNY COMMUNITY
NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

One call can make all the difference

It's not difficult or complicated, usually just basic care as shown in these examples...



Feedback from M, an 18-year-old man with cerebral palsy who is currently receiving our service:

"The night team gave me the confidence to move into my own flat when I had always lived with my mum and had never been on my own at night. Knowing they are there to call on keeps me living independently as I cannot get out of bed on my own, and washing is too much trouble including picking up my remote control when I dropped it and making me a cheese sandwich at 3am!"

ABERGAVENNY COMMUNITY NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

Feedback from daughter of C, an 85-year-old lady living alone:

"Mum is grateful for help in the middle of the night and she feels more secure having someone around to help with spending a penny and any other issues that arise".



Feedback from daughter of G, an 96-year-old lady with advancing dementia and at high risk of falls, living alone:

"By the night team visiting to check Mum was safe and in bed we were able to dispense with the bed alarm which kept going off for no reason and to return back to living in our own home, and even have a night away to visit our daughter."

ABERGAVENNY COMMUNITY NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

monmouthshire sir fynwy



There are 24 hours in a day...

- A 24-hour approach to assessment is now possible
- Viable and realistic night support is now available
- These options are now embedded into the integrated service team's "toolkit" and provide them with choice to offer the people they are supporting

monmouthshire sir fynwy

ABERGAVENNY COMMUNITY NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE



COMMUNITY NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

What a difference a year makes:
 1st September 2020 – Pilot team started in Abergavenny
 12th February 2021 – Further funding application made to ICF
 14th July 2021 – Further recruitment
 1st September 2021 – **FULL ROLL OUT ACROSS MONMOUTHSHIRE**
 (4 teams)

monmouthshire sir fynwy

In summary...

With this innovative project we have shown a light on the need for 24-hour services to such an extent that they are quickly becoming an indispensable part of our support to keep people at home.



It's made a massive difference to people being able to have their own homes at the end of a day.



I would like to thank them very much for easing my life...

The stories we have shared have been made possible by the dedication and commitment of a few people despite the challenges of setting up a unique night time service with limited funding whilst navigating the pandemic.

monmouthshire sir fynwy

ABERGAVENNY COMMUNITY NIGHT SUPPORT SERVICE

By working together...
 By listening to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community...
 By finding new, innovative ways of working...



... We've overcome the challenges and achieved more than we thought possible. We now hope other local authorities will follow the model of service we've created. We'll continue to innovate and meet changing needs. Monmouthshire's residents can now receive the support they need and deserve.

monmouthshire sir fynwy

Focus on Domiciliary Care

Domiciliary Care is the cornerstone of Adult Social Care and Health, and is provided through a mixture of in-house and third sector providers. The demand for care at home is currently extremely high and has been on an upward trend for several years. We work hard to support our partner provider agencies, and have expanded our in-house provision to try and meet the demand. However, the ability to procure home care remains very challenging. The provider market is currently extremely fragile, with the risks of packages of care being 'handed back' to the Local Authority presenting a constant worry.

All other services in adults are reliant on domiciliary care and the impact of the crisis affects all elements of the service.

At the moment, we are seeking to re-design the way that we provide care at home. We want to work in a more integrated way with providers including changing the way that we commission care and

introducing increased flexibility in the way that people's individual outcomes are achieved. Our aim is to expand care at home options in a way that is dovetailed to the needs of individual communities with ideas including supporting 'mirco-carer' enterprises; walking 'runs' to help with recruiting non-drivers as well as patch-based commissioning. These interventions go hand in hand with ensuring that our practice is sharpened around quality of care, assessing and defining personal outcomes and undertaking reviews.

These slides show in more detail where we have unmet need. Notably this tells us that there is more unmet need within communities than within hospitals, and that there is less of an acute problem in the North of the county than in the South and Central areas.



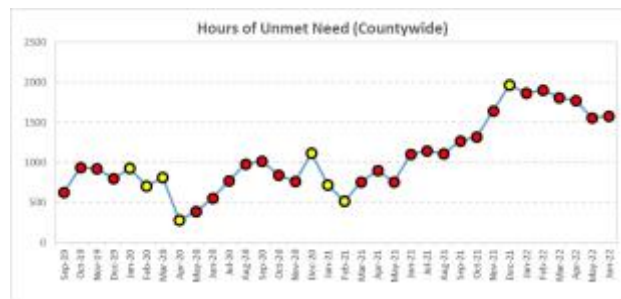
Domiciliary Care is the cornerstone of Adult Social Care and Health.

What constitutes domiciliary care?

- Enablement
- Long term care/ dementia
- End of life care
- Night service

What do home carers do?

- Carers support people according to their individual needs and desired outcomes, and deliver care in line with the person's care and support plan
- It could be four double handed calls per day
- It could be walking to the paper shop
- Carers get to know people on a day to day basis so are critical in monitoring their wellbeing



Demand – Unmet Need by Place Based Areas

Area	Hours
Abergavenny Rural	23.25
North Abergavenny	100
South Abergavenny	1
West Abergavenny (New OGLL)	82.5
North Monmouthshire	298.75
Central Monmouthshire (Now Raglan)	124
Uk & District	582.5
Monmouth Rural	81.25
Monmouth Town	203
Central Monmouthshire	395.75
Caldicot Town	557.5
Chepstow Rural	158.5
Chepstow Town	329.5
The Levels	138.5
Caldicot Rural (New)	41.25
South Monmouthshire	795.25
Total	1581.75
Number of People waiting for POC	142



Type	Hours	People	%
a) In Reablement waiting for LTC	88	12	8%
b) No Care at Home waiting for LTC	657	74	52%
c) In Hospital ready for Discharge	469	31	22%
d) Change of Care and/or Agency	186	16	11%
g) In Care Home waiting to go home	68	4	3%
h) In Hospital not fit for discharge	32	1	1%
f) Step Closer to Home (ABUHB)	81	4	3%
Grand Total	1581	142	100%

Notes: Normal position of between 600 – 800 Hours

Carers

Carers Co-ordinator
Tel: 01291 675474



April 2022

Monmouthshire Carers

A Partnership Between GAVO & Monmouthshire County Council

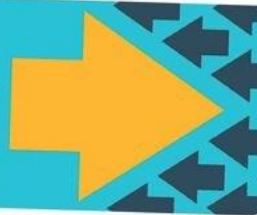


Goodbye and Good Luck Tracey!

Can you believe it, after 17 years Tracey Davies, Carers Co-ordinator is leaving us, and moving onto pastures new. During those 17 years Tracey has built up a carers database that is now providing newsletters, activities, events, training and information to over 1200 Monmouthshire carers. Whilst Tracey works for GAVO she has been an integral part of the Monmouthshire Carers Team and most importantly someone whom carers know they can rely upon for being friendly, helpful and knowledgeable. We are going to miss Tracey, yet it's an exciting new chapter Tracey starts and we want to say thank you to Tracey for her dedication in supporting Monmouthshire Carers, and that she enjoys all the good things ahead of her.

Changes are Afoot

There is going to be a transition of change after February, when Tracey Davies leaves her role as Carers Co-ordinator, GAVO and when a new person steps into the vacant role. The Carers Co-ordinator role is pivotal in maintaining the carers database, producing and disseminating the carers newsletter, co-ordinating and organising carers events and training and managing the leisure card scheme. The Carers Team, Monmouthshire County Council are working with GAVO to ensure there is minimal disruption during the interim period. So please bear with us in the meantime.



Carers Week 2022

8th June 2022 Well-being Day – Mind Monmouthshire;
9th June 2022 Carers Walk – Cefn Isla, Usk;

...INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Carers Co-ordinator;	Carers Hub;	Carers UK;
Carers Week 2022;	Men's Shed;	Monmouthshire Carers Network;
Young Carers;	Carers Handbook;	WhatsApp;
Carers Carers Rights Day;	Royal British Legion;	EPPCymru.

Welcome to Monmouthshire Young Carers Service



The Young Carers Service is working with a caseload of young carers and families that are receiving the 12-week Intervention support depending on their level of need. This programme focusses on their goals which includes emotional and/or practical support.

During February half term the Young Carers team organised some activities one of them being a Pottery session in Lollypops and Ladybirds as an opportunity for the young carers to take part in a fun creative therapeutic activity.

We had a great time and parents were invited to get involved to provide the family with some much-needed time out.

The young carers were able to socialise with people who understand their situation and to make new friends.

A great day was had by all.

Feedback from a Mum *
Thankyou for today we had a great time and it was lovely to spend some much-needed time with others who are in our situation*

**If you are a young carer/young adult carer aged 25 years and would like any support, please contact the young carers service on:
Email: YoungCarers@monmouthshire.gov.uk / Tel: 01633 644621**



Carers Rights Day Luncheons

Over 40 carers in Monmouthshire enjoyed a three course Christmas luncheon at Llanfoist Golf Club to promote Carers Rights Day.

The luncheons took place on Wednesday 24th November and 1st December, 2021. Carers relaxed and chatted over a scrumptious Christmas feast...

A great day was had by all!

TIPS TO HELP YOU STAY CYBER SAFE



Top Tip

Always install anti-virus software on your devices.

For help and advice about staying safe online visit:
www.ofcom.org.uk

Social Media

- Be wary of the data you post on line. Social media sites do sell your data onto third parties so posts you share can also be shared with a wider audience. Don't put countdowns to holidays on there. Limit the data you post about yourself in your profile. Always keep your on-line presence small.

Shopping safety

- Fake emails offering a refund will ask for bank details IGNORE IT
- Received an email from a friend asking to buy a gift card for them? IGNORE IT
- Look out for look-a-like websites, safe sites start 'HTTPS'
- Protect your cards by using RFID card protector sleeves.
- Stay vigilant for counterfeit goods. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. IGNORE IT.

Passwords

- Never use the same password for different accounts, if one is hacked the others can be too. Use UPPER, lower case characters, numbers and special characters e.g. !Y0u!3 Simply Th3 B3ut3. Check if your account has been hacked at:
www.haveibeenpwnd.com

Phishing emails

- Check the spelling of the senders name and the email address. Hover over links to check where the link is pointing to. If in doubt, get the email checked out.
- Report Phishing to: report@phishing.gov.uk

Men's Shed Sied Dynion



Mae'r grŵp yma i ddynion y gymuned MS allu trafod y pynciau sydd bwysicaf iddynt. Ymunwch a ni i gael paned neu peint drwy Zoom. Mae'r sesiynau ar gael i unrhyw un sydd gyda MS neu sy'n rhoi cymorth i rywun sydd yn dioddef.

Mae'r grŵp yn cwrrd ar **ddydd Mawrth cyntaf y mis am 7 o'r gloch y nôs**. Cysylltwch a'r Hwb Lies am fanylion.

(Yn gyffwrddol bydd y sesiynau yn cael eu rhedeg drwy gŵngwng y Saesneg)

email/e-bost:
wellbeingwales@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society



We are the group for the men of the MS community to get together and catch up on the topics that matter most. Whether you live with MS or support someone close to you, join us on Zoom for a moment to unwind!

We meet every month on the **First Tuesday at 7pm**. Contact the Hub for details.

Are You A Carer?

Please let us know if you have changed your contact details so we can update the carers register.

COMING SOON

...the New Carers Handbook



The Monmouthshire Carers Handbook has had a makeover! Whilst we have had many positive comments on how useful the handbook has been, carers have also given us some excellent suggestions as to how the handbook could be improved. The new handbook offers guidance and support for a carer whilst highlighting the need for them to think about their own needs beyond their caring role. The handbook also includes a directory of organisations that may be able to offer additional support to carers. In the meantime, the 2018 handbook is still available online at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/social-care/carers-project/. Watch this space. We will keep you updated and let you know when the handbook is ready for circulation.

SOUTH WALES ADMIRAL NURSE SERVICE



ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

supporting those with dementia; to work with carers and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia; to work with carers and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia; to work with carers and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia.

The Legion works with Dementia UK to provide Admiral Nurse support - a service that supports their beneficiaries, which can be the carer or the person living with dementia, who have served in the UK Armed Forces. The focus of the service is to maintain independence and improve the quality of life for carers and families and to provide the practical advice they need. Admiral Nurses have the experience to facilitate the service every step of the way, offering: skilled assessments to determine the needs of family carers and the needs of the person living with dementia; information and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia; to work with carers and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia; to work with carers and practical advice for carers and their families on supporting those with dementia.

Regional South Wales Areas Covered:

Bridgend, Cwmphyl, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Vale of Glamorgan, Merthyr, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot Newport, Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent.

In terms of postcodes, we cover all CF and NP postcodes and SA10 - SA13.
Telephone: 0333 011 4497 • Email: admiral@southwales@britishlegion.org



Carers UK have launched new resources for carers about Disability-Related Expenditure

Carers UK have launched new resources for carers about Disability-Related Expenditure.

If you care for someone with a disability or a medical condition, there may be extra costs involved in helping them manage this. These are called disability-related expenses (DRE). Carers can claim help from their Local Authority regarding their DRE, but this is not always known about or widely shared, and it can be complex to submit a claim.

That's why, to help carers better understand what disability-related benefits are, including whether they are entitled to support, and how to make a claim, Carers UK have recently launched some new resources.

Please visit: carersuk.org/help-and-advice/financial-support/disability-related-expenses

SUPPORT

When you turn 18 there is still support out there for you

If you want to talk to someone

You can talk to Ali Page who works within the Carers Team to see what support you might need. You may just want to talk about how turning 18 might change your caring role and the choices you want to make.

If you do want to have a chat then contact Ali Page, Young Carers & Young Adult Carers Assessment Worker, Monmouthshire County Council

Tel: 07956 188090
Email: AliPage@monmouthshire.gov.uk

If you want to keep in touch & know what's going on

You will receive regular updates through the Carers Newsletter which contains information that could help you, gives you access to free events, updates on any new carers grants, access to leisure & wellbeing discounts whilst letting you know there is still support for you in Monmouthshire.

If you want to sign up to the newsletter then please contact Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)

Tel: 01291 475474
Email: carers.co-ordinator@gavo.org.uk



We hope you want to keep in touch so we can all connect together

WhatsApp Messaging Service

We are expanding the way we communicate to our residents by developing a WhatsApp messaging service.

If you would like to subscribe to these messages, please contact ASS.Engagement@wales.nhs.uk



Gwasanaeth Negeseuon WhatsApp

Rydym yn ehangu ein dull o gyfathrebu gyda'n trigolion drwy ddatblygu gwasanaeth negeseuon Whatsapp.

Os hoffech gael y negeseuon hyn, cyysylltwch ag ASS.Engagement@wales.nhs.uk



The Health Board will be launching a WhatsApp Messaging service to engage with residents across Gwent.

By subscribing to this service, you will receive frequent updates from the Health Board on a variety of topics including COVID-19 messaging, our vaccination programmes and other information about our healthcare services.

If you or someone you know would like to receive these messages, please contact ASS.Engagement@wales.nhs.uk and file the email 'WhatsApp-Subscriber'

In the email, please provide the following details:

- Your full name
- Postcode/Barrogruff
- The mobile number you would like the messages to be sent to
- If you would like to receive messages in the medium of Welsh

For the avoidance of doubt, messages will be received from the following mobile number: **07973695798.**



Welsh Ambulance Service Non-Emergency Patient Transport



Transport is available for patients in Wales needing to get to Non-Emergency appointments who have a specific medical need and require Ambulatory Care. You can visit our website to enquire if you are eligible, to search for transport options in your local area and find FAQ's about what to expect if you travel with us.

Temporary Changes to Booking: Under normal circumstance we ask patients who are eligible for transport to call and book as soon as they receive their appointment. However, due to the increased risk surrounding Covid cases, we will only be able to take transport bookings within 4-days of our patients' appointments. By limiting advance journeys allows us to obtain the most up to date Covid information from our patients and therefore helping towards ensuring the safety of our staff and patients.



**Free NHS Health & Well Being Course,
Working with MCC Digital Lending Library**

**Gain Digital skills using an ipad & improve
your well-being at the same time!**

You will need to register with the Digital Library to take part, contact Helena from the MCC Library Service on helenawilliams@monmouthshire.gov.uk or phone 07970 380358

This is part of a pilot scheme taking place in **Monmouthshire** libraries for people who want to get online or may benefit from learning digital skills. There will be volunteers to support you.

For info on our other courses contact the **EPP Team** by epp@gavo.org.uk or use the **QR Code link**



The challenges within the social care and health system, particularly the domiciliary care crisis, not only affects individuals but have a massive impact on carers too. The isolating impact of the pandemic on carers is well documented, with a significant reduction on people's desire or ability to access respite options including direct care packages, residential and day services. Our data shows that we undertook considerably more carers assessments this year and that there were more carer's support plans in place.

Never-the-less the need to reinvigorate our approach to providing carers' assessments and focusing on the needs of carers was identified within the CIW inspection report as an area for improvement.

The entire health and social care sector relies massively on our unpaid carers. Providing carers with a responsive service, which recognises the pressure that they experience is a critical part of our business.

Throughout the pandemic and beyond our Carer's Team has continued to find ways to support carers and ensure that they feel supported and valued, as illustrated in this newsletter.

The team also took time to consider the needs of *bereaved carers through offering a garden voucher many personally delivered by the team*. The feedback from the carers was extremely poignant and highlighted the importance of keeping in touch, and saying thank you.

Our Registered Services - Mardy Park, Severn View and Care At Home

Mardy Park, Severn View and our Care at Home Service are registered under The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA).

Mardy Park is situated in Abergaveny provides a rehabilitation, re - settlement and respite service for up to 8 adults.

Severn View is situated in Chepstow and is a residential care home for up to 32 people.

In accordance with the legislation all 3 services are routinely monitored in relation to the quality of care provided and compliance with the regulatory framework.

The Responsible Individual (RI) visits quarterly - spending time within the services, reviewing records, discussing issues with managers and meeting with staff, residents and people who use home care. The findings of the RI are recorded in quarterly reports which are then reviewed at the next visit. This creates an on-going improvement dialogue which is collaborative and inclusive.

Within his quarterly monitoring report for Care at Home the RI commented:

"In talking to people who are supported by the service I am particularly looking at the quality, reliability, responsiveness and consistency of the service; whether we provide sufficient time and flexibility and also whether we communicate well and that people find it easy to get hold of someone to talk to about any issues. When a carer is involved, I am also asking that they feel supported by the team and what else we could be doing. The objective is to see whether we can be any better and how we need to change and develop to do this."

Alongside of the quarterly reports, Quality of Care reports are produced bi - annually to provide an overview of service performance against 5 key priorities:-

- Keeping people safe and well
- Providing relationship based care and support
- Working together (partnership working)
- Building a stronger workforce
- Smarter uses of resources



All together these quality assurance processes provide a rich data source on information and a real insight into the experience of staff and service users.

Whilst all the services are very different there are some key improvement themes that have arisen during the year:-

- The huge impact that the pandemic has had on all direct services both in terms of the ability to maintain service levels, the wellbeing of teams and the impact on people in receipt of services.
- Laterly there has been a sense of reset across services as we emerge from the pandemic and restrictions have lifted. Although everyone worked extremely hard to minimise service disruption, there is now much work to done to rebuild resilience, capacity, and get back on track.
- Recruitment of team members remains the biggest challenge with high employment generally and all providers experiencing the same shortages.
- Aligned to this is the work to retain our current workforce. The challenge being that many have thought to retire as a result of the pandemic and also the cost of living crisis is forcing people to make difficult decisions about working closer to home. Some work is required to review terms and conditions for services that operate 365 days a year.
- With the emphasis on keeping the service running, some aspects of training lapsed during the pandemic.
- The quality and consistency of recording and paperwork, including how care plans are review, is an area for improvement.
- More analysis and exploration of medication errors is required.

Overall though, despite everything, what is reported on most consistently is the warmth, compassion and kindness of staff together with a genuine commitment to provide high quality person centred care.

People's individual circumstances are considered. We saw people are listened to and they have the opportunity to give their views and opinions. People told us they are happy, staff are kind and treat them well. We observed the dining room experience and saw people are valued and given choices.

We observed staff being caring and attentive to peoples' needs.

The review and analysis of falls within the service needs attention in order to learn lessons and to support the timely review of personal plans as necessary.

Multi-disciplinary meetings are held on a regular basis and healthcare support is sought in a proactive and preventative way.

Personal plans lack consistency and the revision of plans requires improvement.

People are cared for in a spacious, clean and welcoming environment. The décor in communal areas is homely. Some areas have been freshly painted and we were told people are involved in how the home is decorated.

There was an inspection of Severn View by Care Inspectorate Wales in March 2022. Strengths were recognised in the quality of care, leadership and quality assurance oversight. Areas for improvement within the report included tightening up of some recruitment and personnel records; storage of medication; timeliness of supervision and appraisals for all staff; health and safety process; and consistency in reviewing personal plans. Here is a selection of feedback from the CIW report.

As part of his quarterly reports the RI gathers feedback from people who use direct care services.

Here are some of the comments and views.

I spoke with the daughter of M. She was generally satisfied but did relay some issues regarding laundry when some soiled towels hadn't been washed. She did say though, that if there are any issues, these are always resolved by a single phone call. Overall, she felt that there was nothing we could do to improve the service and 'quite satisfied'

I met with Mr & Mrs S. Mrs S was unwaveringly positive about the support she receives from the team. There is clearly a very close bond between the team and this couple.

Had a phone conversation with K from Raglan. Described consistent approach from the team but did state that the rotas appear chaotic at times. Happy with the reliability and consistency and only very occasionally did she receive support from someone outside the normal team. Very complimentary about the Senior. Only real comment was that she would like an earlier call. K gave some lovely examples of when the team have gone above and beyond.

Met with J who has been having rehab following a number of falls at home. Her reflection overall was that I 'should be very proud of what I have here and the staff'. She couldn't fault the level of care and support. In discussing the rehab she felt that the team have the right balance between supportive and making you work. She says they do monitor her to make sure she is working hard enough and they do give a gently nudge. Very complimentary of the food.

Met with D&J [husband and wife]. D has been staying with us for about a month following a succession of falls in his garden at home. During a recent home visit supported by X, she was concerned to see how poorly J was. She was able to arrange an urgent admission as J was clearly not safe to remain at home. In talking to J she said she was reluctant to come in but was now so glad she had. They were both extremely complimentary of the team, the food, the support and everyone working on the wing. The team have managed to move things around so they can have adjacent rooms with a shared kitchen so that they can be together all the time.

Specifically in relation to his experience of Severn View, Mrs W had tried two homes prior to settling on Severn View; neither of which were satisfactory. Mr W views Severn View as adequate but he has highlighted a number of areas for improvement. He raised concerns about the external spaces at and felt that these were terrible.



Severn View Parc (Crick Rd Development)

Building work continues on the replacement for Severn View Residential Home. This is a joint project with Melin Housing who are building a residential development in the same area. Lovell are responsible for both the care home and the residential build which has created local employment opportunities and apprenticeships.

The staff at Severn View have been involved in the naming of the home as a whole as well as the naming of the four individual households which it is made up of. These will be called Oak, Ash, Hazel, and

Willow. Each household will have a 'household support team' who will promote the involvement of the residents in all aspects of daily living.

A meeting took place in November with families of current residents to discuss and share information about the new build. Seven family members attended on behalf of six residents. The purpose of the meeting was to share the philosophy and ambition of the new Crick Care Home. The general feedback from families about the new care home has been very positive. There is a good understanding of the ethos and what the home is trying to achieve.

The new build will take advantage of modern assistive technologies to keep people safe whilst encouraging as much independence as possible.



5 - An aerial view of Severn View Parc



6 - The kitchen diner in one of the households



7 - The village hall and village square will be key to the promotion of social connectivity

4. How are people shaping our services? Engagement, participation, partnership and collaboration

Social Care is all about connecting with and listening to people. Right across the service the expectation is clear that people using care and support services have a voice, and should be treated equally with respect, attention and care. This means that understanding what matters to people and responding to need or vulnerability is a shared, collaborative endeavour. The fact that the response to our adult survey question '*I have been actively involved in decisions about how my care and support was provided dropped this year to 77.4% from 83.0%.*' and is reflective of our challenging circumstances.

Positively, our Care Inspectorate Wales inspection found that,

"For many people, their voices are heard, and people's personal outcomes are captured. We saw some detailed and comprehensive biographies and personal circumstances, evidencing 'what matters' to the person. Many people said social services were helpful and they were treated with dignity and respect by practitioners."

However, they commented that the quality of assessments and care plans varied and that,

"The local authority must improve the way it reflects people's strengths and barriers to achieving their personal outcomes, and the risks of them not achieving them."

Re-focusing on the quality of our engagement and partnership practice at an individual level remains a priority for the coming year.

There are countless examples of how services engage people to participate in their care and support in an enabling and empowering way. Here is a brief overview of some participation activity within Children's Services.

Participation and Engagement Activity within Children's Services

- People from My Day My Life or Care Experienced Young People have been involved in every leadership appointment from Chief Officers, Heads of Service and Team Managers
- We are delivering young carer led group work in all secondary schools, which has also been piloted in some primary schools, where young carers are able to decide what they want the group to cover. Work is on-going to re-launch the young carers forum
- Children who are having supervised time with people who are important to them have been involved in ideas about what they like about the service and how we can make it better.

Children with Disabilities use lots of different ways to communicate with children and ensure that their wishes and feelings are understood, and that they are involved in decisions about their lives. Consultation is currently in progress around the re-design of Children with Disability respite services.



Children with Disabilities – My Time Project with Action for Children

- Children with disabilities and their families were fully consulted in the design of their support services.
- The support services are now fully embedded, providing a vital support to many families and plenty of fun for children, reducing social isolation and reinforcing the long-term resilience of families.
- During lockdown the CWD team and Action for Children worked closely together to ensure that services remained flexible and supported those families under the most pressure.
- Providing flexible support with passion, ambition, inclusion and collaboration is a core aim of the service.



With the fantastic support of our partners and colleagues in MonLife, Children Looked After activity days have continued.

This is a great opportunity for children to engage with social workers, members of Corporate Parenting Panel and each other to talk about their experiences in a more informal, fun and relaxed setting.



Are you confident in sharing your wishes and feelings with your social worker?
I feel that every bit of my heart trusts my social worker.

Are you confident in sharing your wishes and feelings with your social worker?
No, I don't know her well enough.
Who would you like to help you?
My teacher Mr P.

Do you have any ideas that will support better communication between children / young people and their social workers?
To see her more and out at the park or cafe.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?
I just want to say thank you for asking.

More Than Just Words - mwy na geiriau yn unig

As a directorate we work very closely with our Welsh Language officer to ensure we support the workforce with the current **More and Words** strategy. Within our workforce intranet we have a 'More than words' tile, this includes information about various resources to encourage, assist and support colleagues to use their Welsh language skills, to include links and resources to promote the Welsh language within social care and information about the **Active Offer** and **More than Just Words**. We have Welsh language courses for social care with learning available for both internal and external care providers who work across both Adults and Children's services including online Welsh taster course as well as courses suitable for the workforce who understand spoken Welsh with ease but lack confidence in speaking Welsh. **More Than Just Words** and the **Active Offer** is part of our induction.



When making a referral or seeking advice or assistance over the phone, we offer our callers the invitation to speak to someone in Welsh. We keep an up to date list of people within both the whole organization and our directorate, both Adult's and Children's Service with Welsh language skills. This list can be accessed by colleagues who may need to identify Welsh speakers to communicate with people we provide care and support for, carers, parents and / or other professionals. The question of preferred language is part of all initial conversations and assessments, this information is included in our social care recording system. The active offer was accepted by **17 people** in our community at the point of assessment across both adult's and children's services. Our Welsh Language Officer regularly reminds us of the requirements of the Welsh language Standards and visits team and leadership meetings to discuss how he can support them. All our Social Care social media posts are bilingual and feedback forms seeking views are bilingual. We offer the whole end to end attraction and selection process as bilingual if required and all our advertised vacancies as well as our applicant app. We are looking forward to working with the new More than Words 5 year plan 2022 to 2027.

What Matters Conversations with Children

Children are encouraged to set their own goal and are invited and encouraged to attend **Achieving Change Together Team** reviews and other meetings, where appropriate although they often don't want to. If they don't we try and get feedback from them about what they want to achieve and change for example one child wanted his mother to 'keep up the good work on her drinking' and 'less shouting, talk to us'. Another child fed back that their mum was 'stronger' and his sibling said that when they were upset their mother now knew what to do to help them.

Building Strong Families Team

Children are involved in setting their own goals. For example "I would like some help and tools to reduce my frustration. I would like feel more comfortable about my parents divorce. I would like home to be more peaceful and fun again."

Activities undertaken with families involve children and children are engaged in reviewing the work. Children are encouraged and supported to find their own voice and to identify what it is they can do to help themselves.

At the end of support, children are asked for feedback about what worked and what could have been better.

“Exploring control”

MY CIRCLE OF CONTROL
I WILL FOCUS ON WHAT I CAN CONTROL

THINGS THAT ARE IN MY CONTROL

- The amount of effort I put in
- How I take care of myself
- My words
- My decisions
- My actions
- How I handle my feelings
- How I treat others
- Whether or not I follow rules

THINGS THAT ARE OUT OF MY CONTROL

- What other people do
- Things from the past
- Other people's choices
- What other people say
- How other people feel
- The weather

“I want to control everything, so I don't get hurt again”

“Coping Strategies”

First Aid

- 101 Read a book
- 102 Call a cat
- 104 Listen to music
- 105 Talking to people and looking them in the eye
- 106 Use puppy
- 107 Callie belly

The directorate employs a number of organisations and methods to support people more formally in their interactions with services.

The Children's Services Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is critical in terms of helping children and young people participate in their Children Looked After Reviews. The small size of the authority enables our IRO service to develop individual relationships with children which is helpful in encouraging them to express their wishes and feelings.

It is an expectation that *proper consideration* is given to all children over the age of 8 attending their child looked after review, or at least part of it. Above the age of 11, it is an expectation that children will always be invited.

There were 126 children aged above 8 years old who had reviews.

Of the 126 children 97 were invited to their reviews.

Of the 97 who were invited, 86 attended.

Some analysis of this data shows:

- Children are less likely to attend their reviews whilst the matter is going through court
- Children placed with their parents and relatives are generally less likely to attend
- There is an increase in children taking up the offer of having conversations with the IRO outside of the review through remote methods
- The number of children being supported by an advocate for their review is 5. This seems to be reducing.

Overall, the number of children who attend when they are invited is consistently positive, and is something we need to maintain. Moving forward the intention is to encourage children to feed their views, wishes and feelings into their reviews beforehand via digital technology, as this appears to be something that they would embrace.

The IRO also encourages parents to attend children looked after reviews. Attendance of parents at reviews is important in order to ensure that all parties have the opportunity to contribute to the review process. Attendance of parents is consistently high at between 80% - 90%.

If required, the IRO facilitates separate meetings for parents to enable their views to be heard. In some respects virtual meetings via TEAMS have helped parental attendance, with less need for separate meetings as family members are all able to safely attend one meeting. For example, some parents have indicated that they are able to attend meetings via TEAMS when, if they were face to face, they would struggle to be in the same room.



8 - NYAS is commissioned on a Gwent wide basis to provide advocacy for children and young people.

National Youth Advocacy Service

Between April 2021 - March 2022 the impact of the pandemic saw advocates using lots of flexible working practices in a virtual world of video calls, texting and Teams. Positively, much of this has continued with advocates now offering young people different options regarding engagement including face to face since the lifting of national restrictions.

Over the year there were a total of **242** referrals into service. The average number per quarter was 61, with a high of 80 and a low of 49. This comprised of 137 Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 105 Active Offer (AO) referrals.

The number of Active Offer referrals has increased 30% since 2020-2021, and the Issue Based Advocacy figure represents an increase of 25% year on year. Overall the numbers of referrals are higher than predicted, which is a positive thing. Overall, there have been **838** hours of issue based advocacy delivered and **184** hours delivered related to Active Offer referrals.

During the year there were 51 self referrals for Issue Based Advocacy, all following Active Offer meetings. 45% of IBA referrals related to requests for advocacy involvement in children on care and support plans; 39% for Child Protection services and 16% for Children who are Looked After.

The most popular reason why young people requested advocacy support this year continues to be presenting their views and feelings at formal meetings. 67% of the issues identified fall into this category. 10% of issues were around helping young people express their views regarding Family Time arrangements (Contact) such as issues around frequency and location, and 7% were related to issues regarding a young persons placement.

Advocacy for Adults Services is also commissioned on a regional basis with the lead commissioning authority being Blaenau Gwent.

The service is called GATA – Gwent Access to Advocacy, and there is a website which provides citizens and professionals with more information : [Gwent Advocacy Service – Home Page \(gata.cymru\)](http://gata.cymru). This service is a single point of access for information and advice regarding advocacy for adults. Citizens or professionals can ring the phone line and can be assessed and referred to the two main providers, Dewis and Age Cymru, if required. Social Workers can also ring Dewis or Age Cymru directly under the scheme.

Complaints and Compliments

Representation and complaints procedures in Social Services departments are a statutory requirement. Everyone who makes a complaint about social services has a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively. We always take complaints seriously and use them as an opportunity to critically appraise our actions and reflect on any improvements that need to be made.

General advice about the procedure is published in our complaints leaflet “How to be heard”. Alternatively, people can contact the Customer Relations team for help and advice about how to make a complaint.

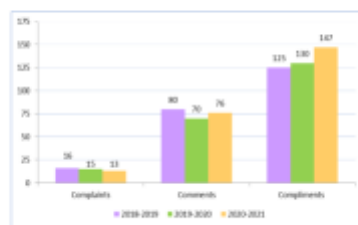
There are 3 stages to the complaints process. Local resolution (stage 1); formal investigation (stage 2) and referral to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (stage 3).

During the year covered by this report we received 12 complaints (6 of which progressed to stage 2), 93 compliments, and 57 comments in Adults Services. In Children's Services there were 21 complaints (3 of which progressed to stage 2), 10 compliments, and 10 comments received.

General themes that within complaints include communication issues; not being listened to or involved in decisions; and dissatisfaction with the provisions of services.

We always take complaints seriously and use them as part of continued professional development and to help us shape policy, operational practice and the design of services.

Period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021



9 - In 2020 - 2021 13 complaints were registered at Stage 1, 10 of which were resolved and 3 of which went to Stage 2

The SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH CUSTOMER RELATIONS officer compiles an annual report including complaints, comments and compliments.



*To the staff of St Anne's, There are no words that can adequately express our thanks to all the staff of St Anne's, who looked after our mother, ***, in her final years, with such dedication, love and care. We know mum will have appreciated that she was cared for in such a way that she could maintain her dignity and feel safe and secure in a new environment. Special thanks are sent to those staff who showed such kindness and empathy in her end of life care when we ourselves were not able to be there. We are so very grateful to you all...*

The service is reliable but timings are not regular and do not suit my schedule. I do things, I would ask for help with if someone was there at the right time. Lots of different staff.

*Thanks *** The DP thing is going well. We are so lucky to be able to provide this level of care for our parents. So glad they live in Wales where the support from you and other people in the system is SO much better and much more caring. The thing you and *** do so well is making it personal. I always feel I can reach out and you will help us out. And you talk to each other. It makes it all work so well and means we all feel very supported. So between us all we are making a real difference to the lives of two elderly people Thank you ☺ ****

I am currently staying with my Daughter as there is currently no care available for me, and no care home available

*Today will be *** and *** last call with us, the private carer will be taking over, the daughter is extremely grateful for all the hard work and commitment that the team have provided for years and will miss the team.*

MCC supply a good meals on wheels service. I have a private arrangement for cleaning and a local manager on site. I feel able to live in my own flat with these support services.

While I am a Direct Payment Service User which suits me well. I sometimes have to have a care agency in, which never send the same carer, never tell me of changes and I feel I am being ignored.

During COVID Lockdown the staff assisted me in choosing colour schemes and redecorating my bungalow and making a portfolio. The hub staff visited daily and assisted with craft work and painting. District Nurses came twice a day and my social worker zoomed. Now able to go out and about. Thank you to all. During Covid Lockdown excellent service and assistance from the same staff. Hub staff and district nurses and my social worker all enhance a very happy life for me. Thank you to all who care and support me in leading a happy, busy life.

A complaint was received around the way in which their father's respite care was handled.

*She was extremely complimentary of the work that has gone into this case. She especially commented upon the amount of work that *** has done to ensure that everything has been covered and that court has every single piece of information that they could need to inform the decision making. Her words “*** has left no stone unturned” and “I can't think of anything else that could possibly be requested, *** has provided it all”. She said that from the evidence submitted, it was very easy to see the journey that this family has been on and the exceptional support that the LA have provided throughout. She did comment that she thought it most beneficial that the family have not experienced any changes of social worker from the beginning and felt this was a big positive as *** knew the case “ inside and out.*

To the OT gang, Just a quick note and a little something to say thank-you for all you have done. Thanks for putting up with my mood swings, I do appreciate how hard you have worked. Many thanks.

We are committed to ensuring that people's involvement and participation in services have a direct impact on how policy is shaped and services develop.

There is an active corporate parenting panel in Monmouthshire with representatives from directorates across the Council, care leavers and foster carers, as well as cross-party elected members. The panel is chaired by Cllr Tudor Thomas, lead member for social care and health. The panel offers members opportunities to hear directly about the experiences of children who are looked after, care experienced young people and foster carers. Although face to face events have been curtailed over the pandemic, the panel was happily able to host an evening with care experienced young people in September 2021. Issues discussed included loneliness and isolation; the impact of COVID; the difficult experiences some young people have in care; challenges around move on accommodation and securing employment opportunities. Meeting with and listening to young people has helped the panel champion many of the issues that were raised by the group as being important to them.

Some of these have included:

- changing some of the terms and language used within the council
- developing activity days for children looked after so that they can
- ensuring priority interviews for care leavers
- arranging leisure passes

Moving forward, we are looking at ways that care experienced people can get more involved in recruiting and training carers.

On 17th March 2022 children's services arranged an on-line event for in-house foster carers to meet with senior managers and the Chair of corporate parenting, so that their views and feelings about the service could be heard directly. Much positive feedback was shared particularly regarding the support provided by the supervising Social Workers and the Placement and Support Team. However, we also heard concerns around a lack of routine communication between children's social work teams. Another


issue of concern was that carers felt they were not always included as an equal partners in key decision making and care planning for the children, even though they are the ones who know their day to day needs the best. Issues regarding fees and allowances were also raised particularly in light of the rising cost of living and energy costs.


This event was part of our developing participation plan with Foster Carers, including ensuring that carers become an integral part of the wider team of professionals around a child. Together with our Gwent partners we have started some joint training to promote this. We are ensuring that foster carers views are feedback directly to the teams to consider ways we can improve particularly regarding frustrations around communication, information sharing and professional respect. The financial situation for Foster Carers will be monitored and reviewed as part of Foster Wales alongside of the wider foster care support offer.

Face to Face School Based Counselling Wellbeing Practitioners IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ The Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Practitioner Team launched a project in March 2022 and have been working to support students in Monmouthshire secondary schools and school colleagues.
- ▶ The team works as part of the umbrella of existing school interventions but also are embedded directly in school life.
- ▶ They bring training and skills into the school that can be developed with a strong therapeutic focus alongside the relative independence that comes with sitting in the independent broader counselling service offer

- ▶ The practitioners take time to build relationships with the students they support, both in the unstructured manner during every day school life, as well as through more structured counselling interventions.
- ▶ This supports their emotional regulation and active listening themes), to the more structured intervention
- ▶ This variation in support has enabled them to be **in the middle of student life and influencing school culture**
- ▶ It has enabled the team to **hear directly from students and incorporate their ideas and suggestions for what would promote their wellbeing.**

- 
- ▶ The Wellbeing Practitioners work alongside education colleagues to create practical plans to implement students' ideas.
 - ▶ These have included ideas such as a girls' football group, sensory areas and group sensory programmes for students who find great value in this experiential way of regulating; and wellbeing spaces that create areas of welcoming, warmth and support.
 - ▶ Schools have identified that this has led to better use of resources, better informed support staff and greater awareness of young people's needs as well as a contribution to the whole-school culture of wellbeing.

- 
- ▶ These outcomes have been a blend of adult-initiated and child-initiated decisions but have seen empowered choice and a sense of self-created reward as outcomes, as well as embedding participatory principles.
 - ▶ The supportive and welcoming way in which schools have embraced the emotional and wellbeing practitioner role has been pivotal to enabling those staff members to understand the nuances of young people's needs in educational settings.
 - ▶ The team continue to work alongside school colleagues to build the whole school culture and ethos.
 - ▶ As always relationships are key and the collegial way in which young people have been supported to have their voice and choice really bodes well for the future.

In terms of using participation to influence whole systems see this great example from the Schools Based Counselling service.

There are many examples of how we strive to keep in contact with and communicate with people who use our services.



In this issue: Jubilee; Community Care; Dementia Awareness week; Boys in Blue; Helpful Information; Wellbeing; Good news stories.

Issue No: 12
July 2022



Chepstow Hospital Platinum Jubilee Celebrations were enjoyed by the inpatients and staff on Sunday 5th June.

Working with our partners CCS everyone was delighted to have a dining with a Royal inspired breakfast and afternoon tea. Our catering staff went to great lengths to perfect the Lemon and Amoretti Trifle which was crowned the official Platinum Jubilee pudding and feedback from our patients was one of pleasure and enjoyment.





Re-opening of the Community Cabin

The grand re-opening of the Community Cabin which took place on 23rd May 2022 was a huge success and we would like to thank everyone who took part.

The Community Cabin is a building just off the main entrance in Chepstow Community Hospital, the non-clinical space is perfectly situated and invites curiosity from people using the hospital. If you would like to book a place in the cabin please contact **Stacey White**, South Monmouthshire Integrated Services on either Tel: 07814061610 or Email: staceywhite@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Our Community Cabin hosts a variety of wellbeing related organisations and charities that are able to provide advice, guidance and support on a wide range of issues from mental health, dementia to volunteering. It is aimed at supporting people maintain their independence and remain in their own homes.

Using the Community Cabin as a place to see community members face to face not only helps reduce their isolation, it gives an opportunity to network and work collaboratively with other organisations who also use the cabin space.

We are really looking forward to welcoming people back into our Community Cabin.





Dementia Awareness Week 16th – 22nd May 2022

The Older Adult Mental Health Team based at Chepstow held a Dementia Awareness Day on the 18th May 2022. The team spent time during the day talking to members of the public and staff from different departments based in the hospital.

The Occupational Therapists had a stand with technology that could be offered out to the public to support families within the home environment. The memory clinic had a stand with a registered nurse and a Health Care Support Worker promoting awareness to members of the public and staff.

Positives from the day included a lovely gentleman who had concerns about his memory and did not know where/ who to discuss this with, after speaking to the team he said that he now has no fears about approaching the GP for a referral to the memory clinic.

Another lovely couple came in and had a chat. The lady had a diagnosis and had moved to the area to be with their family. They were looking forward to their referral to the team and impressed with the support from all services since they had moved here. Staff from the physio department came and took leaflets, along with the Occupational Therapists and their students who were looking over all the technology that was on display. There was also a man who has anxiety and a history of Alzheimer's in the family. He felt more comfortable in approaching his GP to have this looked into.

All of the team have been extremely enthusiastic about today and it was very informative and well received.





Mount Pleasant Hospital "Boys in Blue"



Mount Pleasant Hospital had been built by the Admiralty in 1917 for the workers at the National Shipyard in Chepstow.

In 1919 Mount Pleasant Hospital was transferred to the Ministry of Pensions, and became a centre for accommodating permanently disabled war pensioners. Particularly poison gas victims, known as the "boys in blue" for their serge uniforms.

The photos of the "Boys in Blue" were stored in the old Library at Chepstow Community Hospital. The photographs are now on display in the concourse for staff, patients and visitors to view.





CARING FOR YOU AND YOUR FUTURE
Please take a look at our short animations about helping us help you

The animations include:

- The full extended animation - choosing the right healthcare service first time
- Pharmacy Services
- Primary Care
- Minor Injury Units
- ED Triage System

Click on the attached link to the animation download page [Animations - Aneurin Bevan University Health Board \(nhs.wales\)](#) (The files are available in a variety of formats for full screen and social media use)

Work With Us Roadshow



We are still out and about on a tour around the Health Board area to recruit new members of staff and to ensure local residents know where they should go when they need health care.

The Roadshow schedule is available on our website: <http://abuhb.nhs.wales/aboutus/public-engagement-consultation/work-with-us-roadshows/> and publicised on our social media channels. Please note that times and dates can be subject to change. Please visit the Roadshow schedule on our website which is updated daily with the latest information.

Keep an eye out for our Roadshow bus and get on board with us!

Help us help you to understand the changes to your healthcare services by coming to speak with us at one of the events below...

Date	Time	Area	Location
Monday 25th July 2022	10.00 - 14.00	Tofwen	AGDA Cwmbran
Wednesday 27th July 2022	10.00 - 14.00	Newport	Newport Centre, Kingsway
Wednesday 3rd August 2022	11.00 - 15.00	Tofwen	Zent on the Park Family Fun Day, Pontypool Park
Tuesday 9th August 2022	14.00 - 16.00	Tofwen	Pontypool 50+ Forum





Slimming World on Referral from your Health Professional

Slimming World on Referral gives GPs, nurses and other health professionals the opportunity to offer free membership of a local Slimming World group to those patients who they feel would benefit. Referred patients attend at no cost to themselves for an initial agreed period.

Patients are provided with a referral form by a health professional (typically, a GP, nurse, midwife or Health Trainer) and these are redeemed at a local Slimming World group (choose the most convenient). The group Consultants contact details are also available should the patient wish to talk to them before attending - no booking is required

Cost of Living: Wellbeing Support and Advice for Staff

The Health Board is aware that the current cost of living crisis will cause stress and anxiety for many of our staff.

A dedicated hub of advice and information has been created on the AB Pulse Employee Wellbeing support pages. This was put together by the Workforce & OD, Comms and Employee Wellbeing desks. We hope that this can help staff in these difficult times

Free Home Fire Safety Check
Monmouthshire Community Teams working in Collaboration with South Wales Fire Service.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are working in partnership with our Community Teams to access high risk / vulnerable clients who may otherwise be unreachable. The main focus has been to engage with organisations who work with groups on a regular basis. Our Community Teams can refer for a home safety check by a Fire Service Home Safety Practitioner.

The practitioner will contact you and will go through advice asking you a few questions about your home. If alarms are required the Home Safety Practitioner will chat through a few options to get these to you. They will offer you the opportunity to have a FREE Home Safety visit in your home. If you or a family member wish to book a Home Safety visit please [here to Request a visit - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#)



Cost of Living: Advice and Support

Anyone can fall behind with bills and get into debt, but it's NEVER too late to seek help and advice.

Please [click here to discover what support is available to you in Monmouthshire.](#) It includes details of national organisations as well as local links and connections within Monmouthshire.

The good news is that this is because there is lots of help available. If you're struggling it is always better to seek help and advice sooner rather than later - but it is also never too late to ask for help, you may be surprised at how much can be done to help you get back on your feet!



If you want to talk to someone you can call our Monmouthshire Local Authority Contact Centre on 01633 644644 or walk into one of the community hubs they can advise what help may be most relevant for your circumstances.

You can also contact Citizens Advice on 0800 702 2020.





The Usk and Raglan Community Clinic is a new initiative lead by District Nurses. The clinic provides high quality, evidence based, person focused health and social care. The clinic will fulfil the Welsh Governments Agenda to achieve a proactive, flexible and sustainable primary care service.

Renee Cotson, Usk and Raglan District Nurse Team Manager, said "The Integrated District Nursing Team are exceptionally passionate and proud of the Community Clinic and look forward to developing further initiatives in the future"



District Nurses provide a broad range of nursing expertise that can be delivered within your home or the community clinic setting. Care delivered is person centered with the aim of promoting independence and quality of life. The District Nursing Team will always aim to visit at home or maintain clinic appointments as arranged. However, due to the varied and unpredictable nature of their work, they must prioritise urgent calls received throughout the day. Therefore, routine calls may need to be rearranged on occasion.

There are many benefits to the introduction of the Community Clinic such as its location in the Roger Edwards Trust Building which is central in Usk and Monmouthshire. This will improve efficiency and quality of care due to ease of access to treatment and resources. It will also provide patients with a choice regarding where they would like to receive care and treatment.

Renee said, "We couldn't have achieved it without the support of Leanne Watkins, (Director of operations), and the Trustees of the building. They have been so supportive and believed in our project".





MIST

Monmouthshire Integrated Services

WELLBEING INFORMATION

We hope some of this information is of interest.

What is Active Monitoring?

Active Monitoring is an early intervention service which uses guided self-help tools to support your mental wellbeing as soon as you need it. It involves 5 short sessions with a trained practitioner to hear what support you need and develop a wellbeing toolkit of self-help tools.

Active Monitoring has been developed with people who have lived experience of mental health problems and professionals.

How does it work?

Trained mental health practitioners deliver Active Monitoring in community settings and remotely via telephone. The first session is a 40-minute introduction to discuss what support you need. If both you and your practitioner feel Active Monitoring is appropriate, you will have five 20-minute sessions using evidence-based tools and resources to develop a wellbeing toolkit.

What does support look like?

You and your practitioner can select one of seven pathways to support your mental wellbeing. These include anxiety and panic attacks, low mood, low self-esteem, stress, grief and loss, feeling alone and managing anger. From these pathways, you can try a range of self-help tools to help you stay well and put together a toolkit of resources that work best for you. Your practitioner will support you to do this in your weekly sessions.

What can it do for me?

Our Active Monitoring programme offers one-to-one support to help you make positive choices in your life and improve your mental health. We will work with you to help you understand your symptoms and offer some handy hints and tips so that you can help yourself feel better.

For further information on your mental health symptoms go to: mind.org.uk/information-support/
To join a community of people with similar mental health experience go to: sidebyside.mind.org.uk
If you need someone to talk to urgently call Samaritans on 116 123

Melo Website Refresh and Relaunch

The Health Board's website: Melo, which was developed and designed to help the workforce and population of Gwent look after their emotional and mental wellbeing has been refreshed and is being relaunched **Tuesday 2nd August**. It is now easier to navigate and has an increased range of materials, including topics such as menopause, sleep, financial worries and self-harm and suicide prevention.





A well-deserved CONGRATULATIONS to Dawn James, Community Nurse in Abergavenny

Dawn won the award for "Kindness in the Community" under the category "Triumph over Adversity".
A mother of a patient with Learning Disabilities and Complex Needs nominated Dawn for this Award from the support they had been shown.



All the Monmouthshire Community Teams are very proud of Dawn – Fran Cunningham the Team Leader for Abergavenny said:

"Basically, Dawn is extremely kind and generous of her time to patients, carers and team members, or to anyone who needs it. She goes the extra hundreds of miles. Always wanting the best outcomes for patients, she can see through problems, and how to improve patients' lives in a way that others can't. Dawn has the ability to work around obstacles, seeing them as something to overcome rather than a difficulty. As the team "go to" trouble shooter, Dawn shines through difficult and challenging situations, demonstrating high levels of tenacity.

The nomination for this award represented the hours, very often on top of her normal working hours that Dawn spent listening, supporting, building up confidence and breaking down barriers with the patient and family.
And this was on top of doing her degree!!

GOODBYE and GOOD LUCK - Dr Shyam Pankhanja



For the past year, we had the pleasure of having Dr Shyam Pankhanja with us as Specialty Doctor for the Monmouthshire CRT.

Shyam helped establish the rapid medical service and played a huge part in the development and roll out of pathways to facilitate the rapid assessment of patients and prevent unnecessary hospital admissions.

Shyam completed his year with us and has left to commence specialty training in East England. He wishes to be a Consultant in Emergency Medicine. We wish him all the best in his training post and his future career.





PANCAKE DAY AT MONNOW VALE



**What do they say?
"Laughter is the best medicine"**

It proves how important fun and stimulating activities are for people with dementia - the laughter that was had by all who attended day services on pancake day at Monnow Vale Health & Social Care Facility, could be heard right down the corridor! So rewarding for staff to see the smiles and watching people leave to go back home with such a feel good factor.

One husband when meeting his wife to go home said "I can tell the difference in my wife after being with you every Wednesday, she is so happy and I can't thank you all enough"

Fund Razor

John Hindener shared his shavings and raised £250 by cutting his hair and beard. He kindly donated this to Chepstow Community Hospital staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the Covid Pandemic.

John said "I was working in Canada and it was very cold just before covid restrictions happened. As it was cold I started to let my hair and beard grow.

My mum was on Cas-Gwent ward two years ago and I thought let's do something to raise money for NHS workers. My mum hated me growing my hair and beard but as this was for a good cause, she let it go this time".

Thank you from all of us John for your Beardless Support



We would like to say a big thank you to year 1 children at the Dell Primary school

Their wonderful "Thank you Letters" to the staff at Chepstow Community Hospital for their work throughout the covid-19 Pandemic was very gratefully received by all our staff.



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SGO Newsletter May 2022

Hello everyone!

We've made it through the Easter holidays and now, finally, it's looking like we're getting into summer. We hope you've managed to get out and enjoy some sunshine.

Updates

As most of you may already know, Gabby and Sara have both moved on to new pastures and we all wish them the best in their new ventures.

Joining the team is Mike, who some of you have already met at annual reviews, or at our last support group in April, and Bethan who will be starting with the team towards the end of June.

Whilst there have been no new Special Guardianship Orders made since February, we have been joined by two Special Guardians, who have moved over from other local authorities, and we wish them a warm welcome.

Support Groups & Training

Since the last newsletter, we have been able to hold three face-to-face meetings at various locations around the county, and it has been fantastic to meet some of you in person for the first time and to talk, share stories, drink tea and eat biscuits.

We now are able to access four venues around Monmouthshire; Chepstow Library Hub, Monmouth Library Hub, County Hall Usk, and as of the first time earlier this week, The Cabin in Abergavenny, to meet, deliver training and offer advice or information to all SGO carers who wish to join us.

Upcoming SGO Training and Support Groups are as follows.

Tuesday 7th June 2022 - SGO Support Group - 10:00 – 11:30 Monmouth Library Hub

Wednesday 13th July 2022 – SGO Training Session 10:00 – 12:00 Chepstow Library Hub

Thursday 18th August 2022 – SGO Support Group 10:00 – 11:30 Abergavenny (The Cabin) TBC

Monday 19th September 2022 – SGO Training Session 10:00 – 12:00 Monmouth Library Hub

Tuesday 11th October 2022 – SGO Support Group 10:00 – 11:30 Chepstow Library Hub TBC

Email invites to the sessions will be sent out around 3 weeks prior to the date, confirming the venue and the topic of training or information sharing. At this time, if you require a TEAMS invite to the session, let us know and we shall email one to you.

With the training / information sharing sessions, if anyone has any issues or topics that they would like to have covered, please let us know and we will be able to offer information and advice based around these subjects.

Also, just a reminder that www.kinship.org.uk have lots of great information and resources on subjects such as dealing with emotional stress and tips and assistance in regard to rising living costs.

Summer in Monmouthshire

With the Queens diamond jubilee approaching fast, here are a few ideas for you for the bank holiday weekend:

There's a packed programme of events to look forward to over the May half-term and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend. These include ten days of spectacular happenings at the [Wye Valley River Festival](#) (27 May – 5 June), the [Welsh Perry & Cider Festival](#) (2 – 5 June) at Caldicot Castle & Country Park, the [Abergavenny Steam, Veteran & Vintage Rally](#) (3 – 4 June), and a [Jubilee Party Race night](#) (4 June) at Chepstow Racecourse.

[See the full programme for May half-term and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday](#)

[See all forthcoming Monmouthshire events](#)

With the summer fast approaching, we have been discussing amongst the team the idea of hosting an activity day for you, the Special Guardians, and the children you care for. Is this something you may be interested in? Fairground games, scavenger hunt, etc? If this appeals to you, then please let us know!

Interesting Fact.

In the UK.....

Number of SGOs granted in 2006 – 70

Number of SGOs granted in 2015 – 3520

Thanks everyone and take care!

Mike & Giovanna

Families Together Team

mikeyates@monmouthshire.gov.uk

giovannastancia@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Mike – 07773657139

Giovanna - 07929017107

Issue 3

February 2022

foster wales news

working together to build better futures for local children

what's happening in wales

There are currently over 7000 looked after children in Wales, under the legal responsibility of your local authorities. Three quarters of those children live with wonderful foster carers like you. There are 2700 local authority foster carers in Wales, but we need 500 more.

Thank you to the foster carers and fostering teams from all around Wales who travelled to the Senedd in Cardiff for our campaign launch to stand proudly beside our doors as 22 local authorities working together.

In September we launched our first TV advert on ITV and 54C with over 4 million views.



A simple fix or share could help us to find new foster carers.
www.fosterwales.com
@Foster_wales



message from Llinos

Hi everyone and welcome to our February newsletter. I hope you have all been keeping warm and dry and surviving all the storms unscathed! Lots of information in our newsletter this week. Please take special note of Ros' message this month which will benefit you all. We have an important communications event coming up on the evening of March 17th at 7pm. The event will be via 'teams' on this occasion as we are making every effort to ensure that our team members remain in work! We want to ensure we are able to maintain our service and have learned by experience, with many staff having contracted covid at the same time! The event is not to identify specific issues but to raise awareness of current themes that may affect you all and influence your role as foster carers. The invitation explains how you are able to convey your thoughts and views about what is working well – and what isn't, or what you have that you don't need and what you need and don't have! Please take some time to share your thoughts with FC4FC (foster carers for foster carers). I have met with FC4FC recently and we are planning to have regular information sharing meetings – including how we can improve an induction to new carers to ensure you are all supported and 'included'! We really want to make a success of this event so please would you make every effort to share your feedback to FC4FC (details in the invitation). We are all in this together! See you all soon.....

Llinos



fc4fc

Next meeting is
Wednesday 2nd March
12.30-14.30

[Click here to join
the meeting](#)

recommend a friend

and you will receive

£250

when they are approved.

Money is paid when they start their first
placement.

(Includes Supported Lodgings)



message from Ros



Changes to allowances and expenses.

We want to keep you updated of some changes to fostering and expense payments. If you have any comments or queries, please feel free to discuss with your supervising social worker.

Late payments.

Expense claims that are later than 3 months will no longer be processed and paid unless there are mitigating circumstances. This is due to budgeting and accountancy issues. The additional payments we make need to be forwarded on a regular and routine basis, so the people who do the maths and forecast what budgets we need (the accountants) are able to review and gather an understanding of how much money the service needs.

Mileage claims to and from school.

In line with Monmouthshire's Policy, we will not automatically pay all the mileage to and from school. Primary schools, if the school the child attends is less than 3.5 miles from home then mileage expenses to and from school is not covered.

Secondary schools, if the school the child attends is less than 2 miles from home then mileage expenses to and from school is not covered.

The above is in line with Monmouthshire policy, and links in with the number of miles the local authority will offer school transport.

Retainer fees.

As you have all probably experienced, there can sometimes be a delay between the time a childcare social worker agrees a child has been matched with you and the actual placement. If this is the case, we will pay a retainer fee, that is half a fostering allowance per child until that child is placed. Paying a retainer fee recognises your commitment to that child and the fact you are unable to consider any other placements during this period.

Emergency Placements.

It is likely you have all taken that call from one of our team, asking are you available tonight/this weekend as childcare social workers are out assessing a crisis and have asked us to identify an immediate placement. You cancel plans, move bedrooms around and put-up equipment in readiness, then we call you to say 'stand down' children are remaining home.

In these circumstances, we will now pay you the fostering allowance per child for that day to recognise your commitment to changing plans and reorganising your home to accommodate children who may be in need of a fostering placement.

As mentioned above, if you need any more information, please contact your social worker to discuss.

Kind regards

Ros McAtee

learning & development

Hi Everyone

I have sent you a number of emails recently regarding some upcoming learning and development. Here's a reminder in case you missed any and if you need any more information or help booking a place please let me know. Links to book all courses are in the emails I send. Don't forget to let me know if you are booked on any sessions so that I can update your records.

Based are running a number of sessions in March on the following:

Talking to Young People Around Substance Use
Alcohol
Families
Substances & Wellbeing
Social Media & Drugs
NPS - New Psychoactive Substances

I have organised some drop in sessions in March for you to come and use a laptop and start/complete any outstanding core e-learning on:

Thursday, 3rd March 10am until 1pm
Wednesday, 16th March 10am until 1pm
Tuesday, 22nd March 10am until 1pm
Tuesday, 29th March 10am until 1pm

The Fostering Network are offering a number of Digital Skills Sessions on the following dates in March:

Wednesday 2 March
Thursday 3 March
Wednesday 9 March
Thursday 20 March
Wednesday 30 March
Thursday 17 March
Wednesday 23 March
Thursday 24 March
Wednesday 30 March
Thursday 31 March

Fostering Hope, the parent-and-child fostering forum, are hosting a webinar on 24th February 11-11.30 called Circle of Security and other tools to help parents meet their babies needs.

Brook Sexual Behaviour Traffic Light Training is taking place on the following dates (you only need to attend one session):

Monday 28th February 2022 - 13:00 - 16:30
Tuesday 5th April 2022 - 09:30 - 13:00
Thursday 26th May 2022 - 13:00 - 16:30
Wednesday 29th June 2022 - 09:30 - 13:00
Monday 5th September 2022 - 13:00 - 16:30
Monday 7th November 2022 - 13:00 - 16:30

HyET are running Child Development 0-8 training on 10th March 10am - 2pm at Victoria Village School in Abersychan. Let me know if you wish to attend and I will book your place.

Finally there is Autism training on 2nd March at 10am on Microsoft Teams and here is the link for that one [MCC - Man Workforce Development Team \(office365.com\)](#) You will need to scroll down until you see the course title Autism Awareness Training Children & Young People.

If you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best wishes
Rachel



recipe

Wrth i Ddiwrnod Crempog ddisgyn ar Ddydd Gŵyl Dewi eleri dyma 2 rysât:
efallai yr haffech chi rai cynnig arnyn nhw - Bara-Brith a chrempogau
Americanaidd. Rhwch wybod i ni sut hwyl gawsoch chi, byddem wrth ein
bodd yn gweld eich lluniau!

Sugar-crusted Bara Brith

Ingredients

- 400g/14oz luxury mixed fruit
- 75g pack dried cranberries
- mug hot strong black tea
- 100g butter, plus extra for greasing
- 2 heaped tbsp orange marmalade
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 450g self-raising flour - try a mix of wholemeal and white
- 175g light soft brown sugar
- 1 tsp each ground cinnamon and ground ginger
- 4 tbsp milk
- 50g crushed sugar cubes or granulated sugar, to decorate

Method

- STEP 1
Mix together the dried fruit and cranberries in a large bowl, then pour the hot tea over. Cover with cling film and leave to soak overnight.
- STEP 2
Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4. Butter and line the bottom of a 900g/2lb loaf tin with baking parchment. Melt butter and marmalade together in a pan. Leave to cool for 5 mins, then beat in the eggs. Drain any excess tea from the fruit. Mix the flour, sugar and spices together, then stir in the fruit, butter mix and milk until evenly combined. The batter should softly drop from the spoon - add more milk if needed.
- STEP 3
Spoon into the tin and level the top. Sprinkle with the crushed sugar and bake for 1-1½ hrs until dark golden and a skewer inserted comes out clean. Cover loosely with foil if it starts to over-colour before the middle is cooked. Leave to cool completely in the tin and serve sliced.



recipe

American Pancakes



Ingredients

200g self-raising flour
1 ½ tsp baking powder
1 tbsp golden caster sugar
3 large eggs
25g melted butter, plus extra for cooking
200ml milk
vegetable oil, for cooking
To serve
maple syrup
toppings of your choice, such as cooked bacon, chocolate chips, blueberries or peanut butter and jam

Method

- **STEP 1**
Mix 200g self-raising flour, 1 ½ tsp baking powder, 1 tbsp golden caster sugar and a pinch of salt together in a large bowl.
- **STEP 2**
Create a well in the centre with the back of your spoon then add 3 large eggs, 25g melted butter and 200ml milk.
- **STEP 3**
Whisk together either with a balloon whisk or electric hand beaters until smooth then pour into a jug.
- **STEP 4**
Heat a small knob of butter and 1 tsp of oil in a large, non-stick frying pan over a medium heat. When the butter looks frothy, pour in rounds of the batter, approximately 8cm wide. Make sure you don't put the pancakes too close together as they will spread during cooking. Cook the pancakes on one side for about 1-2 mins or until lots of tiny bubbles start to appear and pop on the surface. Flip the pancakes over and cook for a further minute on the other side. Repeat until all the batter is used up.
- **STEP 5**
Serve your pancakes stacked up on a plate with a drizzle of maple syrup and any of your favourite toppings.

MyST  

www.mysupportteam.org.uk

MyST is a Therapeutic Mental Health Service working with children looked after aiming to help children remain in their local communities. We are based at Victoria Village School. Exciting developments of the existing Blenheim Green - Monmouthshire MyST service. We are very pleased to let you know that our existing joint service will become 2 separate services from the 1st April 2023. This will mean one whole MyST service for Blaenau Gwent Local Authority and one for Monmouthshire. This is in recognition of the success of the initial joint service and will enable us to increase our capacity to support more children, young people, their families, and carers to remain and live in their local communities. It will also enable the service to work fully in partnership with our Local Authority colleagues in each area. We hope that these changes will have minimal impact on the day-to-day delivery of our services and arrangements are in place to continue with business as usual until we move to two separate services. Please be in touch with us if you have any further questions about these changes.

Foster Carer Clinic

We offer three one-hour slots monthly at present on teams but hopefully back in person soon. The clinic provides a reflective space to explore a particular theme.

- A behaviour, explore the meaning behind
- Look at how history has impacted on a child's emotional or physical development
- Consider strategies to manage a difficult behaviour or emotional distress
- Talk about what is going well, strengths and what you might want to change
- Look at transitions from primary to secondary school
- Look at ideas around family time and the impact on the child/young person
- Reflect on the impact of caring on you and your self-care

We don't ask for any preparation beforehand and we go with what you would like from the session. If you are interested, please speak to your supervising social worker who will arrange to book you in. The team look forward to meeting you.

MyST are recruiting Therapeutic Foster Carers

- Gives you the opportunity to provide a young person with positive influences and promote wellbeing with a team who will support you with training and supervision
- We need people who are willing to reflect on the level of care they provide and accept at times they may not always get it right but learn
- You need to have an element of playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy
- A great remuneration package as well as allowances paid for the child and young person
- You will be offered 24 hours on call service available 365 days a year
- Extensive training package including MyST carers support group, 1:1 clinical supervision, part of case meetings and other training delivered by the team
- Your own dedicated Lead Therapeutic Practitioner (they have small caseloads to enable them to intensively support their placements)

If you would like to find out more information: Lir Trigg, Foster Carer Recruitment Officer
lirtrigg@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Hadi James, Therapeutic Practice Manager hadijames@monmouthshire.gov.uk (01495 764880) (07970 192 099)



children's corner



Have a go at making your own and send in some photos.
Please send in drawings or paintings, we would love to include them in the newsletter and there will be a prize for everyone who sends something in to:
liztrigg@monmouthshire.gov.uk

5. Promoting and improving the wellbeing of those we help

We will work with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes

Achieving Change
Together Team

Background

A family who have been working with children's services for over ten years felt that the child's increasingly complex and aggressive behaviour was placing the family under a lot of pressure which could potentially lead to family breakdown.

ACT's work focused on

- Building a trusting relationship with the family as Mum was very anxious about different professionals being in her home and involved with her family.
- Overcoming negativity from both professionals, who were sceptical about the family's ability to change, and family members who weren't positive about previous involvement from professionals.
- Reflecting on the family's current situation – the parents were supported to identify their own solutions using a range of therapeutically-informed techniques. This allowed them to build trust in the process and to encourage a more positive and future-focused approach to the family's life.
- Taking time to understand the roles and functions within the family, looking at systemic approaches and values around genders, parenting, and discipline.

Strategies and outcomes

- ▶ Strategies for working positively with aggressive behaviour were introduced, to help parents manage aggressive outbursts and rebuild relationships afterwards. This helped reduce Mum's anxieties and increased her confidence in her parenting.
- ▶ The success of these strategies also increased the family's confidence in professionals.

Strategies and outcomes

- ▶ Initially, Dad left managing the children's behaviour to Mum, he was anxious and sad that his relationship with the children was not good. Mum and Dad didn't understand each other's emotional responses.
- ▶ Workers provided the opportunity to be a 'safe space' for parents to explore their own feelings and this enabled them to explore some more sensitive and difficult issues within the family dynamics.
- ▶ Towards the end of this work, both parents were able to talk with each other about their feelings and worries and felt comfortable enough to express different opinions to me and to each other.

Overall outcomes

The work enabled them to become closer as a couple and stronger as parents. By the end of the work Dad could see the progress they had made as a family and was keen to learn more about autism and techniques and strategies to de-escalate their child's outbursts. Having initially been on the edge of coming into care, the children are now closed to Children's Services.

We will work with people and partners to protect and promote physical and mental health and emotional well-being



Dave's story

Background

Dave is very isolated and most weeks the mental health support worker is the only person he sees other than his wife.

Actions

The support worker will take Dave's wife out and on other occasions will spend time with both of them in the house.

Outcomes

- Dave has said that for the times when his wife is out with the support worker he has time to recharge. For that time he's not a carer, he's not a cleaner, he's Dave.
- Dave has also taught the support worker how to knit, something that he really enjoyed. He said it's passing on a life skill to someone.
- He said he doesn't know what he would have done without the support worker's support and friendship and looks forward to their visits every week.



Background

Casey (not real name) is a 12-year-old who had been taken into foster care following concerns for Mum's mental health and disclosure regarding sexual abuse by family members. Casey was displaying extremely traumatised behaviour, becoming very dysregulated and the foster carer was struggling to keep all the children in the home safe. A new foster carer was found for Casey and support from BASE was required to promote these new relationships and to address some of her early trauma.

Assessment

The assessment showed that Casey struggled to share control of the sessions with her carers and was extremely sensitive to / frightened of physical touch. When carers would try to feed her, she would snap at their fingers and said even light touch 'hurt her bones'. This made sense given her earlier experiences of sexual abuse.

Outcomes

By the end of our work, Casey was fully engaged in the sessions and could tolerate nurture and physical touch and would even seek it out. By session 6, Casey was happy to sit on her carers lap, be fed a snack and cuddle in for a song. We could see mutual joy, laughter and delight between them.

Review

Her carer reported finding all the sessions helpful and could see from the videos how many changes there had been and just how close Casey now lets her get. The carer would have liked to continue with the sessions but Casey felt as though she did not need any more and that she had grown out of the approach. This felt appropriate given that she was about to transition to secondary school, and we wanted to respect her views. We therefore agreed to close with the proviso that she could return whenever she wanted.

We will support people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

Jack's story

Background

- ▶ Jack, 83, lives alone since his wife died. He has 2 sons and a daughter who live locally. All work and therefore too busy to visit him often. He likes to be as independent as possible and fears loss of his mobility. He is a very sociable person and enjoys telling people stories about his childhood and his extended family.
- ▶ Jack has no previous experience of any tech and only uses a basic mobile phone.

Ethel Care Tablet trial

- ▶ This is a communication device but sensors can also be incorporated. It is customised for the user.
- ▶ It can be used by the person, loved ones, and health & social care professionals.
- ▶ It can aid with health monitoring e.g. vital signs
- ▶ It has a 15 – 18 inch touch screen.
- ▶ It allows for video calls, uploading photos, live streaming, exercise videos
- ▶ Reminders & prompts, wellbeing surveys and check ins can be created
- ▶ Alerts can be created
- ▶ Email, text & web browsing is possible for the user
- ▶ Analytics & dashboard can be sent to a web browser or Phone app for family and care agencies to use.

Outcomes

- ▶ The Ethel has given him the opportunity to video call his family and therefore 'see' his great grandchildren more often.
- ▶ Grandson, Sam, lives in London and is a plasterer. Sam would video call Jack to show him what he was working on, especially if it was a tricky bit of plastering. Jack would love this because he is a retired builder.
- ▶ The family found it simple to call from the app, to send the photos and videos which Jack enjoyed. Jack found it easy to make the video calls himself. He also loved showing off his 'fancy device'.

My Mates



My Mates is a group of 345 members who are self-directing and shaping the way people with a learning disability live their best life.

The focus is on non-paid friendships and the creation of close personal relationships; we value and promote choice, well-being, education, and independence.



Throughout 2021/22 we have held educational workshops on topics including: social media safety, sexual health & well-being, what a good relationship looks like, personal hygiene, using your voice. We have held daily get togethers & events including: Celtic Manor Christmas ball, Bowling, Nightclubbing, Pubs, Coffee Shops, & Restaurants, after all life isn't Monday-Friday 9-5pm.

We have promoted venues throughout our local communities that are free to access including castles, libraries, museums & marketplaces which is encouraging community presence, supporting our local communities & strengthening community bonds, giving a sense of belonging.

Over 12,000 wellbeing calls & advice/contacts recorded have taken place during April 2021 – April 2022. 272 face-to-face events took place during April 2021-2022 in addition to 54 online events via Microsoft Teams.











We will encourage and support people to learn, develop and participate in society

DM's story

What was the challenge?

- ▶ DM had a period of rehab on Deri wing following a fall and struggling to cope at home. DM has been unable to use his right arm since a child.
- ▶ It was important for DM to be able to walk outside without needing someone with him. DM had a wheeled zimmer frame that could be used using only one hand, however it required two hands to steer and control.
- ▶ DM had not returned to accessing the community following his stay in Mardy Park. He was unsure of what key exercises to carry out to help improve his mobility.
- ▶ We worked with DM to identify what he wanted to get out of attending the Amblers group. He had felt quite isolated and had missed interaction with people.
- ▶ We discussed working with ReMAP to alter a four wheeled walker to make it suitable for DM to use single-handedly.

What impact did you make?

- ▶ DM is delighted to be getting out and having the opportunity to see other people.
- ▶ He knows it is important to maintain active and work on his exercises; he now has a detailed exercise plan.
- ▶ The session provides him an opportunity to do so much more than he would on his own and varies what he does. It has provided a chance to chat and discuss issues with other members of the group.
- ▶ Using ReMap he now has an aid that he can use on his own and access the community. In his own words 'this has opened up a whole new world.' The walker can now be controlled by DM alone as his walking has improved. It also has a seat to enable him to rest when needed.
- ▶ He reports 'I never thought I would be able to get back to this.'



We will work with and support people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

New housing in Caldicot

Background

The Community Learning Disabilities Team in collaboration with Melin Homes have been lucky enough to be involved in a project that has seen an office facility turned into a supported living home for three gentlemen.

Melin Homes purchased the property and were instrumental in the conversion. They will continue to be the landlords for the property and have been very supportive every step of the journey with the project completed in August 2022.

Outcomes

The 3 gents are moving on from their family homes and need a supportive, enabling staff team around them to live their lives to their full potential. The company supporting them is Consensus who have been working closely with the team to ensure that the transition for each person is as smooth as it possibly can be.

The conversion has been carried out to the highest standard with all the adaptations necessary, including a specialist bath and rise and fall worktops in the kitchen.



Supporting a refugee with dementia

Background

A 79 year old gentleman from Ukraine, with a diagnosis of dementia, was referred to the Community Mental Health Team. He and his wife were in a hotel and there were concerns about the level of support he may require and the impact of this on his and his wife's well-being, particularly due to the trauma they had experienced losing their home and having to flee their country.

Actions

The team has been regularly visiting the couple to offer support and carry out assessments.

The role of the dementia support worker has been invaluable, because this gentleman is often restless and wanders. This, in addition to the language barrier, has made things challenging with regards to assessing need and identifying outcomes and risks.

Outcome

With the assistance of Google translate (not always ideal, but at times necessary) and interpreters situated at the hotel, we have been able to carry out the processes required and find this individual a care placement that can appropriately meet his needs.

Impact

I feel the impact this will have on both individuals will be very positive. The individual's wife is very relieved, especially after months of being confined to a small hotel room at times and many sleepless nights.

Although there will be challenges for him and those supporting him during this transition, we will continue to use a multi-disciplinary approach, involving other professionals e.g. Occupational therapy, to ensure that communication is as effective as possible.

The verbal feedback from the individual's wife has been immense gratitude and relief. At times, she has displayed frustration at the length of time this has taken, driven by how exhausted she has been feeling. The gentleman is of some understanding that he will be going somewhere that he can be supported and has conveyed happiness about this.

We will take steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

Family Group Conferencing

Background

Mum was referred to us at 15 weeks pregnant in her third pregnancy. Mum has mild learning difficulties and was unable to care for her first child due to a lack of appropriate family support. Sadly her second child had a life limiting condition and died.

Mum and Dad are living together however because Mum has learning difficulties and only a limited support network, it was felt that she would need support to care for the baby and keep the child safe after birth.

Dad's family care a great deal for Mum. They know about her earlier experiences and are understanding and supportive. The request was for a Family Group Conference to be held with paternal family members to explore what support family members could offer Mum which could help keep the baby safe.

Actions

A child protection plan was put in place and the Family Group Conference was intended to identify how wider family could support this.

The Family Group Conference brought together various family members who live locally and were excited at the prospect of the new baby.

The baby will be the first grandchild and the family were very keen to be involved in creating a network of support around the couple and their baby. Their kindness and compassion helped Mum to be honest and open about her difficulties.

Outcomes

This honesty has enabled the family to be aware of any significant changes in Mum's presentation so they can act upon it to support her. Together the family created a safety plan as part of the Family Group Conference. Plan and the family members were confident in their ability to implement this, which they have done.

Following a review of the Family Group Conference plan the baby's name was able to be removed from the Child Protection Register and the family is being supported by social services.

Agnes' Story

Background

Sam moved back to live with his mum, Agnes who has dementia. She was disorientated to time and was wandering. Once she had been brought back home by strangers, Sam was concerned that she might get on the bus and get lost miles away; he needed a device that would alert him as soon as she left the house.

Actions

Cascade 3D fitted a front door sensor & if his mum left the house, an alert would be sent to his phone. He could then contact a neighbour who would go check on his mum. Over the year he received at least 6 or 7 alerts and his neighbours kindly went out and brought his mum back.

Sam then also set some sensors elsewhere in the house, so he was able to track on where his mother was in the house - this information was useful to see if she had been wandering in the night.



6. How we performed in Social Services

An integral part of our delivery in Monmouthshire Social Services is understanding how we are performing and how we know we are making a difference. The use of data and metrics is an integral part of building knowledge and insight into our performance.

The code of practice sets a revised performance and improvement framework for social services which contains three component parts; measuring activity and performance, understanding experience and outcomes and using evidence to inform improvement.

2021/22 is the second year of reporting these metrics as part of the measuring activity and performance element of the framework. There are over a hundred metrics as part of the framework, the most relevant metrics collated in 2021/22 have been included to support this analysis.

As is illustrated with this report, metrics alone do not tell story of the performance of social services. To supplement these, we have combined some of them to create performance measures to further understand how well services are performing and included some of our own locally derived performance data used by our services. How we measure and evidence our performance will continue to be developed in 2022/23, including further development of the remaining two parts of the performance and improvement framework.

How we Performed in Adult Services

During 2021/22 we have seen increased demand for services and complexity of support in Adults' Services. Some of this is attributable to the effect of lockdown as people experiencing reduced confidence and physical frailty. The number of contacts to social care has increased over the last year, as has the number of assessments completed.

While this demand has increased, we are experiencing delays in provision. We have completed fewer number of packages of reablement, started less domiciliary care services and our weekly unmet need

within home care has reached 2000 hours. We are working hard to address a range of issues, a number of which are wider issues prevalent in the sector. These include the fragility of the social care market, a number of providers leaving the market, and a lack of care staff, as well as on-going challenges at the interface of health and social care where there are delays in provision.

Our Adult Social Care service user questionnaire shows a high proportion, 86.9%, of services users are happy with their care and support, although this has decreased and is below levels seen in recent years. The feedback from services users shows a slight decrease in many areas including communication and involvement in their care and care and support meeting their needs, which we have attributed to the overall challenges in the provision of adult social care.

The Front Door

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
	✓	✓	

Where people need to contact social care, multi-disciplinary professionals are available at the first access point. During 2021/22, the front door of adult services received 6,633 contacts from people not already in receipt of care and support. This is a 15% increase on the previous year and some of this is attributable to the effect of lockdown and people experiencing reduced confidence and physical frailty. Health colleagues remain the main source of contacts received (2,693) as integration continues to be key to our way of working.

Of the total contacts received, 4,215 were provided with advice or assistance, over 250 more than the previous year, again indicating increasing levels of demand. Feedback from our customer questionnaire shows a reduction to 77% of adults receiving care and support who feel they have had the right information or advice when they needed it which is the lowest level record in recent years.

Similarly, we have seen an increase in volume of contacts received relating to carers, with 272 received in total during 2021/22, of which 92 were provided with advice or assistance.

Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Front Door (Adults)			
AD/001	The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year	5787	6633
AD/002	The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided	3961	4215
Front Door (Carers)			
CA/001	The total number of contacts to statutory social services by adult carers or professionals contacting the service on their behalf received during the year	226	272
CA/002	The number of contacts by adult carers received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided	88	92

Adults Questionnaire	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
I have had the right information or advice when I needed it	84.0%	81.8%	84.3%	82.5%	77.4%

Assessments and Care & Support Plans

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
✓		✓	

We have completed 142 more assessments, 2177 in total, in the last year with an increased proportion of those assessed with needs that require a care and support plan.

The demand and complexity of support required from Adults' Services has increased over recent years. Due to the fragility of the social care market there are delays in provision. Access to care and support is not always timely, and this has contributed to a reduction in the number of adults with a care and support plan at the end of the year.

Our service user survey responses show a reduction - and the lowest levels in recent years - in people feeling involved in decisions about their care and feeling listened to. There are a number of factors that we feel will have contributed to this including lack of choice around services and providers, for example within residential care; difficulties in sourcing packages of care; the shortages in some key posts such as Occupational Therapy and Social Work together with demand increases causing delays in assessments and formal reviews of care and support plans.

The number of carers receiving assessments has also increased and so too has the number with a plan to support their caring roles. Our view is that this relates to the additional pressures (including not being able to access the same level and range of support services) that carers experienced during the pandemic.

Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Assessments and Plans (Adults)			
AD/004	The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year	2035	2177
AD/005	Of which:		
AD/005a	Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan	721	826
AD/005b	Needs were able to be met by any other means	630	542
AD/005c	There were no eligible needs to meet	627	506
AD/012	The number of adults with a care and support plans at 31 March	1813	1728
Assessments and Plans (Carers)			
CA/004	The total number of carers needs assessments for adults undertaken during the year	132	196
CA/005	Of which:		
CA/005a	Needs could be met with a carer's support plan or care and support plan	39	48
CA/005b	Needs were able to be met by any other means	32	43
CA/005c	There were no eligible needs to meet	55	25
CA/008a	The number of adult carers with a support plan at 31 March	68	105
CA/008b	The number of adults with a care and support plan who also have carer responsibilities	41	64

Adults Questionnaire:	2017/18	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
I have been actively involved in decisions about how my care and support was provided	81.4%	81.4%	83.1%	83.0%
I feel that I was listened to	82.6%	82.7%	86.5%	85.9%

Preventative Services

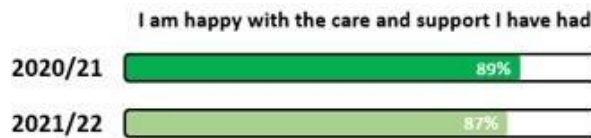
Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
	✓		✓

While we are seeing an increase in demand for social care, we have completed a fewer number of packages of reablement, in part as a result of a lack of available provision. Reablement provides intensive short-term interventions aiming to restore people to independence, mitigating the need for long-term services in the immediate future. During 2021/22 we saw a reduction in the percentage of people who were independent following reablement. This is likely as a result of the increasing

complexity of people’s needs due to delayed presentations; de-conditioning and loss of confidence during periods of shielding / lockdown and delays in sourcing packages of care.

The number of people arranging their own care through a direct payment has increased during the year, this gives people more choice and control over their own care and support.

Survey responses show that overall satisfaction with care and support remains high, although this has dipped slightly to 87%.



Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Early Intervention and Prevention			
Reablement			
AD/010	The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year	291	240
AD/011	Of which:		
AD/011a	Reduced the need for support	50 (17.2%)	54 (22.5%)
AD/011b	Maintained the need for the same level of support	45 (15.5%)	36 (15.0%)
AD/011c	Mitigated the need for support	171 (58.8%)	122 (50.8%)
AD/011d	Neither reduced, maintained nor mitigated the need for support	25 (8.6%)	28 (11.7%)
Direct Payments			
AD/015	The total number of adults with a care and support plan where needs a met through a Direct Payment at 31 March	123	139
AD/018	The number care and support plans for adults supported with direct payments that were due for review during the year	150	185
AD/019	The number care and support plans for adults supported with direct payments that were due for review during the year that were completed within statutory timescales	94	133
Local	The percentage of care and support plans for adults supported with direct payments that were due for review during the year that were completed within statutory timescales	62.7%	72.1%

Adults Questionnaire	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual
I am happy with the care and support I have had	85.7%	88.5%	89.4%	89.0%	86.9%

Provision of Services

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
✓		✓	✓

Fragility in the domiciliary care market, combined with the increased demand evidenced through the increase in volume of contacts and assessments for adults social care has meant that access to care and support has not always been timely. This has resulted in a decrease in the number of adults starting a domiciliary care services in the year.

There has, however, been an increase in the number of adults starting a residential service which appears to correlate with the restrictions on care homes easing as well the difficulties in sourcing packages of care to support people living in their own homes. Hospital discharge pathways such as 'Step Closer to Home' have also influenced a rise in residential placements.

Care and support should be reviewed annually and during 2021/22 53.6% of reviews were held within timescales. This runs the risk of people’s changing needs not being identified and addressed at the earliest stage, including opportunities for services to reduce if appropriate. Delays in undertaking formal

reviews are due to the overall pressure across the system, and again correlates with a decrease in satisfaction around care arrangements in responses to the service users to questionnaire.

Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Provision of Services and Reviews			
Local	The total number of adults starting a service during the year where that service is:		
Local	Residential Care	80	92
Local	Domiciliary Care	1324	1131
AQ/036	The number of care and support plans for adults that were due to be reviewed during the year	-	2094
Local	The percentage of care and support plans that were due to be reviewed during the year that were completed within statutory timescales	-	53.6%

Adults Questionnaire	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual
The service I get is reliable and I'm told about any changes in good time	78.3%	80.0%	81.5%	82.1%	75.8%
I usually get assistance from the same staff	69.9%	67.8%	70.3%	70.1%	68.4%
Do you think that the care and support you get still meet your needs?	92.0%	92.4%	92.8%	91.2%	87.9%

How we Performed in Children's Services

There has been a significant increase in demand for early help, pre- and post-statutory children services intervention with families in the last year.

Children's Services have focused on working with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes.

The impact of the lockdown has meant that some families may not have received the support they needed to reduce harmful behaviours, abuse and neglect at an early stage. The potential risk that child welfare concerns were not recognised or referred early enough continues to be a contributory factor in the increased complexity of support required from Children Services and is an on-going pressure on the service.

While continuing to manage these pressures we have seen an increase in the timeliness of some of our key processes such as: decision on contacts made by the end of the next working day, 99.9%; new assessments completed within statutory timescales, 91.2%; and maintained performance in child protection, 96.0% and looked after reviews, 98.6%, completed within statutory timescales. Reviews of Children in need of care and support completed within statutory timescales still requires improvement.

Overall, the number of in-house foster carers has increased over the last 4 although there remains a shortfall in carers to meet demand and challenges remain within the provider market, which could result in adverse outcomes and reduced well-being for children requiring support.

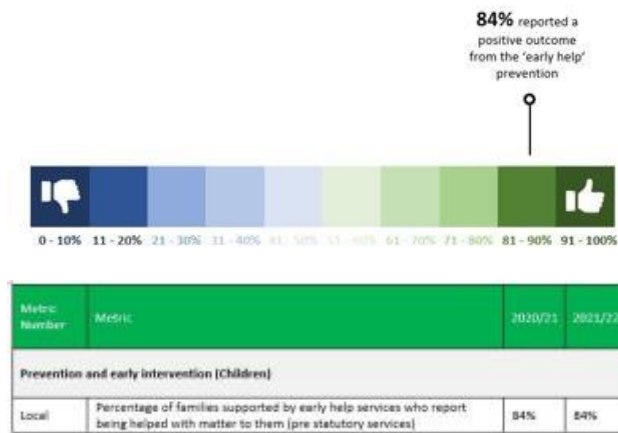
Prevention and early intervention

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
	✓		

Children's Social Services have implemented a co-ordinated approach to early intervention and prevention providing support to children and families who need it as soon as possible, and ensuring that the right help is provided at the right level of intensity. Evaluation and feedback of family support

services indicates clear and positive outcomes for families. For example, during 2021/22, out of 140 families, 84% reported a positive outcome from the 'early help' intervention.

The council has services in place to manage early identification of risk and vulnerability has implemented pre- and post-statutory children services to support families and reduce risk. There has been a significant increase in demand for these services in the last year, particularly due to the impact of the pandemic. Services are under pressure trying meet this demand and providing appropriate and timely support is challenging. There is a need to develop capacity and arrangements to meet increased demands for early help and preventive services.



The Front Door

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
	✓	✓	

The number of contacts for children not already in receipt of care and support received increased in 2021/22 from 4,329 to 5,776. The majority of these contacts were received from Police and education colleagues. Services are under pressure trying meet this increased demand and providing appropriate and timely support is challenging.

Similarly, there has been an increase of 63% in contacts received for young carers, which we have viewed as a positive measure, and attribute to the on-going awareness raising and presence of young carers projects within schools.

A decision on how to progress a contact is expected with 1 working day, and during 2021/22 this happened in 99.9% of contacts, an improvement from last year.



Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Front Door (Children)			
CH/001	The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year	4329	5776
CH/002	The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided	2700	3379
CH/003	The number of contacts received by statutory children's social services during the year where a decision was made by the end of the next working day	3042	5769
Local	The percentage of contacts received by statutory children's social services during the year where a decision was made by the end of the next working day	70.3%	99.9%
Front Door (Young Carers)			
CA/011	The total number of contacts to statutory social serviced by young carers or professionals contacting the service on their behalf received during the year	143	235
CA/012	Of those identified, the number where advice and assistance was provided	61	86

Assessments

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
✓		✓	

During 2021-22, 884 assessments were completed to better understand the needs of children and families, which is an increase on the previous year. There was a similar increase in the number of children requiring care and support following an assessment. Often needs are met in other ways, such as referring to our Early Help services or where more suitable to an external agency. In some cases a decision on the best course of action needs further investigation, for example, where child protection procedures are to be followed.



Assessments are usually expected to be concluded within 42 working days and during 2021-22 an increasing number (91%) did.

Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Assessments (Children)			
CH/006	The total number of new assessments completed for children during the year	828	884
CH/007	The total number of new assessments completed for children during the year where:		
CH/007a	Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan	249	264
CH/007b	Needs were able to be met by any other means	448	424
CH/007c	There were no eligible needs to meet	25	17
CH/008	The total number of more comprehensive assessments for children completed during the year for children who were born at the time the assessment concluded	798	861
CH/012	The number of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales	721	806
Local	The percentage of new assessments completed for children during the year that were completed within statutory timescales	87.1%	91.2%
Assessments (Young Carers)			
CA/014	The total number of young carers needs assessments undertaken during the year	36	40
CA/015	The total number of young carers needs assessments undertaken during the year where:		
CA/015a	Needs could be met using a young carer's support plan or care and support plan	16	18
CA/015b	Needs were able to be met by any other means	13	11
CA/015c	There were no eligible needs to meet	0	0

Care and Support Plans and Reviews

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
✓			✓

Children's Services have focused on working with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes. There were 74 children in the Achieving Change Together team; during 2021/22, 81% were supported to remain at home, 91.5% have improved school attendance, and 100% reported increased family resilience. Some of the support to families was adapted during the pandemic, although direct care and responding to safeguarding referrals remained in place.

At the end of the year, 518 children had a care and support plan which detailed how their support was to be provided. Of these, 54 children had a direct payment, allowing their families to choose how their care and support should be delivered. An increasing number of young carers have a care and support plan which includes support for their caring role.

Of the children with a care and support plan, 60% are supported to remain at home, and for the second year we have seen a reduction in the number of children looked after. This accords with the work that

the service is doing to promote the safe reduction of children who are looked after, particularly in cases where children can be fully repatriated to parents or into Special Guardianship arrangements with extended family members.

The timeliness of reviews of children on the Child Protection Register and Children Looked After remains high, although the timeliness reviews of children in need of care and support requires improvement.

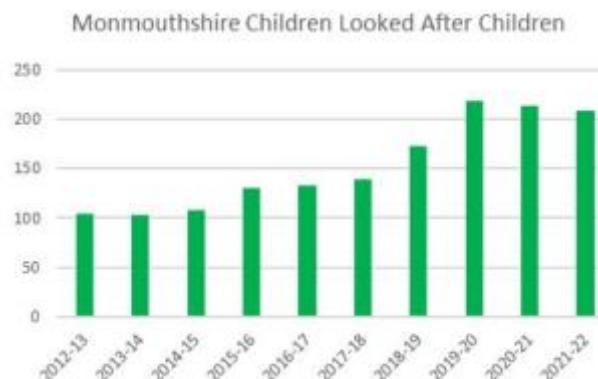
Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Plans (Children)			
CH/015	The number of children with a care and support plan at 31st March	515	518
Local	The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family	58.6%	59.8%
CH/016	The total number of children with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment at 31st March	48	54
Plans (Young Carers)			
CA/017b	The number of children or young people with a care and support plan who also have carer responsibilities	22	34
Reviews			
Local	The percentage of reviews due during the year that were completed within statutory timescales, which were:		
Local	Child protection reviews	94.2%	95.0%
Local	Looked after reviews (including pathway plan reviews and pre-adoption reviews)	99.8%	98.6%
Local	Reviews of children in need of care and support (including children supported by a direct payment)	67.3%	66.8%

Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family	63.8%	63.4%	57.5%	58.6%	59.8%

Children Looked After and Leaving Care

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Protection	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
			✓

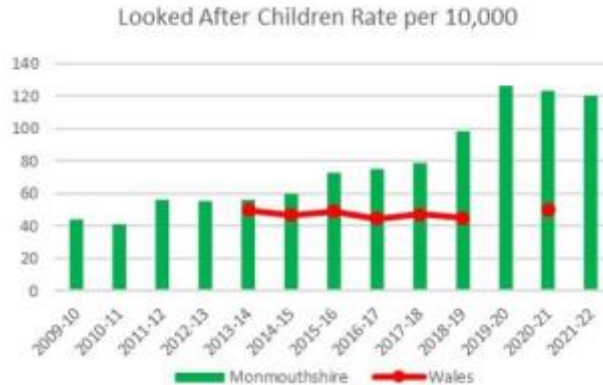
The council is supporting 208 children who are looked after (31st March 2022). The number has risen substantially in recent years but has recently stabilised. It remains higher than the average rate of children who are looked after across Wales.



During 2021/22, the number of children ceasing to be looked after to move to permanent homes, both through adoption and special guardianship orders, has increased. Looked after children benefit from stability and, where possible, placement and school moves are minimised. The number of children

experiencing school moves has decreased this year, although the number of children experiencing three or more placements in the year has increased.

The council is working with Foster Wales to run active campaigns to increase the rates of in-house foster carers to provide accommodation and support to children requiring it, which launched in September 2021. To date, the transition from local to national campaigns has not had the anticipated impact in Monmouthshire and no new foster carers were recruited during 2021/22. Overall, the number of in-house foster carers has increased over the last 4 years from 24 to 40. No new foster carers were recruited during 2021/22 and there remains a shortfall in carers.



There is also a critical shortage of specialist fostering and residential placements, with considerable instability within the provider market, which could result in adverse outcomes and reduced well-being for children requiring support.

Care leavers are supported by personal advisors to transition into adulthood and independence. One year after leaving care 73% of care leavers were in employment, education or training, although this is lower 2 years after leaving care.



Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Children Looked After and Care Leavers			
Children Looked After			
CH/D43	The total number of children looked after at 31 March who have experienced three or more placements during the year	9	14
CH/D44	The total number of children looked after on the 31 March who have experienced one or more changes of school during the year (excluding transitional arrangements, moves associated with adoption or moves home)	15	8
Care Leavers			
CH/O52	The total number of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) within 12 months of leaving care	*	*
CH/O53	The total number of care experienced young people	64	59
Local	The percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 12 months since leaving care	-	73.3%
Local	The percentage of care leavers in categories 2, 3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 15-24 months since leaving care	-	25.0%

Metric	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Actual
Number of Looked After Children	139	173	219	213	208
Number of Children Adopted in the Year	8	*	*	*	9
Number of Children Leaving Care with Special Guardianship Orders in the Year	*	*	8	11	13
Percentage of Looked After Children placed with MCC generic/kinship foster carers	35.6%	37.6%	36.1%	41.3%	40.4%
Number of Generic Foster Carers	24	26	34	38	40
The percentage of looked after children who have experienced 1 or more changes of school, during a period or periods of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the year to 31 March	9.5%	5.3%	12.7%	10.9%	5.4%
Numerator: The number of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March who have had one or more changes of school, which were not due to transitional arrangements	9	6	18	15	8
Denominator: The number of children of compulsory school age looked after at 31 March	95	114	142	138	147
The percentage of looked after children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	5.8%	6.9%	7.3%	4.2%	6.7%
Numerator: The number of children looked after at 31 March who had three or more separate placements during the year	8	12	16	9	14
Denominator: The total number of children who were looked after at 31 March	139	173	219	213	208

Provisional data awaiting final data from Welsh Government

*Small numbers redacted

Safeguarding Adults Services

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
			✓



Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Adult safeguarding			
AS/001	Number of adults suspected of being at risk of abuse or neglect reported during the year	483	528
AD/000	The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received during the year	680	799
AD/002	The total number of reports received during the collection year where it was alleged that there was abuse under the primary category of:		
AD/002a	Neglect	258	344
AD/002b	Physical abuse	260	269
AD/002c	Sexual abuse	35	58
AD/002d	Emotional or psychological abuse	176	214
AD/002e	Financial abuse	106	97
AD/003	The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk where it is necessary for enquiries to be made	906	583
AD/004	The total number of enquiries completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse	282	382
Local	The percentage of enquiries completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse	31.5%	65.5%
AD/005	The total number of enquiries where it was determined that additional action should be taken	356	440

As with other areas of adult social care, adult safeguarding has seen an increase in volume of reports being made during the year. During 2021/22 799 reports were made regarding 528 adults. The majority of reports are from providers and most reports fall under the category of neglect where we have seen a 33% increase in reports in the last year.

The number of reports leading to enquiries has also increased during the year. Enquiries should usually be completed within 7 working days and during 2021/22 65.5% were. While this is an increase on the previous year, it is still lower than we want it to be. Waiting for information to come back from a number of different sources can impact on timeliness of completion and work will continue to influence the timely undertaking of enquiries over the coming year.

The Care Inspectorate Wales inspection reported that there were "good examples of effective and timely adult safeguarding, and this opinion was supported by key partners."

"Practitioners in adult safeguarding are confident in their ability to respond to safeguarding concerns and act where necessary. We saw the response to safeguarding referrals was timely and that strategy discussions and meetings involved relevant professionals, and most are held in a timely manner"

78% of adults tell us they feel safe, where they do not, people often comment on mobility concerns and fear of falling.

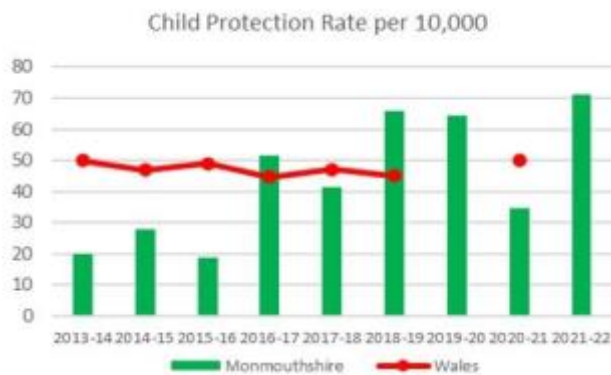
Adults Questionnaire	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
I feel safe	Actual 79.1%	Actual 81.8%	Actual 81.1%	Actual 78.8%	Actual 78.5%

Children's Services

Main Quality standard core principles:			
People	Prevention	Partnership & Integration	Well-being
			✓

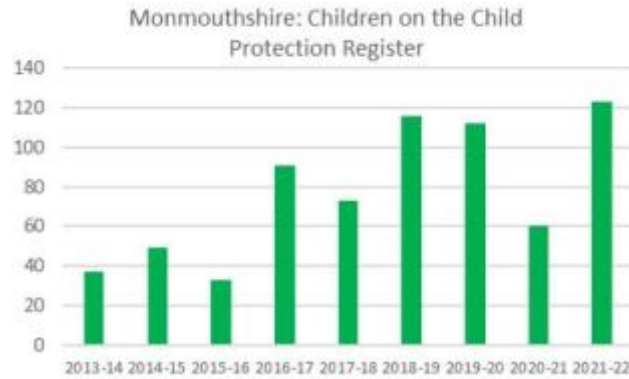
At the end of the year there were 123 children on the child protection register, which has increased significantly from the 60 children on the child protection register at the end of 2020/21. There has been a steady increase of the number of children on the register, particularly during the last six months of the year. This appears to be linked more so to a reduction of the number of children being removed from the register during this period, rather than significant rises in number being added. More children are remaining on the Child Protection Register to ensure the Child Protection Plan is completed in its entirety, which is supported by a decrease in the percentage of children leaving the register to become children looked after.

The rate of 71 children on the child protection register per 10,000 child population in Monmouthshire, exceeds the most recently published Welsh rate from 2020/21. While the number of children on child protection plans fluctuates, the critical issue is that the right children are registered and remain subject to child protection core groups and planning for the right length of time.



There has been an increase in volume of required initial conferences, and consequently the number of children registered, followed by the number of initial core groups required. Alongside these increases, there has been a decrease in the number of children removed from the register this year.

The timeliness of some child protection processes, such as initial conferences and child protection statutory visits, has decreased during the year. In Monmouthshire we have continued to count the 15 day timescale to convene an initial conference from the point at which the decision is made to arrange a conference, which explains the low percentage against the official metric.



Metric Number	Metric	2020/21	2021/22
Safeguarding Children			
CH/022	The total number of Section 47 enquiries completed during the year that progressed to Initial Child Protection Conference	113	176
Local	The percentage of initial child protection conferences held during the collection year that were held within statutory timescales	40.7%	23.6%
CH/028	The total number of initial core group meetings held during the year that were held within statutory timescales	72	120
Local	The percentage of initial core group meetings held during the year that were held within statutory timescales	66.7%	76.4%
CH/029	The total number of visits to children placed on the child protection register that were due during the year	2115	2161
CH/030	The total number of visits to children placed on the child protection register that were due during the year that were completed within approved timescales	1408	1256
Local	The percentage of visits to children placed on the child protection register that were due during the year that were completed within approved timescales	66.6%	58.1%
Local	The percentage of children removed (de-registered) from the child protection register during the year who later became looked after	27.3%	18.7%

Measure	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual
Number of Children on the Child Protection Register	73	116	112	60	123
The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority Child Protection Registers (CPR)	5.3%	3.5%	2.4%	5.6%	0.6%
Numerator: Number of re-registrations of children on the CPR during the year	6	6	*	6	*
Denominator: Total number of registrations on CPR during the year	114	172	*	108	*
The average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year	227	260	270	302	215
Numerator: The total number of days each child had been on the CPR if they were removed from the CPR during the year	9,946	3,794	5,046	49,872	19,537
Denominator: Number of children who were removed from the CPR during the year	132	130	130	165	91

7. Finance

Service Area	Annual Budget 2021/22	Actual Outturn	Actual (Under) / Overspend
Adult Services	£8,261,000	£8,431,000	£170,000
Community Care	£24,342,000	£24,070,000	(£272,000)
Commissioning	£1,394,000	£1,163,000	(£231,000)
Resources & Performance	£607,000	£590,000	(£17,000)
Total	£34,604,000	£34,254,000	(£350,000)

ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Adult Social Services budget for 2021/22 was set at £34.6 million and is made up of different service areas, these include Adult Services, Resources & Performance, Community Care, and Commissioning. Adult Social Services spent £34.25 million in 2021/22 and therefore there was an underspend of £350,000.

The headline breakdown of each service area within Adult social care is as follows.

The Community Care service area was the highest contributor to the underspend within Adult Services with an underspend of £272,000, although there was an overspend in the south of the County within the Chepstow Integrated team which resulted from the need for increased care packages.

The Adult Services service area produced an overspend of £170,000 due to the recruitment of additional carers, over and above the budget, into the in-house care at home service to facilitate additional packages of care in accordance with increased demand, and in situations where care cannot be sourced from providers.

The Commissioning service area had an underspend of £231,000, this was due to an ongoing vacancy, along with the continued closure of day facilities transport which led to the costs being lower than the set budget.

It is of critical importance to note; however, that **the underspend in Adult Social Care this year was a result of numerous funding's and grants**. These included one-off regional partnership funding grants, The Social Care Sustainability Grant, the new Social Care Recovery fund and a one-off injection from the Welsh Government to help cover the cost of Social Care overspends. Whilst of huge benefit to the Council this year, the grants and one-off payments masked considerable pressures within the adult services moving forward.



Children Services

The Children Social Services budget for 2021/22 was set at £16.1 million and produced an outturn of £16.6, this created an overspend of £534,000.

While children looked after numbers reduced, new children required higher costing residential placements because of increased complexity. This is opposed to those leaving that have been placed in

lower cost fostering/kinship/family placements, this accounts for £364,000 of the overspend in Children Services.

A recent legal case led to the need for the directorate to pay kinship carers in line with the foster carer rate, along with an increase in payment for foster carers due to increasing skills, training and increased fostering placements, this contributed £329,000 towards the overspend. Legal costs associated with the court proceedings resulted in a £154,000 overspend, with staffing budgets contributing a further £74,000.

There has been compensating savings including from vacancies and a decrease in contracted transport costs as a result of the pandemic. Finally, Children's Services also benefited from one off ICF funding and various Welsh Government grants and funding assistance that help reduced it's in year costs by £1,789,000.

8. Workforce



The last 2 years have been, without a doubt, the most challenging, eventful period for our Social Care workforce.

Everyone in the directorate will have felt the negative effects of the pandemic on the health and wellbeing of our communities. Even so, the whole workforce rose to the challenges and continued to respond with compassion, empathy and dedication, in protecting and promoting people's opportunities to have the best possible lives.

COVID-19 has touched all of us in different ways, not only was there our own personal experience, but our workforce witnessed its often devastating effects on others. We all deeply admire the hard work, tenacity, understanding and kindness shown by all our teams day in day out to our residents and each other.

If the pandemic taught us anything, it was the need to forge even closer cooperation and collaboration across our directorate and this was evident across all of our workforce. Everyone in social care and health across our integrated services and beyond, in children's, adults and YOS are the all-seeing eye of integrated social care and health, making vital linkages to make sure people with care and support needs don't fall through the gaps. Each and everyone of our social care staff work tirelessly to support people, their carers and each other.

In short, we have never needed the expertise and insights of our workforce more than we do now. As we emerge from the privations of the pandemic, only to face fresh challenges and anxieties, tragedies borne of war in Eastern Europe, and the economic pressures we will be facing, once again our workforce will be tested and relied upon to support our communities.

It continues to be a very long, hard road with everyone very tired, especially following the Omicron outbreaks which compounded the stress on the whole directorate. Our teams stepped up to ensure our social care response was the best it could be during such an unprecedented period.

As the workforce recover and grapple with the changes and the 'new normal', the challenge for us is to take a big leap forward by redesigning and reimagining how we support our workforce moving forward and how we ensure they are skilled, equipped prepared to work alongside people, their carers and our communities, to be ambitious for the best possible lives and outcomes for all.

Flexible and collaborative approaches to working with health partners and improved approaches to working with the community sector, who have stepped up across the country to respond to people in their communities, have shone a light on strength-based practice and the benefits of community-led, asset-based approaches to supporting people in achieving the changes that matter to them.

The wellbeing of staff has also become much more central. Ensuring our workforce has access to supervision and peer support as well as continuing professional development opportunities is a top priority.

The following is a look back summary of the year in how we have supported our amazing workforce and then how we will set the direction for the year ahead.



Learning & development (L&D), wellbeing, recruitment, onboarding, retention and development of career pathways have been priority workstreams that the WDT have been focussed upon during 21-22. During 21-22 despite the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions **2505** people undertook L&D opportunities.

Face to Face Learning

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the return to classroom learning had to be carefully assessed, ensuring a Covid secure environment was created. During 21-22 we commissioned and developed a L&D Hub in Mamhilad Business Park to facilitate the delivery of face-to-face training. Completion of Covid risk assessments for accommodation and course delivery were completed and updated in line with Welsh Government Regulations and Guidance. Since commissioning Mamhilad L&D hub in June 2021, **634** people have received face to face training in these facilities. Delivery of essential H&S training face to face has been prioritised for the services and saw the following numbers of staff trained respectively: **103** manual handling passport, **27** manual handling refresher, **124** care of medicines, **146** emergency first aid at work and **10** first aid at work.

Digital Learning

Despite the return to some face to face L&D, there are certain opportunities that lend themselves to a digital platform. Prior to the pandemic **359** staff undertook L&D on a digital platform in 19-20. This has dramatically increased and in 21-22 saw **737** undertake online training and **848** complete e-learning, a total of **1585**.

Onboarding and Registration

To facilitate the onboarding of staff into direct care monthly week-long inductions have been developed and delivered to all new staff within Monmouthshire. These have been evaluated and developed over the year in response to staff and managers feedback.

This comprehensive induction is aligned to the All Wales Induction Framework (AWIF) and introduces the principles & values qualification that staff are required to complete in order to register with Social Care Wales (SCW). Registration to SCW by domiciliary homecare staff is compulsory within 12 months of starting work in homecare, a stipulation that is coming in for residential staff as of 1st October 2022. Place based workshops to support staff with completion of their principles & values module have been delivered by the WDT to ensure staff have undertaken the necessary learning to register with SCW. Current compliance data for homecare team registration is in a table to the left.

Homecare Registration		
North	Central	South
50/65	40/50	26/47
77%	80%	55%

Placed Based Learning

Place Based L&D to upskill care staff and improve continuity of care for people receiving care in Monmouthshire has been delivered as part of a project with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. Opportunities that have been delivered as part of the project included vital signs, rehabilitation, oral care, catheter awareness, skin care, hydration and nutrition. The learning that was delivered as part of this project will become embedded into the WDT, 'business as usual' based upon the learning needs of staff within the direct care team.

In-House Trainers

Delivery of training by in—house trainers is well received by staff within MCC as it is aligned and reflects the values and protocols of Monmouthshire. This year has seen us grow the number of in-house trainers by 2.0 WTE providing the WDT an opportunity to develop and deliver greater learning opportunities both centrally and place based. The social care trainers have been working with local services to support locally identified learning and mentoring needs.

Foster Carers

Foster Carers are invaluable within our workforce in Monmouthshire, with the critical role of caring for looked after children. In order to support foster carers in their development, the WDT has embedded a workforce development officer into the team that specifically focusses on the L&D needs of foster carers. As well as working extremely closely with the foster carers, they work collaboratively with the supporting social workers in the fostering team, with other workforce development office rs across Gwent and the National Fostering Framework to maximise the support to foster carers and support the embedding of the L&D Framework.

Training Management System

In the absence of a corporate -wide training management system the WDT have successfully implemented the use of MS bookings to advertise training to allow staff to quickly and efficiently book onto the training they wish to attend. MS forms have been utilised for staff to request e-learning which once allocated generates an automated response to the staff member confirming their learning is ready and how to complete the e-learning module. Transforming the way in which we facilitate the booking of training through utilisation of these digital platforms has allowed the WDT to produce a comprehensive training data dashboard to interrogate and analyse training data in greater detail. 22-23 will see the implementation of Thinqi across MCC.

Wellbeing

This year saw a number of staff from the social care directorate become Connect 5 trainers. Connect 5 is based upon the 5 ways to wellbeing and supports participants with their own mental wellbeing as well as the mental wellbeing of others by giving them the confidence to engage in open conversations. The course focusses on a number of tools that can be used to support staff and help build resilience not only in their personal lives but also in the workplace. Melo is also a fantastic website resource available to staff to support mental wellbeing.



Programme	Numbers on programme April 21-22	Numbers at risk during 2021/22	Numbers achieving during 2021/22	Numbers withdrawing	Numbers carrying forward to 2022/23
Level 2 Apprenticeship - Youth	34	10	3	1	10
Level 3 Apprenticeship - Youth	38	4	0	0	13
GCSE 17 - EXP	1	0	0	1	0
Level 4 Apprenticeship - Youth	40	8	0	4	4
Level 5 Apprenticeship - Youth	3	1	2	1	0
Social Services Programme - Professional	3	1	3	0	1
Social Work Degree Level 4 - Apprenticeship	2	1	2	0	1
Social Work Degree Level 5 - Apprenticeship	1	1	0	0	0
Social Work Degree Level 6 - Apprenticeship	1	0	1	0	0
Social Work Degree Level 6 - Other	0	1	0	0	1
Social Work Degree Level 6 - Other	2	0	4	0	0
Social Work Degree Level 6 - Other	4	4	4	0	4
Master Social Work Degree - Year 1 - Other	1	1	1	0	0
Master Social Work Degree - Year 1 - Other	1	1	1	0	1
MSW in 180 weeks	1	0	1	0	0
Consultation	1	0	1	0	0
Enabling Practice & 17 (Practice Assessor approval)	0	0	0	0	0
Approved Mental Health Practitioner	2	2	2	0	0
Team Manager Development Programme	1	1	1	0	1
Multi-Manager Development Programme	0	1	0	0	1

First 3 Years in Practice

Post Qualifying	Team
NQSW	Integrated Services, Monmouth and Adults Mental Health
NQSW	Older Adults Mental Health
NQSW	Family Support & Protection Team
NQSW	Family Support & Protection Team
NQSW	Family Support & Protection Team
NQSW	Early Help & Assessment Team
Consolidation	Integrated Services, Abergavenny
Consolidation	Child Protection & Support Team
Consolidation	Child Protection & Support Team
Consolidation	Children with Disabilities team

First 3 years in practice is an important transition from student to qualified social worker. In Monmouthshire we believe it is essential that social workers are supported with a comprehensive induction, a specific NQSW programme to consolidate their university learning and embed their learning into practice before undertaking the CPEL consolidation programme at either Cardiff Metropolitan University or the University of South Wales.

Staff currently within their first 3 years in practice are identified in the table to the left:

3 social workers in adults services & 7 social workers in children's services

Student Social Workers

Level	Programme
1	Cardiff University x 2 University of South Wales x 2 Open University x 2
2	Cardiff University x 2 Open University x 3
3	Cardiff University x 2 University of South Wales x 4

Enabling people to become qualified social workers is an opportunity and privilege that MCC makes considerable investment in to ensure the workforce is fit for the future. As a local authority we host students from both Cardiff University & University of South Wales. We also invest in our own workforce and sponsor staff to become qualified social workers whilst working in their existing role via the Open University.

Recruitment

Attraction & Selection

In order to deliver our services across the directorate, we require a stable, experienced, and highly skilled social care workforce with the knowledge, skills, and values to meet our commitment to our communities in Monmouthshire.

Monmouthshire is a great place to build a career in Social Care, and we constantly strive to deliver our attraction, recruitment and retention plans to support existing and new workers to progress their career goals. Recruitment challenges continue to escalate and evidence shows this will only get harder in the coming years.

During the Pandemic we brought various people together to create a virtual recruitment team in order to support all services across the directorate and beyond. This virtual team were creative and proactive in finding attraction and recruitment solutions working alongside managers and staff in order to fill vacancies and support the increase in demand. Here is a flavour of how we supported services with attraction and recruitment:-

- Individualized marketing material for each specific locality
- Creating a Social Care web page within the Monmouthshire website
- Business Cards
- Clothing with advertising
- Banners for buildings and street advertising
- Applicant app
- Digital booking system for interviews.
- Videos and images for marketing on social media
- Multi media platform advertising
- Career Fair attendance
- Joint road show attendance with Health

We will continue to focus on our attraction techniques and methods in order to support services and will continue to evolve and develop our end to end recruitment strategy during the next 12 months.

JOBS FOR CARING PEOPLE

'You have to work in a job you enjoy, and I LOVE my job'



Join our team and make a real difference

- You'll get to work with a wonderful team, making a difference everyday - knowing what you do really matters to the lovely people in the community you meet.
- We look after our team, everyone is valued and recognised - with enhanced weekend pay, excellent training and lots of support.



monmouthshire
sic. fywry

@MonmouthshireCC
monmouthshire.gov.uk

monmouthshire.gov.uk/socialcarejobs
socialcarejobs@monmouthshire.gov.uk

07970894429

JOBS FOR CARING PEOPLE

**'It's the people
you work with
that make this
job so special'**



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sir fynywy

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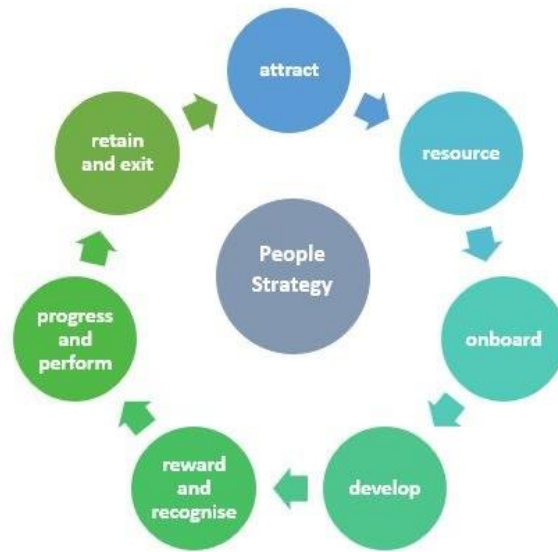


The Year Ahead

Our future priorities will focus on supporting the whole life cycle of our employees. We will be setting ourselves 7 priorities in line with the life cycle of our workforce and we will do this through the lens of the All Wales Health & Social Care Workforce Strategy [Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy - HEIW \(nhs.wales\)](#) Additionally, supporting recovery from the impact of the pandemic on staff remains a key priority.

There are lots of challenges ahead, but we are well placed to respond to those challenges and to make a vital contribution to helping people to live happier, healthier lives for longer in their communities.

Employee Life Cycle



Our focus for the future

Attract: Use all of Monmouthshire Social care attributes in order to be the exclusive employer of choice in our community.

Resource: Facilitate all available talent to apply. No stone unturned.

Onboard: Welcome and induct everyone who joins us.

Develop: Support everyone in all corners services to grow, develop and learn.

Reward and Recognize: Everyone's efforts are recognized.

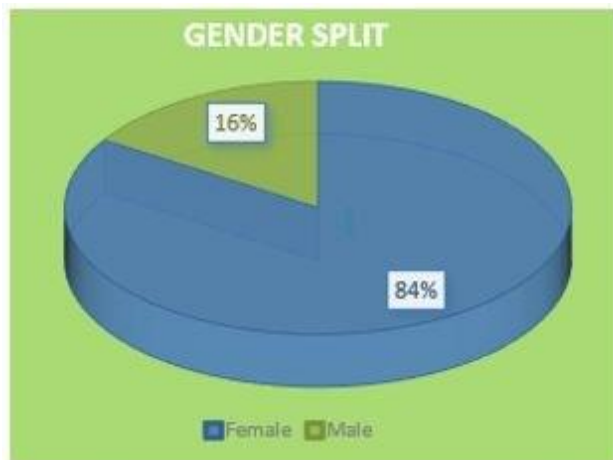
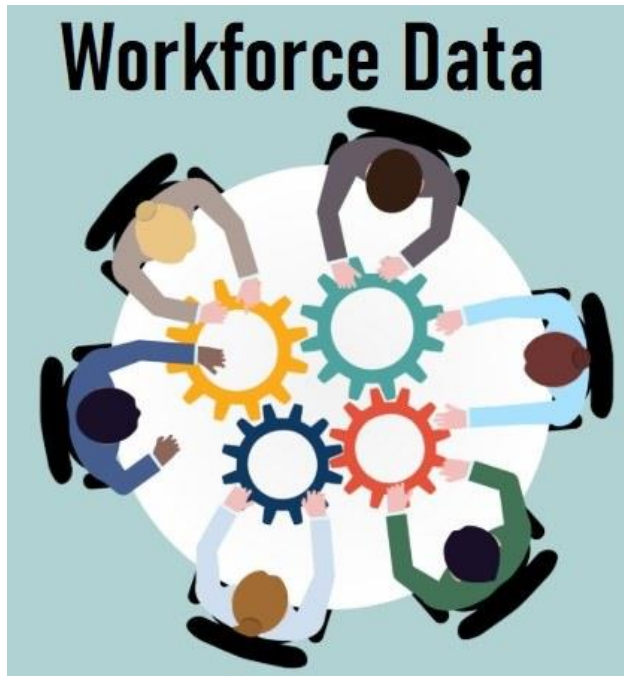
Progress and Perform: Hold regular conversations about performance and development.

Retain and Exit: Encourage our people to stay and then learn from those who leave.

We are extremely proud of everything achieved by our workforce. It is also testament to the leadership and commitment of all the leadership teams who support and guide our frontline workforce. There are challenging times ahead however we have the leaderships teams that believe in our vision and are committed to its delivery.

What Does Our Workforce Look Like?

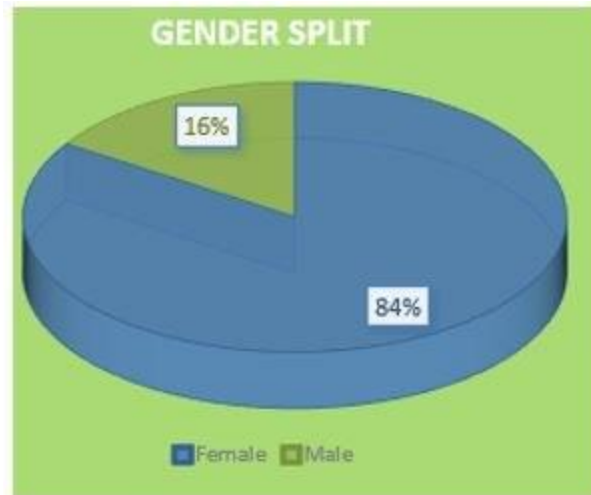
Workforce Data



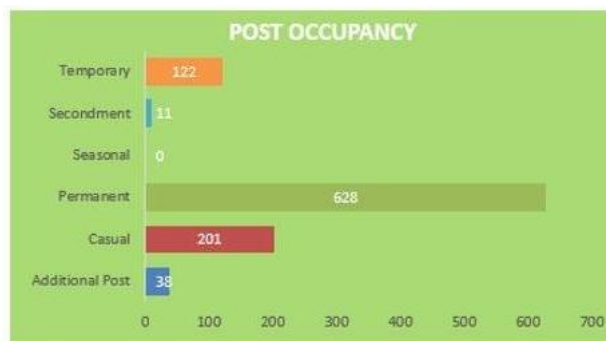
Across the whole of the directorate 84% of the workforce is female.



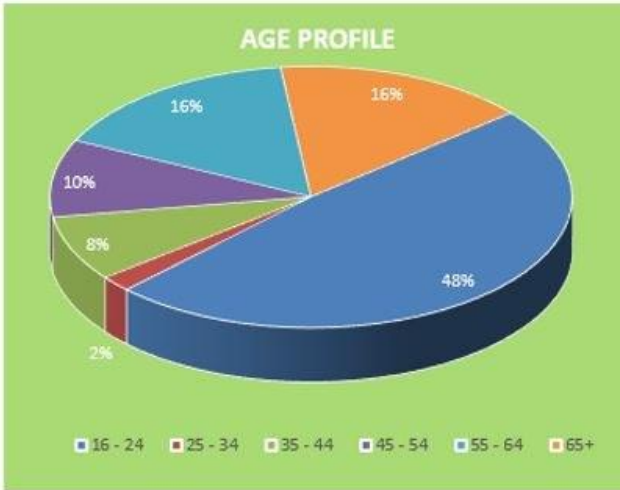
Gender Split Adult Services



Gender Split Children's Services



The majority of our workforce are in permanent contracts, there is a smaller number in temp contracts this will be as a result of the temporary nature of the funding streams.



64% of our workforce of over the age of 55 years of age. This data is essential in order for us to build workforce planning strategies for the future in order to replace experienced and knowledgeable workforce as people retire or work towards retirement.



A large part of our workforce being part time shows how we can offer flexible working patterns to meet the needs of our workforce.

New Starters and Leavers – Social Care April 2021 – March 2022			
Team	New Starters	Leavers	Trend
Care at home	49	63	↓
Integrated Services Adult's	7	11	↓
Safeguarding and Quality Assurance	2	2	←
Children's Services	26	20	↑
Business Support – Children's Services	2	2	←
Commissioning	0	1	↓
YOS	5	4	↑
Finance	2	1	↑
Transformation Team	2	0	↑
Leadership	1	1	←
Total	96	105	↓





9. Next Steps, Key Challenges and Priorities

Whilst I have endeavoured to include a balanced and representative selection of service areas, the breadth and depth of Social Care and Health activity within Monmouthshire is nigh on impossible to capture in a single report. Similarly, although I have exposed some of the current challenges we face, I have in no way explored them all or captured the issues in their entirety. I would hope, however, that the report provides a sufficient basis to evidence what I feel are the most pressing strategic and operational challenges for the service moving forward. In summary these are:

Operational Challenges

- Maintaining a sufficient and stable workforce that is suitably qualified and experienced
- Dealing with the on-going ripple effect of the impact of the pandemic on people, families and on the workforce
- Managing on-going increased demand across all services
- Maintaining sufficient capacity to meet our statutory requirements
- Maintaining sufficient capacity to respond preventatively to risk and need for individuals and families
- The fragility of the provider landscape within the sector specifically direct care and placements for children

- Working in a climate of increased budgetary pressure
- Maintaining partnership working when all key partners and statutory agencies are under significant pressure

Risks

- Inability to meet the care and support needs of vulnerable people resulting in their welfare being compromised or harmed
- Failure to comply with statutory requirements
- The financial consequences of a failing social care and health sector

Priority Actions

- Continue to develop and implement the workforce strategy for recruiting into the social care and health workforce over the immediate and longer term
- Continue to develop and implement the workforce development plan with emphasis on individual wellbeing and increased opportunities for professional support and development
- Maintain a strategic and operational focus on preventative services with emphasis on community resilience and targeting the most vulnerable groups and individuals to help reduce demand
- Further develop innovative responses to the challenges within the provider market, specifically through a 'place-based' approach to home care
- Re-focus on practice particularly within adult's services including quality assurance process and management oversight, support of practice, specifically to address issues raised within the Performance Evaluation Inspection
- Work with partners to develop and implement services that will address the insufficiency of placements for children and young people, particularly those with complex needs
- Continue to maintain a strong partnership presence in key forums particularly within the Gwent Safeguarding Board and the Regional Partnership Board.