

SUBJECT:	Commissioning Strategy: 'Where I am Safe?' - A Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families
DIRECTORATE:	Social Care and Health
MEETING:	Children and Young People Select Committee
DATE:	7th July 2016

1. PURPOSE:

To consider and endorse the Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee endorse the approach contained within the Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families, and reviews progress and the approach at regular intervals.

3. KEY ISSUES:

The Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families attached as Appendix 1 sets out the strategic intentions in respect of Children, Young People and their Families who require care and support by Monmouthshire County Council.

Specifically, it seeks the Children and Young People Select Committee's support to:

1. Endorse the Children, Young People Strategy which aims to keep children and young people safe by preventing need from escalating, responding appropriately to disadvantage and safeguarding concerns, and maintaining a focus on identifying the most appropriate placement setting;
2. Develop and resource prevention and early intervention services to reduce need from escalating, and to support children and families out of statutory services;
3. Review the range of family support services Monmouthshire provides at all tiers of intervention to ensure that where possible children remain in their families and where they are in care that they can be effectively reunified;
4. Strengthen our approach to practice and quality assurance by learning and implementing change from the findings from quality assurance exercises;
5. Strengthen our collection, validation and presentation of high quality information and intelligence that gives insight into how effective the system as a whole is at protecting and supporting vulnerable children, as well as helping to change and improve practice;
6. Strengthen the procedures for admission to care;
7. Improve the opportunities for children and young people to have permanency outside of the care system by enabling them to be reunified with their birth or extended family where it is safe to do so, or by securing an adoption order or a special guardianship order to live with a permanent family;

8. Expand the availability of placements to meet a wide range of children, in particular placements for teenagers, parent and babies, sibling groups and children with additional / challenging needs;
9. Evaluate the BASE project with the aim of establishing if the model has been effective, and whether it can be expanded to all foster carers, adopters, and special guardians;
10. Ensure placement with parent agreements are updated in line with regulatory requirements and plans are monitored, and where possible that arrangements are made to discharge Care Orders and support families to meet children's needs without the requirement for them to remain looked after.

4. REASONS:

1. We want to work successfully with children and young people, their parents and families, and partner agencies to help children and young people achieve the best outcomes.
2. We want to ensure that children and young people achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures
3. We want to ensure that achieving the best for children and young people is at the centre of everything we do.
4. We want to safely support children to achieve the best possible outcomes for them within their families, recognising this is the best environment for the majority of children and young people to develop and achieve their outcomes.
5. We want to ensure that children and young people who are unable to live safely within their own families are looked after and provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs.
6. We want to ensure we use the resources afforded to us by the Council effectively to support children, young people and their families within the Councils allocation.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Understanding the financial implications and potential constraints of the Strategy for Children, Young People and their Families will be built into the work programme for the next phase. In embarking upon this journey we are mindful of the financial challenges facing local government.

In terms of the resources needed to realise the ambitious outcomes, we are conscious of competing priorities within a limited staff group and also the potential need for expert help. Should additional support be required the necessary permissions will be sought.

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 2) are summarised below for members' consideration:

The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This

will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families

The Future Generations Evaluations Form has helped the Council understand the positive and negative impacts of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy proposal and has evidenced that the Council has paid due regard to equality and sustainable development issues within the strategy proposal.

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every year and criteria for monitoring and review will be:

1. Against the actions contained within the children, young people and families care and support action plan;
2. Against the impact measures contained within the children, young people and families performance table

7. CONSULTEES:

Claire Marchant – Chief Officer, Social Care and Health
Jane Rogers, Head of Children's Services
Departmental Management Team – 8th June 2016
Senior Leadership Team – 14th June 2016

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

9. AUTHOR:

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APPENDIX 1

Monmouthshire County Council Children's Services



'Where I am Safe'

**A Strategy for Children, Young People and their
Families**

Table of Contents

Part 1		6 - 11
1.0	Our Pledge to Children and Young People	6
2.0	Our Vision for Children and Young People who are unable to live safely within their own families	6
3.0	Values and Principles	6 - 8
4.0	Context	8 - 11
4.1	Policy Context	8
4.2	National Context	9
4.3	Local Context	9
4.4	Financial Context	9 - 11
Part 2		12 - 21
5.0	Needs Analysis	12 - 21
5.1	Number of Looked After Children in Monmouthshire / Wales Comparison	12 - 13
5.2	Age of Looked After Children within Monmouthshire	13
5.3	Ages of Children by Admission and Discharge	14 - 15
5.4	Legal Status of Looked After Children by Age Group as at 31.03.2016	15 -16

5.5	Parent and Baby Placements between 01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016	16
5.6	Placement Stability of Monmouthshire Looked After Children (3 or more placements within a year)	16 - 17
5.7	Type of Placement	17 - 18
5.8	Number of Approved Monmouthshire Foster Carers	18
5.9	Number of Monmouthshire Placements	19
5.10	Number of Young People in Independent Fostering Placement by Age and Gender as at 31.03.2016	19
5.11	Number of Children Placed with Parents as at 31.03.2016	19 - 20
5.12	Permanence	20
5.13	Number of Care Leavers	20 - 21
5.14	Number of Children becoming Looked After and leaving the Looked After System	21
Part 3		22 - 27
6.0	Current Service Provision and Placement Choice	22 - 27
6.1	Fostering	22 - 23
6.2	Children with Complex Needs and Specialist Placements	23 - 24

6.3	Mother and Baby Placements	24
6.4	Children with Disabilities	24
6.5	Current Support Services and Commissioned Arrangements	25
6.6	Training	25
6.7	Independent Foster Placements	25 - 26
6.8	Residential Placements	26
6.9	Placement with Parents	26 - 27
Part 4		28 - 38
7.0	Keeping Children and Young People Safe	28 - 38
7.1	Supporting Families, and Children and Young People on the Edge of Care	28 - 29
7.2	Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel	29 - 31
7.3	Legal Planning Meetings	31
7.4	Looked After Children Reviews	31
7.5	Children and Young People Support Team	31 - 32
7.6	Adoption	32
7.7	Special Guardianship Orders	32 - 33

7.8	Complex Care Panel	33
7.9	Consultation and Quality Assurance	33 - 34
7.10	Corporate Parenting	34
7.11	Accommodation for Care Leavers	34 - 35
7.12	Recruitment of Carers	35 - 36
7.13	Key Areas to Keeping Children and Young People Safe	36 - 38
Part 5		39 - 40
8.0	Children, Young People and Families Care and Support Action Plan	39 - 40
9.0	Children, Young People and Families Performance Table	41 - 44

Part 1

1. Our Pledge to Children and Young People

We will work successfully with children and young people, their parents and families, and partner agencies to help children and young people achieve the best outcomes.

We will ensure that children and young people achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures

We will ensure that achieving the best for children and young people is at the centre of everything we do.

We will safely support children to achieve the best possible outcomes for them within their families, recognising this is the best environment for the majority of children and young people to develop and achieve their outcomes.

We will ensure that children and young people who are unable to live safely within their own families are looked after and provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs.

2. Our Vision for Children and Young People who are unable to Live Safely within their own Families

Children and young people will be healthy and happy, and feel valued and loved. Children and young people will enjoy learning and grow into successful adults who can have positive relationships, positive futures, become responsible citizens and achieve their goals and ambitions. Our aspirations for the children and young people that we look after are the same as any good parent would want for their children. Where they need it children and young people will receive the very best possible standards of care and support.

3. Values and Principles

It is our priority to ensure that we will find safe and appropriate ways to work with families to help them meet their children's needs, including their need to be protected from harm. We will, whenever it is safe to do so, always look for ways to support

children and young people to remain with their birth family or extended family and avoid the need for children and young people to become looked after.

The next best alternative when children and young people cannot live within their own family is a permanent stable family such as an adoptive placement and a family based foster placement. An adoptive placement is a way of providing a permanent home and family to a child or young person who can't be brought up by their birth family. Today, the majority of adoptions in the UK involve older children, sibling groups and children with disabilities, who have been taken into care. Fostering is a family based foster placement which offers stability and security to children and young people, which often provides them with their first experience of positive family life. Today 80 per cent of looked after children within the UK live with foster families,

Residential placements will rarely be seen as long term arrangement, as children and young people achieve better outcomes if they can live in a family based environment. Residential care offers short and long term care for children with complex needs and behaviours. Children and young people placed in residential care typically arrive as teenagers after multiple foster care placements. They tend to have complex needs including mental health, emotional and behavioural problems as a result of childhood trauma. According to UK government figures, 30% children and young people are placed as a result of abuse or neglect, while the same percentage has experienced significant instability with five or more different placements. Some 38% of children and young people in residential settings have special educational needs. They are also more likely to be in contact with the criminal justice system. A residential placement will always be the exception, and will only be considered when detailed assessments of a child's / young persons needs have identified that a specialist resource is required.

We will always seek to look after children within the boundaries of Monmouthshire in order to maintain their relationship with their family, peers and to enable them to continue to maintain their links with education, health and other services that may be involved with them unless there is a reason why this would not be in their best interest.

We will always aim to return children and young people to their birth family or to a foster family unless it is explicitly clear that to do so would be detrimental to a child / young person's health or wellbeing.

4. Context

4.1 Policy Context

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force on the 6th of April 2016, is the legislative underpinning for changes in the way that local authorities and their partners work with individual families. It requires local authorities to review the care and support they provide, while providing a range of services designed to promote wellbeing and prevent the need for care and support.

In 2013 Cordis Bright was commissioned by the All Wales Heads of Children's Services, the Welsh Local Government Association (WGLA) and the Association of Directors of Social Services to provide insight into 'why do local authorities with similar levels of needs, have different looked after children populations' across Wales. Their research took a case study approach involving the following areas: Bridgend, Denbighshire, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taf, and Torfaen. It was found that whilst some variation in the numbers and rates of looked after children across local authorities can be explained by differences in the demographic and socio-economic profile of each authority, these factors only go part of the way to explain differences between local authorities. Other factors affecting the numbers and rates of looked after children relate to factors more within the control of the local authority and their partners – especially the way that local authorities lead, organise and deploy their services to children, young people and their families. Their research highlighted five main areas that can help support children, young people, and their families – strategic leadership, prevention and early intervention, approach to practice, partnership working, and information and intelligence about performance.

This document sets out the strategic intentions in respect of care and support provided to children, young people and their families within Monmouthshire and specifies how the intentions will be realised and the actions that will be taken to ensure we achieve the best possible outcomes for all of the children, young people and families for whom we have responsibilities.

4.2 National Context

We do not currently have the all Wales 2016 comparative figures as these figures will not be released by the Welsh Government until later this year. However, to provide the most recent national context we have been provided figures as at 31st March 2015. As at the 31st of March 2015 there were 5,615 looked after children in Wales. Of these children 76% (4,255) were living in foster placements, 4% (250) were living in local authority or registered children’s homes, and 10% (575) were placed with parents (*source of data – statswales.gov.uk).

4.3 Local Context

As at 31st March 2016 there were 129 children looked after in Monmouthshire. Of these children 71% (92) were living in foster placements (32 were placed in Monmouthshire foster placements, 28 were placed with family or friends, 32 were placed in independent foster placements), 8% (10) were placed in residential children’s homes, and 12% (16) were placed with parents.

Monmouthshire has a slightly lower percentage of children being looked after in foster placements than last years National average; a higher number of children in residential placements, and a higher number of children who are subject to Care Orders living at home subject to Placement and Parent Regulations.

Monmouthshire has seen a significant rise in the population of looked after children over the last 5 years from (106) in 2012 to (129) in 2016 which is a 22% increase.

4.4 Financial Context

The cost of meeting the needs of the rising looked after children population has resulted in Children’s Services and the Local Authority being placed under significant financial strain (see fig 1 below).

Fig 1 - Looked After Children Budget Breakdown between 2012 to 2016

	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
LAC Budget (Per RA Return to WG) - £m	2.375	2.706	3.799	4.942

	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
Breakdown of LAC Budget (from above)				
External Placements (Residential, Schools, IFAs, Secure, etc.)	1.079	1.169	1.458	2.287
In-house Fostering	1.141	1.355	1.442	1.582
*Other (which includes Independent Living / Supported Housing / Legal Costs / Base Team / Adoption Allowances etc.)	0.155	0.181	0.899	1.073

Percentage Increase in LAC Budget since 2012/13	13.94%	59.96%	108.08%
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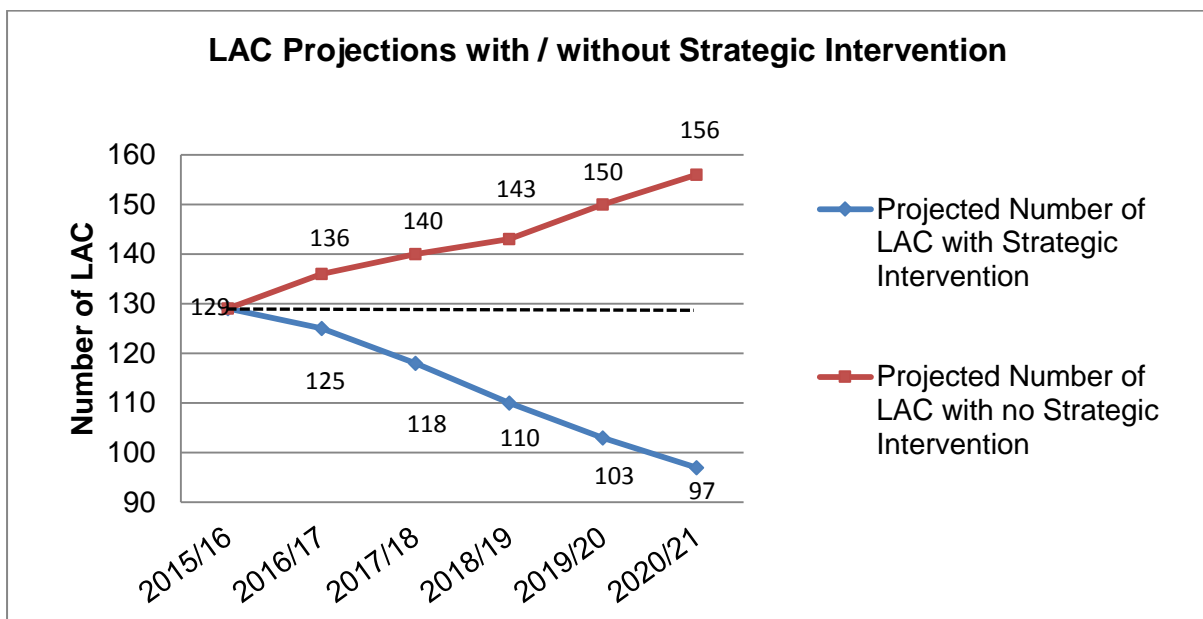
LAC nos. at year end as shown in fig 2	102	103	108	129
Actual Cost of LAC (Per RO Return to WG) - £m	3.748	4.514	5.261	Not Available Yet
Average LAC Unit Cost (£)	<i>Not Calculated</i>	30,000	36,000	42,000
Approximate Cost of LAC based on year end nos. & Unit Cost (£m)				5.418

**LAC costs calculated for the RA Return are determined according to guidance notes which accompany the return. Sometimes there are changes from one year to the next where costs are re-categorised under a different heading. Re-categorisation would be largely responsible for the increase on 'Other' costs above from 2013/14 to 2014/15.*

As a consequence of the rise in the LAC population and the financial strain the Council is under, we are setting out our commitment within this strategy to use the resources afforded to us by the Council effectively to support children, young people, and their families within the Councils allocation.

Fig 2 below shows LAC projections over the next five years with and without the impact of the strategic interventions contained within this strategy. It is our intention to reduce the looked after population by 25% (32 children and young people) to 97 children and young people by 2021 through the measures contained within this strategy. Fig 2 also shows the projected rise in the LAC population to 156 children and young people by 2021 without any strategic intervention.

Fig 2 - LAC Projections with / without Strategic Intervention



Through implementation of the commissioning strategy and the planned reduction in LAC numbers, the Council will look to contain spend within its budget allocation within the five year period. It is important to note that the commissioning strategy will be supported through other improvement programmes in social work practice and workforce development. However, the commissioning strategy is the key document to deliver improvements in commissioning.

Part 2

5. Needs Analysis

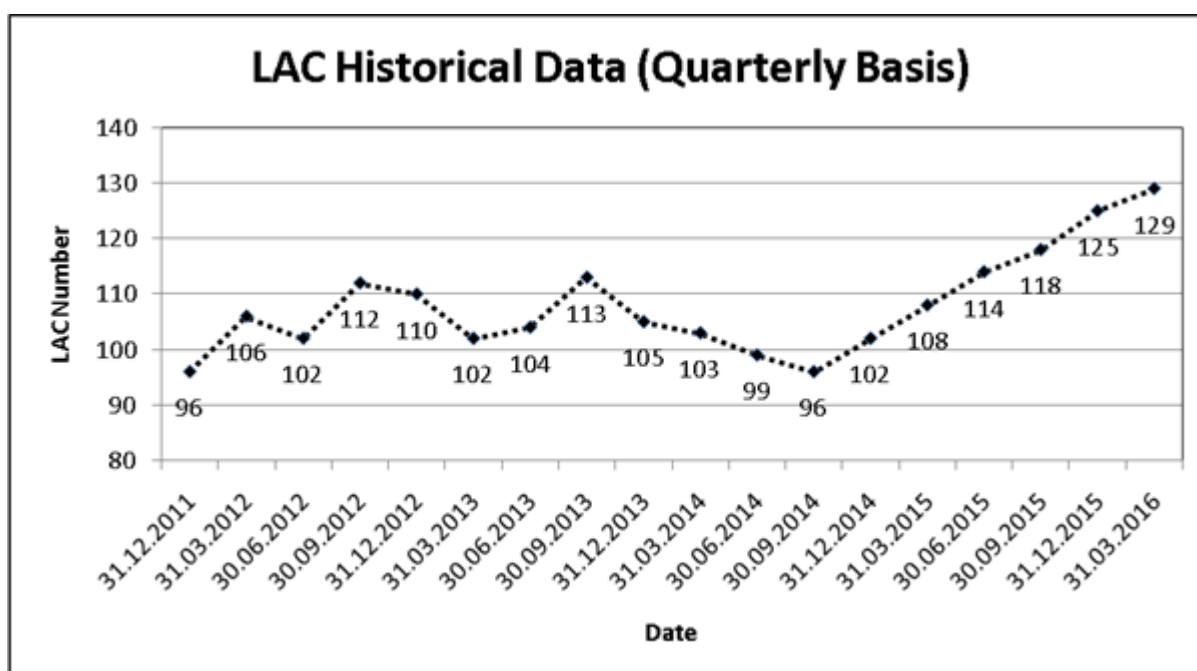
5.1 Number of Looked After Children in Monmouthshire / Wales Comparison

Fig 3 - Number of Looked After Children in Monmouthshire / Wales Comparison

	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Monmouthshire	106	101	103	108	129
All Wales Average	260	262	262	255	*

* All Wales Averages will be published by Welsh Government later in the year.

Fig 4 - Monmouthshire LAC Historical Data (Quarterly Basis) – 31.12.2011 – 31.03.2016



While the LAC population is decreasing across most Welsh authorities during the period 31.12.11 – 31.03.2016, Monmouthshire has seen a 34% increase within the same period.

Consideration has been given to the reasons why Monmouthshire has seen this significant rise in numbers of looked after children. Amongst these reasons are:-

- Increased level of risk and complexity of cases
- The increased use of court / legal processes to manage risk rather than through a multi-agency child protection plan
- A lack of a consistent preventative LAC strategy including a coherent, multi-agency family support strategy and services to support families who experience difficulties
- The impact of staff turnover, together with a 'built-in' transfer point at the first looked after child review can undermine the timely implementation of alternative risk management processes or care plans for rehabilitation
- The increase use by the courts of children being placed at home with their parent(s) whilst retaining their Looked After Status (Placement with Parent Regulations). The year-end figure for this was 16 children 12% of the LAC population

There is an urgent need to ensure that children, young people, and their families are provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs.

5.2 Age of Looked After Children within Monmouthshire

Fig 5 - Age of Looked After Children within Monmouthshire

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
31.03.2012	5	5	5	5	8	3	5	2	2	5	3	6	3	10	9	9	9	12
31.03.2013	5	4	7	5	7	8	3	4	3	2	6	2	7	4	9	10	8	7
31.03.2014	6	6	5	4	5	6	7	3	5	5	5	5	3	9	5	10	8	6
31.03.2015	8	5	7	1	4	5	5	6	3	5	5	6	6	3	9	9	12	9
31.03.2016	9	10	7	8	5	5	8	5	7	5	8	5	6	8	4	10	7	12

Of the children looked after on 31.03.2016 there are 44 children who are 0-5 years old; 33 are aged 6-10, and 52 are aged 11 plus. When these figures are considered in conjunction with legal status of children looked after it is possible to highlight patterns which impact on the overall looked after children population (see Fig 7)

5.3 Ages of Children by Admission and Discharge

Fig 6 indicates that there is a need to ensure that there are available resources to ensure that children under the age of 5 who enter the care system do not remain in care for longer than required.

Fig 6 - Ages of Children by Admission and Discharge

	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016	
	Adm	Dis	Adm	Dis	Adm	Dis	Adm	Dis	Adm	Dis
0	9	5	7	1	14	5	12	7	15	8
1	5	2	1	3	1	2	3	1	6	1
2	5	0	4	2	1	1	3	4	3	1
3	4	1	5	2	1	4	0	2	4	2
4	4	2	1	3	4	5	2	3	4	0
5	2	0	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
6	2	1	2	2	4	2	0	1	3	0
7	4	3	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	1
8	1	0	3	2	0	0	1	0	3	0
9	3	0	3	2	4	1	0	1	2	1
10	1	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	1	0
11	4	2	3	3	4	3	3	1	0	0
12	4	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	1
13	4	1	2	0	4	3	0	1	2	0
14	3	2	2	4	3	0	4	1	0	0
15	2	2	4	2	1	3	4	1	3	2
16	2	3	0	3	4	7	3	0	2	4
17	2	6	2	3	1	1	0	5	0	8
18	0	1	0	12	0	7	0	1	0	1
Total	61	33	43	48	53	51	37	31	53	32

This can be achieved through improved planning in care proceedings at court, exploring alternatives to fostering with extended family members, and the development of the adoption service to enable children to achieve permanence without delay.

In addition, fig 6 highlights that there is a need to ensure that there is sufficient resource within the in house fostering service to ensure that there are placements available for children aged 11 plus and that these placements are supported to meet the needs of young people. It also highlights the need to ensure that there are interventions available to support young people returning home where this is possible.

5.4 Legal Status of Looked After Children by Age Group as at 31.03.2016

The data in fig 7 indicates that there is potential to achieve permanence outside of the looked after children's system for the majority of children aged 0-5 as indicated by those children who are subject to Care Orders and a Placement Orders.

For the children aged 6 plus the majority are looked after subject to a Care Order with few having Placement Orders. A Care Order is an Order, which places a child under the care of the Local Authority. This is otherwise known as a child 'being in care'. The Order is applied for by the Social Services Department of the Local Authority and gives the Local Authority Parental Responsibility for the child. This does not necessarily mean that the parent doesn't have Parental Responsibility but the parent's wishes can be overridden if the Local Authority believes it is in the best interests of the child. A Placement Order gives the child / young person's social worker permission to go ahead with the adoption plan. This means the social worker can arrange for your child / young person to go and live with a prospective adoptive family (if one has been matched as being suitable to meet your child / young person's needs). This is called being placed for adoption.

Fig 7 - Legal Status of Looked After Children by Age Group as at 31.03.2016

	0 - 5	6 – 11	11 plus	Total
Placement Order	11	4	0	15
Interim Care Order	15	3	5	23
Care Order	15	23	27	65
Section 20	3	8	12	23
Wardship	-	-	3	3
TOTAL	44	38	47	129

It is recognised that achieving permanence through adoption for children aged 6 plus is likely to be more difficult, and therefore permanency outside of the care system for this age category is most likely to be through revocation of Care Orders where children are placed with parents or through applications for alternative orders such as Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders. A Special Guardianship Order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure

placement. A Child Arrangements Order decides who the child is to live with and/or who the child will spend time with, and can be granted to more than one person whether they live together or not. If a child arrangements order states that the child will live with a person, that person will have parental responsibility for that child until the order ceases.

For some children their permanence plan will be one of long term fostering, and therefore there will always be a need to ensure sufficiency in the availability of long term foster carers.

5.5 Parent and Baby Placements between 01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

We are unable at this time to provide the number of parent and baby placements between 01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016 as this will be reported to Welsh Government later this year. However, within Monmouthshire’s Fostering Service there is currently one approved mother and baby carer and no mother, father and bay carers. As a consequence there is an urgent need to increase this resource to provide appropriate assessment placements for parents and babies including community based assessments and supports.

Fig 8 - Parent and Baby Placements between 01.04.2015 – 31.03.2016

	Mother and Baby Placements	Mother, Father and Baby Placements
Independent Fostering	-	-
Monmouthshire Foster Carers	-	-

5.6 Placement Stability of Monmouthshire Looked After Children (3 or more placements in a year)

Again we do not have the all Wales 2016 comparative figures, as these figures will not be released until later this year. However, Monmouthshire’s provisional figure (which needs to be validated by Welsh Government) for the year ending 31st March 2016 was 8.5% of looked after children having three or more placements in the year compared to 1.9% the year before (see fig 9 below).

Fig 9 - Placement Stability of Monmouthshire Looked After Children (3 or more placements in a year)

	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Number of Children	10	2	11	2	11
Percentage	9.4%	2.7%	10.7%	1.9%	8.5%

The most commonly reported reason for placement breakdown was cited to be a challenging teenagers (including young people using substances, at risk of offending, and at risk of sexual exploitation) and carers not being able to manage complex behaviours.

It is more likely to be the case that the young people placed in independent fostering placements are those who are likely to have more complex needs. However, it would appear from the data available that there is no indication that for this age category, independent foster placements are able to provide greater placement stability than Monmouthshire Carers.

Monmouthshire has invested in employing a Clinical Psychologist within its BASE therapeutic support project, to pilot with 20 foster carers a detailed programme of group training and support, coupled with individualised consultations and professional team consultations known as network consultations. This proactive and intensive support will change the current crisis approach, by providing regular planned therapeutic support to foster carers and their professional network of support, resulting in foster carers being supported to maintain placements and meeting the needs of children more effectively.

5.7 Type of Placement

The data in fig 10 below indicates that the number of children placed with Monmouthshire foster carers has reduced from 42 in 2012, to 32 in 2016, at the same time the number of children placed with family / friend carers has increased from 22 in 2012 to 28 in 2016.

Fig 10 - Looked After Children by Placement Type as at 31st March

	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Monmouthshire Carers	42	36	35	34	32
Monmouthshire Family and Friends (kinship carers)	22	28	19	16	28
Independent Fostering	26	25	25	37	32
Independent Living	4	2	2	1	1
Pre-adoption	0	0	7	2	9
Placed with Parent	3	4	9	9	16
Residential / Educational	9	6	5	8	10
Mother and Baby Placement*	0	0	0	0	0
Secure Unit	0	0	1	1	1
Child in Hospital	0	0	0	0	0
Total	106	101	103	108	129

*NB the data for Mother and Baby placements reports the number of placements as at the 31st March and is not reflective of the total number of placements made during the year.

The number of children placed with Independent Fostering carers has also increased from 26 to 32 over the same period. There has been a substantial increase in the number of children placed with parents from 3 in 2012 to 16 in 2016 which will be discussed further under point 5.11. There has been an increase in the number of children in pre-adoption placements from 0 in 2012 to 9 in 2016, with a slight increase in the number of young people placed in residential / educational accommodation from 9 in 2012 to 10 in 2016.

5.8 Number of Approved Monmouthshire Foster Carers

Fig 11 - Number of Approved Monmouthshire Foster Carers as at 31st March

	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Foster Carer	51	47	49	49	54

5.9 Number of Monmouthshire Placements

Fig 12 - Number of Children Looked After Placed with Monmouthshire Foster Carers as at 31st March

	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Foster Carer	86	79	86	88	80

5.10 Number of Young People in Independent Fostering Placement by Age and Gender as at 31.03.2016

Monmouthshire has increased its use of independent fostering placements between 2012 and 2016. However, there has been a slight reduction over the last 12 months.

Fig 13 - Number of Young People in Independent Fostering Placement by Age and Gender as at 31.03.2016

Gender / Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Male	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	2	3	1	2
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	0
Total	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	3	4	3	2

5.11 Number of Children Placed with Parents as at 31.03.2016

Monmouthshire has a high number of children who are subject to care orders and placed a home with their parents subject to Placement with Parent Regulations. As at 31.03.2016 there were 16 children who were placed with parents. The average length of these arrangements was 1.3 years (although it must be noted that of those 16, 2 children became looked after at the end of March 2016 and a large family became looked after in December 2015, therefore reducing the average length of time of these arrangements). The length of time children remain subject to care orders needs to be reviewed to ensure that wherever possible the right supports and plans are being made to discharge Care Orders when it is safe to do so.

5.12 Permanence

Fig 14 - Adoption Orders / Special Guardianship Orders Granted during the year ending 31st March

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Adoption Oder Granted	2	1	2	9	1
Special Guardianship Orders	2	5	21	3	6

There was a significant rise in the number of Adoption Orders granted in 2014/15 to 9 compared to previous years. However, this number fell in 2015/16 to 1 which is in contrast to the number of Care Proceedings and Care Orders granted during 2014/15.

In May 2015 the Local Authority agreed to increase its social work capacity within the Placement and Support Team to manage Special Guardianship Orders (SGO). The additional post supports SGO carers and their application process. However, due to recruitment and retention issues within the service over the last 12 months, the impact of this post has not been as anticipated. Nevertheless, there are 11 prospective SGO carers who care for 12 looked after children that the SGO worker is currently working with. Therefore, it is anticipated that the number of SGO's granted will rise over the next 12 months.

5.13 Number of Care Leavers

Fig 15 - Number of Care Leavers at 31st March

	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Eligible	14	15	19
Relevant	7	3	3
Former Relevant	39	33	28
Total	60	51	50

There has been a rise in the number of eligible young people in 2016 which is a reflection of the rise in the number of children looked after during the last few years. However, there has been a fall in the number of former relevant young people in 2016.

5.14 Number of Children becoming Looked After and Leaving the Looked After System

Fig 16 - Number of Children becoming Looked After and Leaving the Looked After System during the year ending 31st March

	31.03.12	31.03.13	31.03.14	31.03.15	31.03.16
Admissions	61	43	53	37	53
Discharges	33	48	51	31	32

The figures in fig 16 demonstrate that the number of young people being discharged from care does not equal the number of children and young people being admitted to care over the period 2012 to 2016, which contributed to a rise in the looked after children population up to March 2016.

Part 3

6. Current Service Provision and Placement Choice

6.1 Fostering

Monmouthshire's fostering service supports 38 approved foster carers, 11 of which are connected foster carers who look after family members.

The service consists of Recruitment and Assessment Team and a Foster Carers Support Team.

The service does not benefit from having a dedicated recruitment and retention officer, although in May 2015 Cabinet did agree to fund two additional social worker posts in the Fostering Team (one permanent and one for 12 months) to focus upon recruitment and assessment of foster carers, particularly children aged 10+. These posts should support the process of increasing Monmouthshire's pool of in-house foster carers. However, there have been delays in recruiting to these posts since agreement was given in Cabinet in May 2015; therefore it isn't possible to evaluate the impact of these posts at this time.

There is a need to expand the availability of placements to meet a wide range of children, in particular placements for teenagers, parent and babies, sibling groups and children with additional needs.

All foster carers are approved for children and young people from birth until their 18th birthday while allowing carers to have a preference for younger or older children as part of matching considerations.

The largest age group represented in independent fostering placements is that of young people aged 11 plus. There is limited capacity to consider returning teenagers to Monmouthshire placements due to the small number of foster carers willing to care for teenagers. The 11 plus age group is also the most likely to have the largest number of young people whose length of time in care is greater due to the less likely options of exploring permanence through other orders such as adoption or SGO's. It is important that there are robust plans to support successful rehabilitation and move on

from care in addition to supporting placements to prevent breakdowns due to challenging behaviour.

6.2 Children with Complex Needs and Specialist Placements

Current support for carers who look after children with complex needs or children who are in specialist placements is usually reactive and activated at times of crisis, therefore they are less effective with more intensive levels of intervention.

Children in care have often experienced abuse, neglect and trauma and so their behaviour towards those who care for them can be very challenging, abusive and confusing to understand. We should expect Monmouthshire foster carers to need therapeutic support if they are to sustain caring relationships and placements for these children

Therefore, the fostering service, with the employment of a Clinical Psychologist at BASE (the Therapeutic Support Project) is delivering a pilot project with up to 20 Monmouthshire foster carers by involving them in a detailed programme of group training and support, coupled with individualised consultations and professional team consultations known as network consultations.

This project will provide the assessing social worker with consultation with a psychologist halfway through the assessment process regarding attachment styles. Once approved, each foster carer will attend, over a 14 month period, an 18 week therapeutic attachment group run by the clinical psychologist, 3 network consultations, and 3 individual psychological consultations.

It is hoped that if foster carers are supported to maintain placements and meet the needs of children more effectively, then children will experience more stable placements, have improved emotional well-being, learn better and make the transition to adulthood more successfully. In addition, foster carers will become more resilient, enjoy better emotional well-being and are more likely to remain as Monmouthshire foster carers.

This project will be evaluated later this year with the aim of establishing if the model has been effective, and whether it can be expanded to all foster carers, adopters, and special guardians.

Nevertheless, Monmouthshire needs to attract and develop additional specialist foster carers to provide placements to children and young people considered to have particularly challenging behaviours.

6.3 Mother and Baby Placements

There is currently only one approved mother and baby foster placement within Monmouthshire's Fostering Service. The carers have received specialist training on mother and baby assessments and follow an assessment programme. However, there is a need to expand this service provision in order to meet the demand for placements.

6.4 Children with Disabilities

A small number of Monmouthshire foster carers (4 households) offer placements to children with disabilities. These 4 households include salaried carers at the Herbert Road facility, one specific short-breaks carer, and two generic carers who offer a range of short / respite placements to children. The service has recently had 2 short breaks households resign, which need to be replaced.

Of the population of children and young people who are placed with independent fostering placements and residential placements 21% (9 out of 42) are children who have a disability. The fostering service now needs to consider how best to effectively meet the needs of children with additional needs.

The Herbert Road facility provides a short breaks service to 8 Monmouthshire families with a further 3 children currently being introduced. Monmouthshire's generic short break carers offer short-breaks to a further 8 children and more depending on frequency of breaks required.

However, there is a need to expand the in-house provision to enable children to live in their local communities and wherever possible and appropriate, to return children placed in independent foster care to its own in-house provision.

6.5 Current Support Services and Commissioned Arrangements

Monmouthshire does not have a coherent model of the range of family support services required at all tiers of intervention. A review is urgently required aimed at identifying the range of interventions that are required to ensure that where possible children remain in their families; where they are in care that they can be effectively reunified; or where this is not possible that placements are secure and stable.

It is essential to ensure that provision match the service need and can be flexible to quickly respond to changing demands and priorities (e.g. services which support the rehabilitation of children to their families, as well as a rapid response service which is able to offer flexible support to assist in preventing family or placement breakdown).

6.6 Training

In order to support carers to look after children with complex needs and ensure placement stability it is essential that foster carers are provided with the resources and training to develop their skills. The Fostering Service provides a core and advanced training programme to all carers, but there is a need to review this training programme. Monmouthshire County Council's Training Unit provides a core training programme to all carers and as discussed earlier BASE the therapeutic support project is currently trialling detailed programme of group training and support with 20 foster carers. Nevertheless, there is a need to increase the capacity of this advanced / specialist training to all carers who look after children with complex needs.

Training also needs to be able to increase its capacity to support carers to develop professional qualifications. The issue of foster carers attending training is one which needs to be addressed to ensure that foster carers are involved in developing training programmes and attendance is maximised.

6.7 Independent Foster Placements

A small number of children and young people will need to be placed outside of the local area. This may be due to their assessed specialist needs or because the risks of them remaining in the local community cannot be managed safely.

Independent foster carer placements are commissioned when a suitable in-house match cannot be identified.

Monmouthshire commissions foster placements via the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (The 4C's) via the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) database. The 4C's ensure that there is an equitable commissioning resource, and that all agencies who are registered providers are working towards the same framework arrangements which improve placement choice, quality and cost effective provisions.

There is a placement and contracts officer located within the fostering service who is responsible for sourcing external fostering and residential placements from within the 4C's framework.

Contracts with providers are managed under the 4C's Framework.

6.8 Residential Placements

Monmouthshire does not have its own residential provision. Where an assessment of a child or young person's needs has explored all placement options and residential placement is required, a placement will be commissioned with multi agency involvement with an Independent provider via the placement and contracts officer using the 4C's framework and the CCSR. However, if no placements are found through the CCSR, the Placement and Contracts Officer will procure 'off framework'. This process has been strengthened within the last six months with dedicated commissioning support from the Commissioning Team with regard to accreditation of providers off framework.

6.9 Placement with Parents

Monmouthshire has an over representation of children who are subject to Care Orders and looked after and placed with parents. Overall it is noted that children placed with parents remain subject to placement with parents regulations for a lengthy period of time (average 1.3 years). Arrangements need to be made to ensure that placement with parent agreements are updated in line with regulatory requirements and that plans are monitored and where possible that arrangements are made to discharge Care

Orders and support families to meet children's needs without the requirement for them to remain looked after.

Part 4

7. Keeping Children and Young People Safe

7.1 Supporting Families and Children and Young People on the Edge of Care

We are currently strengthening our social work model to ensure that families get the help they need when they need it. We need to ensure that all of our social workers are competent, trained to a high standard, have a shared vision, receive strong support, supervision and leadership to be able to effectively support the families they work with.

We are looking at thresholds, decision making and front door arrangements and how children's services can work with partners on an agreed common model for engaging with, and supporting children, young people and their families.

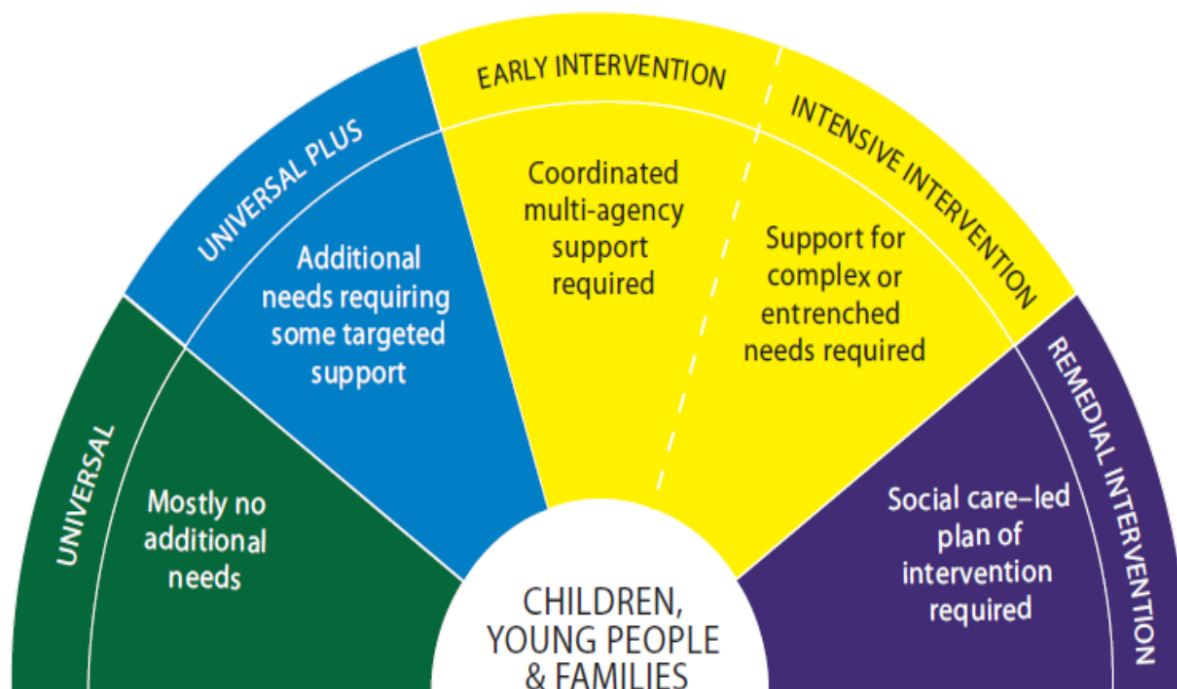
We need to have access to intensive intervention services to reduce the number of looked after children by reviewing the current distribution of resources in early help and intervention, while exploring the rebalancing towards families with more complex needs and edge of care service.

We also need to identify the key needs and service development priorities in terms of supporting families with complex needs, and therefore commission, re-commission or develop these services, to include looking at potential partnerships with neighbouring services.

This strategy uses the Children's Services Framework – Windscreen of Need (see fig 17) as the basis of the scope for our analysis. It recognises the importance of the whole network of services to supporting all families, and in particular identifies a differentiation between services and support for children and families needing early intervention and those needing intensive intervention.

This is based on research evidence which indicates that different forms of intervention require very different levels of support and skill on the part of those undertaking assessment, care, and support:.

Fig 17 - The Children's Services Framework – Windscreen of Need



We need to develop a common shared model covering the full Windscreen of Need, and the role the different partners play within in it. This will require a redesign of our front door processes and decision making arrangements while developing a clear and shared understanding of thresholds for different service responses. All of these activities will support children, young people and families on the edge of care.

We will continue to strengthen commissioning and partnership arrangements to ensure that the services we use are the ones that best meet the needs of children, young people and their families, and will best help families to be able to become successful and independent.

7.2 Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel

Where there is a need for interventions we ensure this is undertaken in a coordinated way, and a way that ensures that families are fully involved in planning. Monmouthshire has recently established a Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel to consider the range of services and supports available to children on the edge of care / or children who are already in looked after accommodation. It is planned that the Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel will include representatives from partner agencies who are essential to this process.

Whenever there is a need to consider a child or young person becoming looked after the Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel must consider this. The multi-agency panel, chaired by the Head of Children's Services will ensure that children, young people and their families receive the appropriate support they need at the right time to help them, and to ensure that any admission into care is appropriate, and that an early return to family is facilitated where ever possible.

Research indicates that when a child is accommodated for 6 weeks they are likely to remain looked after for 6 months and if they are looked after for 6 months they are likely to remain looked after for 18 months. Therefore it is important that children are only accommodated if it is essential and once accommodated they should be supported to return home as soon as possible but only if it is safe to do so and if it is in their best interests.

In order to ensure that at the earliest opportunity reunification is considered, it is the intention for the Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel to review cases 6 weeks after the date of placement.

The Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel will be a key pillar in ensuring children are safe and that we provide the right care to the right children.

The Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel will also support the planning arrangements for looked after children. It will play a key role in ensuring that children do not drift in care, and that alternatives are being considered.

A long term foster carer may be considered to be the most appropriate way of meeting the needs of some children. However, Monmouthshire is committed to ensuring that wherever possible children have the opportunity to live with a permanent family either through

- Reunification to their birth or extended family
- Adoption
- Special Guardianship Orders

We will continue to develop the role of Looked After Children Admissions and Prevention Panel in order to ensure that drift is avoided when children become looked after. We will review arrangements for children to ensure that they have a permanent plan by 6 months of being in care and we will ensure that the panel reviews the arrangements of all children and young people who are looked after for 2 years or more.

7.3 Legal Planning Meetings

A child or young person may be referred to legal planning meetings by their social worker following discussion with their manager. Legal planning meetings provide the opportunity for the social worker to seek legal advice as to whether a case meets the threshold for care proceedings; to issue care proceedings; to decide whether any expert assessments are required; consider and resource issues relating to care plans; and seek senior management agreement to commence care proceedings.

Legal planning meetings help to determine thresholds, and therefore should help to reduce the number of care proceedings and ensure that the interventions of the Local Authority are appropriate and proportionate. Legal planning meetings will continue to be held to support planning for children and families.

7.4 Looked After Children Reviews

When children or young people become looked after they will have regular looked after children's reviews. These are chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who is responsible for ensuring that the child or young person has a robust plan, and that this plan is meeting their needs. The role of the IRO is to ensure that the voice of the child or young person is heard and that the people who are tasked with meeting the needs of the child are accountable. All children and young people should have an agreed plan for permanency by their second looked after review.

7.5 Children and Young People Support Team

Monmouthshire has a social work team which works with looked after children. The team are proactive ensuring permanency plans are made for children and that wherever possible, they will seek to make plans for children or young people which

will enable their needs to be met without the need for them to remain in the looked after children system. This includes working with children who are placed with parents to safely revoke care orders; supporting children and young people returning home; or supporting applications from carers who wish to pursue Special Guardianship Orders

The social work workforce needs stability to improve social work confidence and skills in leading and delivering change with children and families. The improvement of social work confidence and skills will support a consistency of support for children and young people; it will improve the quality of planning for children and young people and support their preparation for independence. It will also ensure that where possible the team are being proactive in ensuring that children can be cared for safely outside of the care system through driving forward care order discharge and alternative order applications.

7.6 Adoption

Monmouthshire forms part of the collaborative arrangement of the South East Wales Adoption Service. The service, which operates across the Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Newport, sets out to meet the agenda of Welsh Governments Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Bill and the introduction of a National Adoption Service for Wales. The aim is to provide adoption, increase the number of available adopters, and provide good quality matching and support for those who require it. The newly established Welsh Adoption register aims to enable potential matches to be identified more quickly than if matches were only made at a local level. The development of the South East Wales Adoption Service has enhanced the existing good outcomes for children that were established by Monmouthshire's Adoption Team and will aim to increase the number of adopters and reduce the length of time children remain looked after.

7.7 Special Guardianship Orders

In line with the Family Justice review Monmouthshire has introduced a *Unified Assessment* when considering applications of family members who are identified as being potential carers within the Public Law Outline process.

The aim of the unified assessment is to prevent the duplication of assessments for families, reduce the timeliness of assessments being completed and to allow the opportunity to explore all possible permanence options for children at an early stage, and where possible to achieve permanence outside of the looked after children's system.

Wherever possible, existing carers will be supported to offer permanency to children in their care. It is essential that arrangements are in place to set out the financial and practical support available to carers to enable them to make applications.

When carers put the Local Authority on notice to apply for a special guardianship order it is important that applications are dealt with in a timely manner by the social worker to ensure completion of applications. However, this isn't always the case and opportunities are missed. This has now been strengthened through an additional post within the Placement and Support Team. This new post focuses on supporting carers who have either expressed an interest on becoming a special guardian, or supporting current special guardians through an annual review of their special guardianship order arrangements. However, due to recruitment and retention issues within the service over the last 12 months, the impact of this post has not been fully felt as yet.

7.8 Complex Care Panel

In accordance with *Towards a Stable Life and Brighter Future*, Monmouthshire holds a multi agency Complex Care Panel on a monthly basis (and more frequently if required) to ensure that the needs of children placed out of county are being met, and where appropriate that partner agencies are involved in the contracting and commissioning arrangements.

We will continue to develop working arrangements with partners to ensure that we are achieving the best outcomes for children and young people.

7.9 Consultation and Quality Assurance

It is essential that the voice of the child and the carer's views are sought and are used to support the services that are delivered and developed. Monmouthshire is

committed to developing a consultation and engagement strategy and ensuring that the voice of the child is central to everything it does.

In addition it is important to build on the existing consultation activities with groups of young people such as the Children in Care Council by including younger children.

It is important that Children's Services engages with the corporate engagement and participation officer to take forward consultation with families.

7.10 Corporate Parenting

Monmouthshire has a Corporate Parenting Panel and a Corporate Parenting Strategy. There is strong support from members to improve outcomes for children and young people whom the Local Authority has responsibility for.

The Corporate Parenting Panel provides a proactive approach to ensuring that all young people who are looked after and who have left care have access to the best opportunities. There is representation at the Corporate Parenting Panel from young people, carers, officers of the Local Authority and partner agencies.

7.11 Accommodation for Care Leavers

For many young people in foster care, their home with their foster carers is one which provides a stable, permanent placement, and one that the young people can remain in until they are able to move on to independence. For other young people, foster care may provide a short term transition to other provisions. Young people may either through circumstance or choice find themselves needing to move towards independence from foster or residential care between the ages of 16 to 18. The reasons may vary from the young persons needs being unable to be met through foster care, or the young person wishing to live independently. Post 18 will continue to have responsibility to support young people who have been previously looked after up to and on the 16th birthday

Historically the limited accommodation options available resulted in some young people who required support being accommodated in less than appropriate living options (e.g. bed and breakfast accommodation). However, currently there are no care leavers in bed and breakfast accommodation within Monmouthshire, and the

service is committed to ensuring that this type of accommodation if used is used only in emergency situations.

Monmouthshire has no framework arrangement with external providers to provide supported accommodation or supported living accommodation to young people. However, we do have spot contract arrangements with a number of providers who provide supported accommodation and supported living accommodation when needed. It is our intention to review these arrangements and develop a new service model which will assist in delivering the range of accommodation choices and support needs that young people require. It will ensure that young people have appropriate choices, and young people will not be accessing poorer quality housing due to the lack of options available.

7.12 Recruitment of Carers

Securing sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of children who are looked after is vital to delivering improved outcomes. Having the right placement at the right time is essential to ensuring placement stability.

Monmouthshire foster carers provide the opportunity for children and young people to remain living in their local communities which assists with potential plans for reunification, and enables children and young people to retain their friendships, education, and community activities, all of which promote placements being stable and successful.

There are many significant benefits in promoting the growth in local foster carers. Monmouthshire foster carers promote a strong sense of community pride and achievement in supporting local children and young people to remain in the communities they are from.

There is a strong competitive local market, with Monmouthshire fostering having to compete with large neighbouring local authorities and a high number of independent fostering agencies recruiting within its locality. Monmouthshire must ensure it has a marketing campaign which is visible, and offers an attractive package of support to foster carers in order to offer a competitive service.

The fostering service has a recruitment strategy which is reviewed on a regular basis and as a result the service has made a number of improvements this year. Monmouthshire's fostering service public facing internet site has been upgraded and improved, prospective applicants information packs have been reviewed and revised, advertising materials (banners, flags, posters etc.) have been reviewed and revised, monthly sessions at the 'HUBS' in Monmouth, Abergavenny, Caldicot & Usk have been set up and publicised, several newspaper articles and recruitment notices have been publicised, and a series of events were planned and completed for fostering fortnight across the County Borough. There are several events planned for the summer 2016 across the County Borough (i.e. local shows such as Monmouth, Chepstow, and Usk, as well as the Eisteddford)

Nevertheless Monmouthshire's fostering service needs to develop a fostering plan that is absolutely clear about the number of different types of foster placements that are needed to meet need. This will then be supported by a targeted marketing strategy to identify carers to meet the needs of children and young people and ensuring that it can meet a range of needs including supporting children with complex needs. As part of the marketing strategy the financial arrangements that support foster placements needs to be reviewed. The finance policy needs to ensure that it reflects the need to support placements for children and young people with complex needs, and that this links with the need to develop skills and competencies.

7.13 Key Areas to keeping Children and Young People Safe

Based on evidence gathered and the experience of the service already provided there are a number of key areas to focus on in keeping children and young people safe:

This will be achieved through:

- Having a clear strategy in place to keep children and young people safe by preventing need from escalating, responding appropriately to disadvantage and safeguarding concerns, and maintaining a focus on identifying the most appropriate placement setting;

- Developing and resourcing prevention and early intervention services to reduce need from escalating, and to support children and families out of statutory services;
- Reviewing the range of family support services Monmouthshire provides at all tiers of intervention to ensure that where possible children remain in their families and where they are in care that they can be effectively reunified;
- Strengthening our approach to practice and quality assurance by learning and implementing change from the findings from quality assurance exercises;
- Strengthening our collection, validation and presentation of high quality information and intelligence that gives insight into how effective the system as a whole is at protecting and supporting vulnerable children, as well as helping to change and improve practice;
- Strengthening the procedures for admission to care;
- Improving the opportunities for children and young people to have permanency outside of the care system by enabling them to be reunified with their birth or extended family where it is safe to do so, or by securing an adoption order or a special guardianship order to live with a permanent family;
- Expanding the availability of placements to meet a wide range of children within the Foster Team, in particular placements for teenagers, parent and babies, sibling groups and children with additional / challenging needs;
- Evaluating the BASE project with the aim of establishing if the model has been effective, and whether it can be expanded to all foster carers, adopters, and special guardians;
- Ensuring placement with parent agreements are updated in line with regulatory requirements and plans are monitored, and where possible that arrangements are made to discharge Care Orders and support families to meet children's needs without the requirement for them to remain looked after.

As a consequence of the above planned strategic intervention it's our intention to reduce the looked after children population (if safe to do so) by 25% (32 children) by 2021. This reduction is shown below in fig 18:

Fig 18 - Proposed LAC Reduction 2016 - 2021

Financial Year	Projected Number of LAC	LAC Reduction Per Year	Rate of LAC per 10,000 population
2015/16	129 (actual)		71
2016/17	125	4	71
2017/18	118	7	67
2018/19	110	8	62
2019/20	103	7	58
2020/21	97	6	54

Whenever it is safe to do so we will support children staying in their own family. However, when this is not possible we want to make sure that we provide the best possible service and have arrangements in place to ensure that we look after the right children in the right placements for the right length of time.

Part 5

8.0 Children, Young People and Families Care and Support Action Plan

Task No:	Specific Action	Target Date
1	Develop and put in place this strategy to support children, young people and their families.	August 2016
2	Review current distribution of resources in early help and intervention and explore rebalancing towards families with more complex needs and edge of care service.	September 2016
3	Identify the key needs and service development priorities in terms of supporting families with complex needs.	September 2016
4	Commission or develop services supporting families with complex needs including looking at potential partnerships with neighbouring services.	March 2017
5	Improve the opportunities for children and young people to have permanency outside of the care system by enabling them to be reunified with their birth or extended family where it is safe to do so, or by securing an adoption order or a special guardianship order to live with a permanent family;	On-going

Task No:	Specific Action	Target Date
6	Expand the availability of placements to meet a wide range of children within the Foster Team, in particular placements for teenagers, parent and babies, sibling groups and children with additional needs.	March 2017
7	Evaluate the BASE project with the aim of establishing if the model has been effective, and whether it can be expanded to all foster carers, adopters, and special guardians.	December 2016
8	Ensure there are robust and effective quality assurance functions fully implemented to support children, young people and their families.	November 2016
9	Review the current information and intelligence system to ensure it is able to collect high quality information and intelligence that gives insight into how effective the system as a whole is working to protect and support children.	December 2016

9.0 Children, Young People and Families Performance Table

Pledge / Vision	Objectives	Impact Measures
<p>In Monmouthshire we want the same things for children and young people that we look after as any good parent would want for their children.</p> <p>We want to ensure that all children and young people who are looked after are provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs.</p> <p>We want to achieve this by providing the best possible standards of care.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that children in care have good quality foster placements close to home, by increasing the number of local foster care placements to meet a range of needs. 2. To increase the number of children looked after secure permanency outside the care system by achieving permanence through adoption, special guardianship orders, or placements with family and friends. 3. To ensure that suitable placements are available to support young people with additional needs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. An increase in the number of children and young people who are looked after by in-house foster carers proportionate to the total looked after population. b. A reduction in the number of placement moves. c. A reduction in the average length of time children and young people spend in care. d. An increase in adoption orders and special guardianship orders made. e. An increase in children and young people being reunified with their birth or extended family.

Pledge / Vision	Objectives	Impact Measures
		f. A reduction in the number of children and young people in residential placements.
<p>We want to work successfully with children and young people, their parents and families, and partner agencies to help children and young people achieve the best outcomes.</p> <p>We want to ensure that children and young people achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures</p>	<p>4. To ensure there is strong collaborative working in place between all agencies working with children, young people and their families.</p> <p>5. To provide early multi agency intervention and support to prevent children and young people becoming looked after.</p> <p>6. To review current distribution of resources in early help and intervention and explore rebalancing towards families with more complex needs and edge of care services.</p>	<p>g. Evidence of strong collaborative working between all partners.</p> <p>h. Effective services in place which support families with significant problems, children and young people on the edge of care, and rehabilitation of children and young people from care, which have been developed in collaboration with partners.</p> <p>i. Reduction in the number of looked after children.</p>

Pledge / Vision	Objectives	Impact Measures
	<p>7. To identify the key needs and service development priorities in terms of supporting families with complex needs.</p> <p>8. To commission and develop services supporting families with complex needs including potential partnerships with neighbouring services.</p>	
<p>We want to ensure that achieving the best for children and young people is at the centre of everything we do.</p> <p>We want children and young people to be healthy and happy and we want them to feel valued and loved.</p> <p>We want children and young people to enjoy learning and we want them to grow</p>	<p>9. To ensure there is a clearly defined approach to social work practice in place that is understood and implemented by all relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>10. To develop a model of social work practice for the service which details what is expected of practitioners in terms of direct work</p>	<p>j. Outcomes of audits to show that care planning and reviewing arrangements are helping children and young people achieve outcomes.</p> <p>k. Evidence that the views of children and young people have been actively sought and are used to inform their reviews and plans</p>

Pledge / Vision	Objectives	Impact Measures
<p>into successful adults who can have positive relationships, positive futures, become responsible citizens and achieve their goals and ambitions.</p>	<p>with children, young people and their with families.</p> <p>11. To improve social work confidence and skills in leading and delivering change with children, young people and their families.</p> <p>12. To ensure that all children and young people have a robust care plan which identifies their needs and is reviewed regularly</p> <p>13. To ensure that all children and young people understand and are fully involved in any plans that are made and that they have copies of plans where appropriate.</p>	<p>l. Timeliness of Looked After Children Reviews.</p> <p>m. Reduction in the number of Looked After Children.</p>

APPENDIX 2



Future Generations

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Craig Williams Phone no: 07855 112814 E-mail: : CraigWilliams@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal The Children, Young People and Families Strategy articulates what Monmouthshire County Council needs to do to support Children, Young people and their Families in Need within the County.
Name of Service Children's Services	Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed 14 th June 2016

1. **Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The Children, Young People and Families Strategy will have a positive impact as it articulates a number of actions which will ensure that resources are effectively and efficiently used within Monmouthshire (e.g. reviewing current distribution of resources in early help and intervention / commission and develop services supporting families with	N/A


Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	complex needs / supporting children and young people to have permanency outside the care system / expand the availability of placements to children and young people)	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	N / A	
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, requires local authorities to review the care and support they provide, while providing a range of services designed to promote wellbeing and prevent the need for care and support. The vision contained within the Children, Young People and Families Strategy is for children and young people to be healthy, happy, and feel valued and loved and grow into successful adults who can have positive relationships, positive futures and become responsible citizens. For example it is hoped that if foster carers are supported to maintain placements and meet the needs of children more effectively, then children will experience more stable placements, have improved emotional well-being, learn better and make the transition to adulthood more successfully.	N/A

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	In addition, foster carers will become more resilient, enjoy better emotional well-being and are more likely to remain as Monmouthshire foster carers.	
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>The values and principles contained within the Children, Young People and Families Strategy are to ensure that we find safe and appropriate ways to work with families to help them meet their children's needs, including their need to be protected from harm. We will, whenever it is safe to do so, always look for ways to support children and young people to remain with their birth family or extended family and avoid the need for children and young people to become looked after. We will always seek to look after children within the boundaries of Monmouthshire in order to maintain their relationship with their family, peers and to enable them to continue to maintain their links with education, health and other services that may be involved with them unless there is a reason why this would not be in their best interest. For example Monmouthshire foster carers provide the opportunity for children and young people to remain living in their local communities which assists with potential plans for reunification, and enables children</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	and young people to retain their friendships, education, and community activities, all of which promote placements being stable and successful.	
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	There are many significant benefits in promoting the growth in local foster carers. Monmouthshire foster carers promote a strong sense of community pride and achievement in supporting local children and young people to remain in the communities they are from.	N/A
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	An action within the Children, Young People and Families Strategy is to expand the availability of placements to meet a wide range of children within the Foster Team, in particular placements for teenagers, parent and babies, sibling groups and children with additional needs. This also means promoting and protecting the culture, heritage and Welsh language by expanding and proving placements to meet these particular needs / well being goals.	N/A
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	An overarching priority within the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy is to ensure that we will find safe and appropriate ways to work with families to help them meet their children's needs, including	N/A

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>their need to be protected from harm. We will, whenever it is safe to do so, always look for ways to support children and young people to remain with their birth family or extended family and avoid the need for children and young people to become looked after. But when children and young people are unable to live with their own family a permanent stable family such as an adoptive placement or a family based foster placement which meets their needs will be sought and secured.</p>	

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?


Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.	If not, what has been done to better meet this principle?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>We have set out our commitment within the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy to use the resources afforded to us by the Council effectively to support children, young people, and their families within the Councils allocation. This is within the context of the 3 year service and financial plan which sets out a sustainable service and financial plan for children’s services, combining improvements in social work practice, workforce development and commissioning. This strategy is the key document to deliver those improvements in commissioning and provides an action plan to not only support children, young people and families on the edge of care, but to actively reunite children and young people with their families by reducing the look after children population over a 4 year period.</p>	<p>N/A</p>





Working together with other partners to deliver objectives

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force on the 6th of April 2016, is the legislative underpinning for changes in the way that local authorities and their partners work with individual families. Within the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy we outline how we will continue to strengthen commissioning and partnership arrangements to ensure that the services we use are the ones that best meet the needs of children, young people and their families, and will best help families to be able to become successful and independent. We are also going to identify the key needs and service development priorities in terms of supporting families with complex needs, and therefore commission, re-commission or develop these services, to include looking at potential partnerships with neighbouring services. We will also develop a common shared model covering the full Windscreen of Need, and the role the different partners play within in it. This will require a redesign of our front door processes and decision making arrangements while developing a clear and shared understanding of thresholds for different service responses. We will continue to strengthen commissioning and partnership arrangements to ensure that the services we use are the ones that best meet the needs of children, young people and their families, and will best help families to be able to become successful and independent. We will continue to develop working arrangements with partners to

N/A

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.	If not, what has been done to better meet this principle?
	ensure that we are achieving the best outcomes for children and young people.	
 <p data-bbox="394 611 568 783">Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p data-bbox="215 799 349 823">Involvement</p>	<p data-bbox="600 411 1346 1002">Within the Children, Young People and Families Strategy we outline when there is a need for interventions with families we ensure this is undertaken in a coordinated way, and a way that ensures that families are fully involved in planning. The strategy outlines that the voice of the child and the carer's views are sought and are used to support the services that are delivered and developed. Monmouthshire is committed to developing a consultation and engagement strategy and ensuring that the voice of the child is central to everything it does. In addition it is important to build on the existing consultation activities with groups of young people such as the Children in Care Council by including younger children.</p>	<p data-bbox="1368 663 2063 767">It is important that Children's Services engages with the corporate engagement and participation officer to take forward consultation with families.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.	If not, what has been done to better meet this principle?
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Within the Children, Young People and Families Strategy we discuss how we will work successfully with children and young people, their parents and families, and partner agencies to help children and young people achieve the best outcomes. We will ensure that children and young people achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures. We will ensure that achieving the best for children and young people is at the centre of everything we do. We will safely support children to achieve the best possible outcomes for them within their families, recognising this is the best environment for the majority of children and young people to develop and achieve their outcomes. We will ensure that children and young people who are unable to live safely within their own families are looked after and provided with the best possible care and support in placements that meet their needs. To enable to do this we have developed an action plan which articulates the actions we must take and the resources we must develop to ensure that the needs of children and young people are appropriately met.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? Describe how.	If not, what has been done to better meet this principle?
 <p data-bbox="389 571 562 815">Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p data-bbox="600 300 1346 1091">Within the Children, Young People and Families Strategy we outline our priority to ensure that we will find safe and appropriate ways to work with families to help them meet their children's needs, including their need to be protected from harm. It outlines whenever it is safe to do so, we will always look for ways to support children and young people to remain with their birth family or extended family and avoid the need for children and young people to become looked after. The strategy further outlines when children are unable to remain within their own families we will find the next best alternative which a permanent stable family such as an adoptive placement and a family based foster placement with the aim of returning children and young people to their birth family when it is safe to do so. The strategy as a whole demonstrates how we will meet sustainable development by supporting children, young people and their families and how it may / or may not impact on other organisations.</p>	<p data-bbox="1697 692 1756 719">N/A</p>

3. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below. For more detailed information on the protected characteristics, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Standards that apply to Monmouthshire Council please follow this link: <http://hub/corporatedocs/Equalities/Forms/AllItems.aspx> or contact Alan Burkitt on 01633 644010 or alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children and young people we work with by ensuring they achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children and young people we work which includes children and young people with disabilities with by ensuring they achieve in their childhood, and that they can be successful in their futures. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing a range of services to support the needs of children, young people with disabilities.	N/A	N/A
Gender reassignment	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Marriage or civil partnership	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Race	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A
Religion or Belief	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sex	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of children, young people and their families	N/A	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Welsh Language	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy has been developed to impact positively on all children, young people and their families we work with. This will be achieved through reviewing, identifying and commissioning / developing the right services to support the needs of all children, young people and their families that we work with.	N/A	N/A

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities? For more information please see the guidance <http://hub/corporatedocs/Democratic%20Services/Safeguarding%20Guidance.docx> and for more on Monmouthshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy see <http://hub/corporatedocs/SitePages/Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.aspx>

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy outlines the key areas to keeping children and young people safe by preventing need from escalating, responding appropriately to disadvantage and safeguarding concerns, and maintaining a focus on identifying the most appropriate placement setting.	N/A	N/A
Corporate Parenting	The Children, Young People and their Families Strategy discusses the Councils corporate parenting responsibilities and how the Council currently responds to those duties and how it will respond in the future to those responsibilities to support children, young people and their families.	N/A	N/A

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

The evidence and data that has informed the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy was:

1. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
2. Cordis Bright Report – ‘Why do local authorities with similar levels of needs, have different looked after children populations’ 2013
3. Statswales.gov.uk – Quantitative data on population, services users, comparative data across Wales
4. Local Government Data Unit – Qualitative data on service users
5. Service user data from PLANT
6. Financial data – Agresso
7. Cabinet – Business Cases Paper - May 2015
8. Children’s Services Framework – Windscreen of Need – IPC Draft Report 2016
9. Children Services Management Consultation on perceptions / views of services / performance data (qualitative data)

6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

The Future Generations Evaluations Form has helped the Council understand the positive and negative impacts of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategy proposal and has evidenced that the Council has paid due regard to equality and sustainable development issues within the strategy proposal.

7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. MONITORING: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	14.06.2017
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9. VERSION CONTROL: The Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Children and Young People Select Committee	07.07.2016	