

Powys County Council Director of Social Services Annual Report 2017 - 2018

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1. Introduction

This annual report is set in a very different context to other local authorities in Wales, and in many ways, is a new start for us in Powys.

Over the past 12 months we have been responding to a very challenging situation following an independent review of both our children's and adults' services. This report sets out the challenges and how we intend to respond, with leadership and purpose, positive actions, and resources.

We know that Powys County Council needs to change and improve. In the delivery of children's social services, we have fully accepted the findings of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) (previously known as the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)) report published in October 2017 and the intervention by Welsh Government. They found that we had failed to meet the high standards children and families in the county should expect and deserve. The report raised serious issues about how we provide Children's Services for the most vulnerable children in Powys; delivering improvements requires all the Council to make this a priority.

The Council is committed to safeguarding children and adults in Powys. Our programme and plans have been approved by the Cabinet and by the Assurance Board, and it will provide direction for deep and sustainable change and improvement to services for children, families and vulnerable adults in Powys.

The programme will build on the strengths of our staff who have been resilient and committed in the face of many challenges. We recognise that, to be effective, Social Services must be able to call on a wide range of corporate support services and so we will drive improvements across the whole Council working collaboratively to ensure that the service can deliver its duties.

The improvements are already underway across all our services for Children and Adults. We will ensure that we have in place services of which everyone can be proud where we can provide a safety net for those in harm's way, responsive services for people to achieve the best possible outcomes that they need, and good advice and support to improve the well-being of people in Powys.

In leading this agenda, we know that we need to build resilient communities, helping people to be as independent as they can, ensuring that as peoples' needs change so too can we in being more responsive and agile in responding to those needs.

I'd like to thank all our staff for what they have done with us so far. We know we are on an improvement journey, and I am confident that together we will deliver our overall strategy of a healthy and caring Powys.

Councillor Rosemarie Harris
Leader of Powys County Council

2. Director's Summary of Performance

These past 12 months have been extremely challenging for social services in Powys and for our Council. We have gone through an external inspection of both our adults and children's services which have highlighted several failings in the way services are planned and delivered, and as a consequence we have been working to put things right.

As an organisation, we have been achieving important milestones in our improvement journey since the inspection of Children's Services in 2017 – both those set for us and those services we have identified and planned. It has taken a considerable amount of collective effort and working collaboratively across the Council and with Partners. In terms of outcomes, there have been real benefits to some children and families and adults who use services. However, it is still early and some of our work to date has confirmed that we are seeking to make progress from a very low starting point in important areas such as professional practice and corporate ownership of service priorities.

On the other hand, there have been encouraging signs about our capacity to deliver positive change at pace while dismantling some of the obstacles that could get in the way. We can begin to demonstrate that Social Services are firmly established as a political and corporate priority and that good foundations are being laid. Again, this is tempered by realism about how far we need to travel. In adults' services we have been willing to learn from previous inspections and from best practice across Wales in applying the Social Services and Well-being Act along with other legislative requirements. I am pleased to report that that we have worked hard to ensure that:

- Individuals are engaged in a "What Matters" conversation at an early stage.
- Social care practice is becoming grounded in a more asset/strengths-based model.
- Infoengine and its ongoing development have extended the reach of information, advice and assistance services (IAA) significantly in many rural parts of Wales, including Powys, giving people access to more information.
- We are better at sharing information with our Safeguarding Team and Community Connectors working in the same environment as the information, advice and assessment teams
- Additional funding, in particular the Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund has allowed us to commission pilot projects and develop new services which are more outcome focused, for the most part in the third sector. This approach to the IAA service encourages diversity and respect for communities through use of a wide range of third sector organisations, with an understanding of the local culture and requirements.

Looking ahead, we have produced a work programme to improve our children's, adult services and all our services over the next few years, and this annual Director's report is one way that we can be accountable to people in Powys for the steps we will make in each year to reach our overall aims of:

- **Supporting families** to stay together and reduce the need for children to be looked after by the Local Authority, by focusing on services which provide timely help, build on family's strengths and prevent greater problems arising.
- **Managing risk** confidently and effectively when providing support to families

where children and young people need to be safeguarded or they are judged to be on the 'edge of care' by making sure that their needs are accurately assessed and met effectively, with positive outcomes for them. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by making private arrangements within their wider family networks so that children become looked after by the council only where this is clearly in their best interests.

- **Securing a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** for children who are looked after, adults who require care and support and their carers to meet the diverse range of their individual needs and circumstances;
- **Giving children and young people clearly planned journeys through care and into adulthood** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements and exit the care system with good prospects for improved life chances.
- **Supporting adults and carers who require care and support**, where timely assessment and the right level of care and support is available to adults who require this support
- **Providing support to adults** by making sure their needs are accurately assessed and met effectively, with positive outcomes for them. This will be in a strengths based approach which will involve re-connecting with their community networks and supporting carers to continue to care for their relative. Risk management needs to take into account the capacity of the individual to make specific decisions in terms of their lives, and decisions need to be made in compliance with legislation in terms of best interest where deemed appropriate;
- **Promoting independence and self-care wherever possible**, to work alongside partners, especially health, to ensure that individuals with complex care needs have the assessment they require under legislation and ensure that appropriate provision is available to meet their needs if required and wherever possible the use of technology is used to mitigate risk, promote independence and enable individuals to remain in their own home for as long as possible.

Everyone has worked hard over these recent difficult few months. We have accepted the CIW recommendations from inspections, we have developed plans and have invested appropriately to support improvements to service delivery. Thanks to the hard work of staff, corporate colleagues, partner organisations and the political support we are beginning to deliver some significant improvements albeit that there is still much to do to reach the standards we aspire to for the residents of Powys.

Alison Bulman
Director of Social Services

3. How Are People Shaping Our Services?

Communicating and engaging with the public is important to how we shape the services people need and collectively evaluate how well we perform in delivering care and support to those who need it. Engaging and consulting on service development and delivery is crucial to delivering what the people of Powys require. We are eager to hear about the services we already deliver and how we can support adults and children better. This is important for all our services and those who access them. In some areas we have done well to engage adults but need to improve how children are able to voice their opinions to the decisions that affect them.

Adult Social Care specifically developed an Engagement Strategy during the year and it is now in its final period of consultation prior to implementation.

We have made good progress towards gaining a good understanding of residents' needs to inform our plans for service improvement. Considerable engagement work has been undertaken in developing the Health and Social Care Strategy, the Powys Well-being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment, along with our individual integrated thematic commissioning strategies.

In particular, in Adult Services, service users have been involved in strategic reviews such as the Review of Day Time Opportunities for Older People, in contract monitoring and in our service user forums. We have developed and consulted with stakeholders on an engagement strategy for adult social care and this has recently been finalised in order to implement fully during 2018.

We have opportunities for young people to reflect and inform on service development i.e. we have a young people's safeguarding group and have had presentations by young people to Powys Safeguarding Group. We have re-launched the Corporate Parenting Group during this year and plan to have more engagement with young people going forward.

However, a Child Practice Review, completed in January 2018, identified several key areas for learning which have helped to shape our improvement programme and plan for children and young people. During 2018 we will create a new Charter for Children in Powys in conjunction with other agencies.

The Child Practice Reviewers met with a group of young people, to help gain a clearer understanding of their experiences as a young person in care, leaving care or getting ready to transition into adulthood. All the young people spoke of their very real fears about leaving care and gaining their independence. They wanted their corporate parents and current carers to look after them as they would their own children - being caring and caring enough to challenge them.

At a corporate level, the Council itself has focused on developing a better understanding of how residents see social care contributing to wellbeing outcomes, gathering information through our Community Connectors, for example, who are a good source of local intelligence.

At a service level, our internally and externally commissioned services collect compliments, comments and complaints and report these to us on a regular basis for us to discuss them with our service providers

The following table shows how many complaints and compliments were received during the year:

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Compliments
Children Services	97	8	9
Adults Services	85	5	45
Total	182	11	54

What are our priorities for next year and why?

As part of our overall plan to deliver a more effective council across all our services we will:

- prioritise residents and communities
- ensure residents are heard through ongoing communication and dialogue to involve them in decisions that affect them, and for us to understand the impact of what we are trying to do
- co-produce a new Charter for Children in Powys in conjunction with other agencies.
- ensure communities are engaged in a timely and meaningful manner which informs decision making and also helps us to understand how “what matters” to people informs our service development
- be open and transparent and communicate in plain Welsh and English
- publish information in an accessible way
- County and Community Councillors are well informed and actively engage with residents.

4. Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

(a) Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

Understanding “what matters” in our conversations with people is crucially important in placing the individual at the centre of what we do and how they are engaged in defining their own outcomes. This is a golden thread that runs throughout our services, and is important in understanding one of the guiding principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

What did we plan to do last year?

In last year’s Annual Report we set out a number of priority actions to support how we can work with people to help them achieve their outcomes, namely that we would:

- Build upon our current prevention and early help services
- Carry out a 24 month pilot of a 24/7 floating support community warden service which would provide rapid response to lifeline alarms, based on the successful *Home Based Support* model developed in Rhayader.

- Ensure that we would have nine Community Connectors in Powys with good links to the voluntary sectors, to help signpost people to a range of advice and support.

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

- We worked with the 3rd sector to develop our preventative services.
- We developed home based support services in East Radnorshire with the 3rd sector and in Llanidloes and Llandrindod. These early intervention and prevention pilots will be evaluated at the end of the second year.
- In association with the Powys Teaching Health Board we commissioned Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations to employ nine Community Connectors.
- We worked with Powys People Direct (PPD) to develop access to the service and information advice and assistance.

Our aim is to ensure straightforward and timely access to good quality and accurate information so that individuals can make informed decisions about how to achieve what matters to them. We have used our single point of access, Powys People Direct (PPD), both to provide information, advice and assistance and also to receive social care enquiries from the public and professionals. Enquiries have been responded to online and by telephone, and to meet the needs of children, families and adults for a timely and proportionate early contact response, we have increased capacity in PPD.

However, we recognise that we have not been able to respond to calls as effectively as we would have liked and, therefore, we need to undertake significant work in 2018 to support call answering in a timely manner and to ensure that those requiring support receive it swiftly.

During 2017/18 1,327 adults contacted us for information, advice and assistance. Of these individuals who contacted us in the first half of the year 90% have not contacted us again within six months

The council is always seeking to improve the way it communicates with residents, with up to date information and advice that is easily accessible for all. There have been significant changes over the last decade in how we communicate with our public, and digital technology has enabled and challenged us to do things differently. You can now access up to date information via a desktop, tablet or smart phone pretty much wherever you are via all kinds of apps including YouTube, Twitter, Facebook etc, but is it truly accessible for all?

As a rural county in mid Wales, we offer a broad range of information in both Welsh and English via our website and printed materials, however this didn't address the third language here in the UK, British Sign Language.

British Sign Language (BSL) was recognised by the government as a language in its own right in March 2003. BSL is the first or preferred language of an estimated 87,000 Deaf people in the UK. In Wales, around 4,000 people are deaf. BSL is a visual-gestural language, with its own grammar and principles, which are completely different from the grammatical structure of Welsh and English.

Our aim was to improve the way deaf people access information in Powys by interpreting a number of social care pages with a trained interpreter. The initial scope

was to interpret just social care information as the project was part funded by the Delivering Transformation Grant from Welsh Government. However it was felt the interpretation work should go much wider to include information that Powys residents are most likely to want interpreted into BSL. So a quick look over the web analytics identified our most visited webpages, these included; recycling and rubbish, applying for a job, applying for benefits; and other important pages in relation to safeguarding.

The Active Offer

In order to implement the Active Offer effectively Powys County Council has:

- Amended systems and processes to enable staff to ascertain and record service users' first language and other languages spoken. These are mandatory questions at point of referral:
 - *“What languages do you speak?”*
 - *“What is your first language?”*
- Ascertained and recorded staff's linguistic skills in Welsh.

Our next steps are to:

- Promote the allocation of Welsh speaking staff to work with Welsh speaking service users where possible.

In order to attain a baseline understanding of current provision and to be able to measure growth or decline in the provision we have adopted the following measure from June 2018:

- Percentage of Welsh Speaking service users who receive an assessment from a Welsh speaking member of staff (ALTE Level^[1] 4+).

Whilst the baseline data demonstrates that there is significant improvement required, this measure will be used to promote maximisation of the active offer and drive forward improvement in this area. The long term aim is to provide the Active Offer to at least 90% of Welsh speaking service users.

All Service plans and strategies, including joint Health and social care strategies, reflect Welsh language needs and Planning/Commissioning for delivery of Services.

Welsh language service provision is included in all new contract specifications, service level agreements and grant funding processes. This is regularly contract monitored.

Workforce

The Council has adopted a revised Welsh Language and Recruitment Policy which places an expectation on managers to assess requirements for individual posts and teams with respect to linguistic skills. Frontline services should aim to reflect the language profile of the community served within its workforce.

In order to achieve this we have removed the essential\desirable criteria within job descriptions and adverts and have adopted the Association of Language Testers Europe (ALTE) Framework (1 -5 linguistic skills) for all posts. If appointees do not have

the minimum level 1 skill, they are required to undertake a 10 hour online welsh language course as part of their induction.

We are working in partnership with the Health Board to become the pilot site for the National Centre for Learning Welsh to Adults' web based linguistic skills assessment software.

We have supported approximately 8 individuals during 2017 to undertake the Intensive Working Welsh training. One student working within the Single Point of Access for Social Care has successfully completed the training and is now able to answer calls in Welsh to service users contacting Social Services. We are producing a film to share on You Tube to celebrate her success and to promote the training.

We continue to meet in partnership at the Powys Promotion Challenge and Support Group which recently received a Special Commendation for Leadership at the More than Just Words Showcase Event in 2017.

BrowseAloud is software that turns text on the internet into spoken word in any language. This software was procured and implemented in 2018. All information is available in Welsh and English by default and all third sector contracts place bilingual information requirements on providers.

An online database developed by Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO) called InfoEngine provides comprehensive information on community support networks, including the third sector. InfoEngine is used by both Children's and Adult Social Care staff to share information with the public and it is freely available online for those seeking information, with active links from the Council's own website. Through PAVO, the Council has commissioned computer programmers to develop a link between InfoEngine and Dewis, the national well-being database, so that information from both systems is regularly shared and updated. Providing access to information is really important if we are to give people the opportunity to help themselves by access what they need.

Case Study

Client has lived in Powys moved here from out of county. His wife passed away several years ago. He is very lonely and would like some company and a friend.

Connector involvement – what mattered to the client?

During the initial phone conversation the client admitted he was struggling a bit with being on his own and trying to sort things out. He had received a bill which he hadn't paid so debt collectors had been in touch. His debt issues had started after he was unable to pay for his wife's funeral. The connector contacted Welfare Rights who said they had exhausted the options they felt were available to him. The connector introduced him to the idea of *Floating Support* and he agreed to a referral to Compass. Compass made several visits and supported client to apply for an affordable loan through the Cambrian Credit Union.

During their visits they saw how exhausted the client became when preparing food and climbing the stairs to his second floor home. They will be working with him to look at alternative housing options. Meanwhile the connector referred him to Powys Befriending Services for their lunch club. He has attended recently for the first time and was chatting away to the others in the room and is keen to keep attending. During a follow up call

with the client, he said that he was overdue a check-up of his pacemaker as he was unable to make the appointment at Hereford Hospital because he had no way of getting there. The connector introduced him to Community Transport and left him with details of this service and of the Non-Emergency Patient Transport for times when this might be an option.

Client is managing much better at home now and Compass continue to offer support. The stress and concerns about the outstanding bill and finances are now alleviated with the support of the Cambrian Credit Union. The client is able to access the Powys Befriending lunch club, this not only provides the client with a regular hot meal but enables the client to meet people and engage with people to combat his loneliness.

(PAVO Community Connectors Report Quarter 4 2017-18)

One of our priorities has been to build the capacity of our Community Connectors, in partnership with our local health board. During 2017/18 the Council commissioned PAVO to employ Community Connectors who are based within multi-disciplinary teams in the wider community and support PPD on a rota basis. The Community Connectors provide information, advice and assistance, support individuals to gain access to their local community facilities, as well as working with communities/local groups to ensure that activities are accessible. Their roles continue to develop but the evidence from case studies demonstrates that they are facilitating independent community living and that many individuals do not require formal social care as a consequence of being signposted to local community-based options as part of the assessment process.

Measure	FY 16/17	FY17/18
Community Connector referrals	1,196 -	1,710 +43%
Percentage of people that said Community Connectors helped to deliver 'what mattered' to them	-	85%

Adult Social Care is also striving to adopt good practice in terms of listening and giving carers time to participate in assessments in their own right, along with providing a timely response to assist them in their caring role. There have been delays in carers assessments being undertaken in some areas because of staffing capacity. However, the data is currently showing a significant increase in the percentage of carers being offered an assessment which is up to almost 95%. However, we recognise that there is more we should be doing to identify carers.

Where required, specialist assessments such as mental capacity act assessments, sensory impairment/deaf-blind assessments or Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessments are undertaken either as part of the assessment or in conjunction with it to ensure client engagement and to ascertain the care and support required. The Emergency Duty Team, which operates out of hours, provides proportionate assessments depending on identified needs for those in crisis or emergency situations.

The ability to provide timely assessments and reviews has varied across the county, reflecting recruitment and retention challenges in some areas of Powys. The Community Team supporting older people in the south of Powys for example has been affected by staffing instability. We have been relying on agency social workers and occupational therapists. In the short-term, an external organisation has been commissioned to undertake assessments on behalf of the Council to eliminate the backlog of work and this is having a positive impact. Annual reviews in adult services remains a challenge but we have started to make some progress in delivering this area

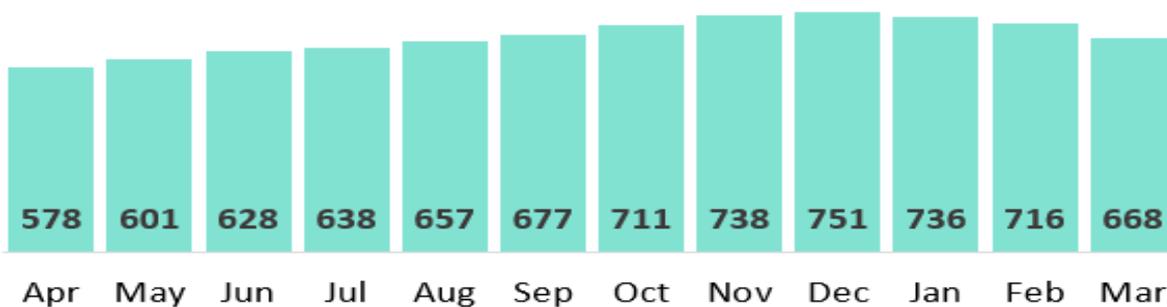
of performance. The Council has been working closely with Powys Teaching Health Board to manage winter pressures in adopting a team approach to dealing with urgent assessments, supporting flow within both hospital and community systems.

There is evidence of significant co-production in care and support planning, especially with people who use direct payments, but reviews do not always demonstrate involvement by all relevant parties or challenge whether the services provided will achieve the best outcome possible. The introduction of controlled workloads and investment in staff will enable a change in practice and appropriate support and training will be provided to ensure this happens. Team management structures have been designed to ensure structured and timely oversight of decision-making in care planning and review processes but capacity issues have made this more problematic in some areas.

For those children in need of care and support plans, there are many good examples of outcome-focused care planning which consistently reflects the outcomes of the assessment and the views of the individuals and their families/advocates. People are actively involved in planning and delivery of their care and support and they are supported to identify what matters to them and how they might achieve their personal wellbeing outcomes. These outcomes are clearly described and the actions to achieve them are identified.

We have seen an increase in the numbers of Children who require care and support plans since April 2017. However, this has been steadily reducing since the high of 751 in December.

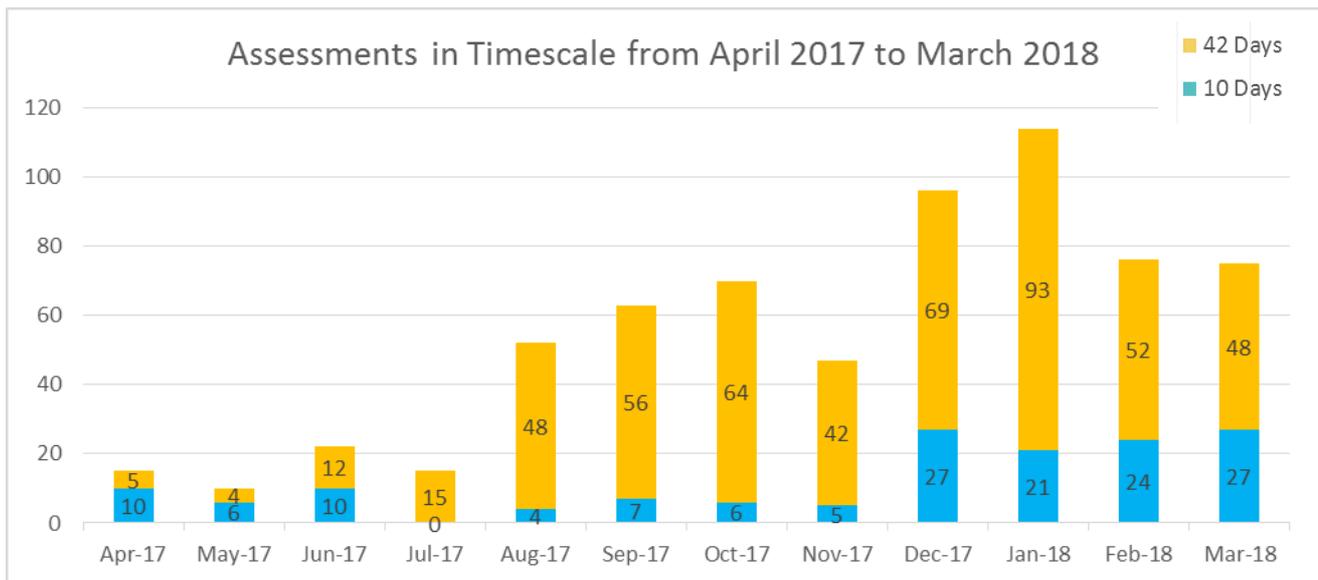
No. of Children with a Care & Support plan since April '17



The Council is determined to achieve 100% compliance for completion of assessments for Children within the statutory timescale of 42 days. However, noting that it is coming from a very low base of 53% completion in April, May and June 2017. In January 2018 we saw a significant improvement to 72% of assessments being completed within timescale and this has increased further to 86% for February 2018, and 96% for March 2018. This takes us past the 90% target set for March 2018.

It should be recognised that during 2017/18 we were above the Welsh average for 2016/17 of 90.8%, but accept that there is still considerable room for improvement. The Service continues to make every effort to deliver its aspirations of 100% compliance. This is monitored by the Leader of the Council on a fortnightly basis and exceptions are challenged to be understood.

The table below shows the number of assessments completed within either 10 days or 42 days.



Children who have care and support plans receive regular visits from their social worker. All looked after children are placed in appropriate regulated settings and receive statutory visits from their social workers. All children’s cases are allocated to qualified social workers.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

As part of our priority setting for 2018/19 we recognise that there are a range of challenges to address and have identified the following priorities, we will:

- Address the difficulties in recruiting to specific posts (including the Contact and Safeguarding Specialist Social Worker). Developing a workforce strategy which will enable us to support, develop and retain our existing workforce. Look to provide a flexible and agile working environment. Provide consistent and strong leadership across the service.
- Review our access arrangements promoting self-service and channel shift wherever appropriate. Ensuring we have the right model to meet the demands on the service. Promoting a culture of getting it right the first time for people who contact us.
- Review the end to end customer journey/experience and ensure that each step adds value and that our systems are lean and agile.
- Streamline data collection as not all the information is in one place and the IAA service needs greater co-ordination across third sector organisations.
- Work with professionals to develop their understanding and respect for the importance of IAA in enabling the local population to make informed decisions and take personal responsibility for their health and wellbeing.

- Address the need to build a culture which routinely meets the expectations of the Social Services and Well-being Act and other legislation which encourages co-production and reduced dependence.
- Address the challenges of the WCCIS system and IT in terms of inputting data, version control and building reports.
- Examine how best to respond to demographic pressures in respect of significantly older adults who are generating additional demand.

(b) Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

What did we plan to do last year?

In the 2017/18 Directorate Plan we stated that we would:

- Engage people who use services in their evaluation and development

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

As a Council we have a range of responsibilities to protect and promote the physical mental health and emotional well-being of the children in our care, ensuring that they can be supported through community mental health services when needed and access services through local dentists and GPs. In the year 2017/18 the percentage of children seen by a registered dentist within three months of becoming looked after was 60.32% (60.0% in 2016/17) and 77.9% (68.6% in 2016/17) of children registered with a GP. In the past 12 months we have continued to support children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing through the joint-commissioning of counselling services for young people.

Early intervention and preventative services are at the heart of the Adult Social Care strategy and the development of our joint Health and Care Strategy. Ensuring that Children have the best start in life and working to protect and promote people's physical health, mental health and well-being which requires flexibility and innovation in providing services early enough to make a difference.

Alongside the Community Connectors, the Council also provides or commissions a range of services to promote and support peoples' health and wellbeing:

Reablement

This service supports individuals who have recently experienced a loss of function where they need support to either regain or adapt to become as independent as possible. The evidence suggests that a high proportion (over 70%) of the people who receive a reablement service subsequently do not require ongoing care provision or have fewer care needs, therefore helping people to be more independent.

Home Based Support

A 24/7 rapid response technology enabled care (TEC) and floating support service have been merged. We are also able to provide short periods of domiciliary care to those who need some support to get back on their feet. This is currently being piloted and evaluated in three areas across Powys - Llanidloes, Presteigne and Rhayader (where the current service is being extended to include Llandrindod Wells).

Home Based Respite / Sitting Service

Carers advise that sitting services enable informal carers to undertake regular tasks while continuing to provide care and support and enables independent living/sustainable caring.

Befriending Services

These are used to support vulnerable and isolated individuals to access community activities with a trusted company for a short period of time until they are comfortable and confident in attending alone or with newly-made friends. In an evaluation report commissioned by PAVO of its Befriending Service, older people in Crickhowell described a positive impact on reducing loneliness and isolation.

Community transport services

Mobility is essential to independent living in a sparsely populated and large county. Adult Social Care financially supports a number of schemes across the county to ensure that vulnerable and disabled individuals can engage in community activities.

Community-based dementia support

This is provided by a newly-established local Powys wide service called Dementia Matters Powys (DMP). It works with communities to set up their own self-help groups based on the 'Meeting Centre' model which is designed to provide early support to those who have dementia and their carers. DMP also supports the broader development work of the Alzheimer Society in establishing dementia friendly communities.

The Supporting People Funds have enabled community early intervention on a significant scale, which integrates with Adult Social Care. Of the 1627 people reported as receiving support in the period from July-October 2017, 675 have been on a settled even keel and haven't needed to make demands for active support.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will:

- Aim to put in place a more uniform approach to integrated assessment, requiring a strong commitment by both the Council and the health board to improve how we address peoples' physical, mental health and emotional needs
- Continue to deliver progress on securing a more sustainable workforce at the frontline.

(c) Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

What did we plan to do last year?

During 2017/18 we said we would:

- Deliver benefits of older people's integrated care teams; rolling out to next planned areas
- Deliver benefits of integration children's disability service

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

The Safeguarding Team is located within PPD at the front end of service provision, ensuring a consistent approach to dealing with enquires. We have experienced staff on hand to support contact officers to screen information, with all enquiries forwarded to experienced designated lead managers. This screening is an essential component in the single point of access. It follows the All Wales Procedures and facilitates a proportionate response to enquiries with individuals who are at risk of moving into the safeguarding arena, as evidenced by the positive feedback from the "light touch review" of safeguarding in 2017.

There has been renewed emphasis within the Council on corporate safeguarding. Given the complex legislative context, it is essential that safeguarding activity undertaken by different parts of the Council is underpinned by an explicit and comprehensive policy which is well understood by all those who may need to apply it. This helps to ensure clear strategic direction, greater effectiveness and strong lines of accountability as well as common standards and transparent practice.

The Council has adopted a Corporate Safeguarding Policy which:

- sets out the steps that the Council will take to protect and safeguard residents at risk; and
- provides guidance for all Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers on what to do if they suspect a child or vulnerable adult may be experiencing harm or is at risk of harm.

Our Corporate Safeguarding Group will monitor the delivery of the policy, and it will be chaired by the Chief Executive and will include the relevant Cabinet members. In taking a robust and strategic approach to safeguarding it will:

- ensure that the Council operates effectively in providing guidance and has robust management and assurance processes and controls for safeguarding children and adults at risk
- help the Council carry out its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding at a corporate, service and partnership level
- drive improvements in safeguarding policy and practice.

Quarterly reports on adult safeguarding activity are submitted to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. These demonstrate effective management oversight and good use of specialist expertise. The reports include aggregated information about referrals, case

conferences, strategy meetings and the way in which allegations of abuse, mistreatment or poor practice by professionals and carers are taken seriously.

Case Study

Tim lived in a 24 hour supported tenancy for individuals who have a learning disability. Tim was admitted to hospital following a seizure and a stroke.

Working with the medical team, it was discovered that Tim had the wrong medication, which may have led to his illness.

A safeguarding enquiry was instigated immediately while Tim remained in hospital. Powys County Council and the Powys Teaching Health Board worked collaboratively and found that an error had been made at a community pharmacy.

This finding led to a review of the systems of work at the community pharmacy as well as by the supported tenancy service provider. The situation was referred both to regulatory bodies to ensure that lessons are learnt and systems are effective and safe.

A lead coordinator for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards has provided training to a wide variety of practitioners and, in order to reduce the numbers awaiting assessment, the Authority has procured the services of an external expert who is undertaking assessments.

We have increased the capacity of Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs)/Conference Chairs to meet current demand, especially to cater for the increase numbers of Looked After Children. A threshold tool, Quality Assurance Framework and auditing tool have been developed and launched. The service has appointed a full time Quality Assurance Manager which will commence in post in June 2018.

We have re-established the Powys Local Operational Group which operates on a multi-agency basis to co-ordinate the work of the Regional Safeguarding Board and we are ensuring that senior officers make a stronger contribution to the work of the Board.

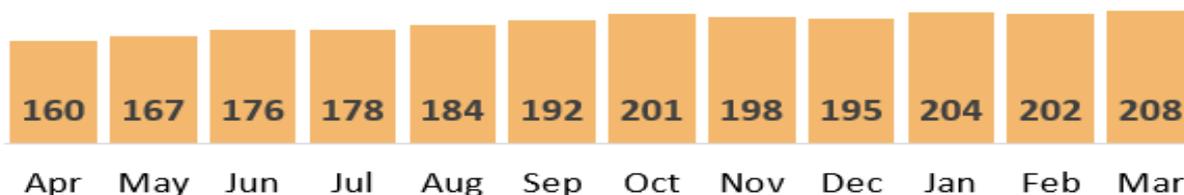
The delivery of the service is focusing on the importance of the basics - ensuring that assessments are completed, statutory visits made within timescales, Case Conferences and Looked After Children reviews held promptly, plans developed and communicated with the family to ensure the child is protected and avoiding drift in fulfilling the plans. We are also increasing capacity in the safeguarding service and developing our edge of care services to ensure that needs can be met, bearing in mind the importance of being able to act quickly to prevent problems getting worse.

The Council has responsibilities to act when children are at risk in the family home. In some cases this means that they are removed for their own safety and well-being. Although we have a lower proportion of Looked after Children (LAC) nationally (82.9 per 10,000 population for March 2018), we have a higher rate than some of our local authority neighbours.

The number of LAC has remained over 200 from January to March 2018.

However, the number of LAC is much higher than at April 2017.

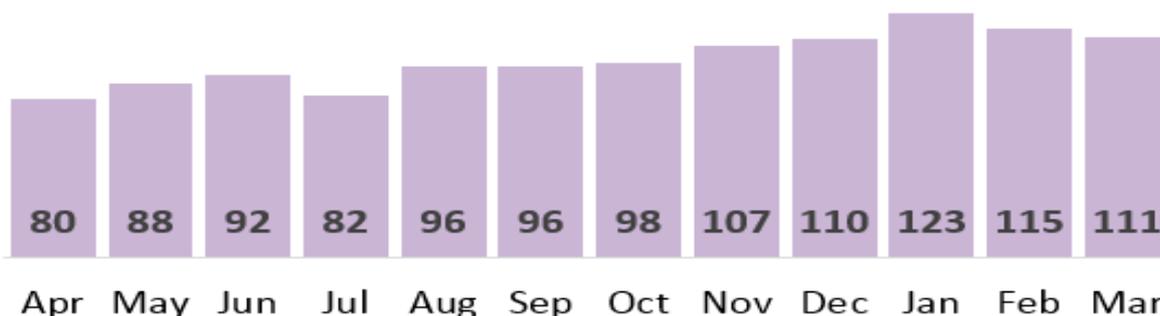
No. of Looked After Children since April '17



One of our important roles is to ensure that we undertake visits to our LAC. The percentage of statutory visits held within the statutory timescale has improved from 49% in January 2018 to 55% in February 2018, and 86% in March 2018. This is however below the target set of 100% and it is recognised that further immediate improvement is required. This will be one of our priorities for 2018/19 going forward.

The service and partner agencies will be adopting over the coming year the “Signs of Safety” model successfully used in other Welsh local authorities and beyond for achieving improved management of risk and a greater emphasis on the family’s strengths and potential for change.

We have been focussed on the impact that we can have on our child population and how the Council needs to perform in responding to those at risk. The number of children on the child protection register has decreased by 12 from January to March but is still far higher than at April 2017.



The number of children added to the register during March 2018 was 8 with 7 children being removed giving a net decrease of 4 children on the register. The average length of time on the Child Protection Register for those removed has reduced from 229 days in January 2018 to 195 days in March 2018.

The percentage of Section 47’s completed in timescale has shown significant improvement increasing from 48.9% at the end of January 2018 to 100% at the end of March 2018.

To keep children safe the service must ensure statutory visits are undertaken at the right time. At the end of January 2018 performance was low at 56%, but has increased to 72% at March 2018. The organisation has set a compliance target of 95% for statutory visits; it is recognised that further and immediate improvement is required. We accept that this is not where we need to be and we will prioritise actions to address this position during 2018/19

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2018/19 we will be focussed on delivering a range of outcomes, where we will:

- Increase the percentage of initial core group meetings in respect of children on the child protection register, within timescale
- Ensure that statutory visits for those on the child protection register are undertaken at the right time with a compliance target of 95%.
- Ensure that we achieve the 100% target for statutory visits to LAC and understand any variation to this expectation
- Implement the Regional Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan in Powys and provide additional multi-agency training on CSE and children who are missing.
- Prioritise safeguarding throughout all services and systems, including the front door through the expertise available in the PPD.
- Ensure strong senior management involvement and oversight, and involvement with regional partners to develop consistent pathways
- Strengthen the links between specialist safeguarding staff and care management teams.

(d) Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

What did we plan to do last year?

During 2017/18 we said we would:

- Develop community-led support and services (e.g. day opportunity services)

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

The focus of the new social services legislation is to do more for people in supporting them to access different kinds of support. The aim is to work with partners across the community in Powys to help people to be as independent as possible where they are supported to live the lives they want, participating in those activities that matter to them.

In 2017-18, 51% of adults (197 adults) felt that they could do things which were important to them. 47% (182 adults) felt that they couldn't, or could only do so some of the time. This demonstrates little change over last year (52% (267)). Health and mobility issues were raised as being the main limiting factors.

A third of carers (33% or seven individuals) felt that they can do things that are important to them, with 24% (five individuals) saying this only applied to part of the time. Three carers (15%) said that they couldn't. One comment related to ensuring the day centres remained open while others said that their caring duties were a barrier.

Providing stability in placements for Looked After Children (LAC) is one way that the Council can help to support a key group of children and young people have access to stable placements in our school and participate in society.

In our 2016/17 annual report we outlined how:

- The majority of children and young people (69% or 41 individuals) felt that they can do the things they like to do. The remaining respondents felt that this was the case only part of the time, with parents and time cited as barriers.
- A larger proportion (86%) of children and young people (52 individuals) said they were happy with their family, friends and neighbours. Three young people (5%) said that this was not true for them with comments received relating to the 'meanness' of others.
- The percentage of children with care and support needs achieving the core subject indicator at key stage 2 was 48.15% (33.33% in 2016/17) and was 14.29% (13.64% in 2016/17) at key stage 4.
- The percentage of 'looked after' children who, during the year to 31st March have experienced one or more changes in school during periods of being looked after that were not due to transitional arrangements was 20% (21.2% in 2016/17).

The Percentage of LAC at 31 March 2017 who have experienced three or more placements during the year was 14.8% and remained constant as at the 31st March 2018 at 14.3%.

During 2016/2017 we had 17 care leavers, 64.7% of these were engaged in education, employment or training during the 12th month that they left care. During 2015/2016 we had 16 care leavers, 62.5% of which were in education, employment or training in the 24th month after leaving care.

Powys has 93 identified care leavers aged up to 24. Three of our care leavers experienced homelessness during the 2017/2018 period. With records showing that they experienced 'sofa surfing' and 1 being placed in a B&B.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

Our services will focus on providing people with the right information and advice to enable them to make informed decisions. People will be supported to live as independently as possible and learn or relearn new skills, affording them every opportunity to reduce isolation and encourage re-connection / employment if wished. Use of Technology will be explored to mitigate risk and promote self-directed support. Care Leavers are a particular focus for Children's Services 2018/2019 with the appointment of an Assistant Team Manager in the 16+ project.

(e) Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

What did we plan to do last year?

In the 2017/18 Directorate Plan we stated that we would:

- Implement the key milestones in the Assistive Technology strategy

- Implement the Carers Strategy and improvement in carers support

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

We know that most children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families. Preventative services and early help to support children in need and their families should be provided in ways that give them every chance to stay together. Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, there will be help available for assisting them to make private arrangements within their wider family and friendship networks and, where necessary, to make these arrangements permanent.

For 2017/18 we received a responses from 49 children and young people who undertook our survey. 39 felt that they belonged in the area where they live. 4 felt that this was sometimes the case. 1 person felt that he/she didn't and 2 didn't know. This is consistent with the responses that were received in the 2016/17 survey undertaken, and noted in the Annual Report for 2016/17.

The percentage of children who were supported to remain living with their family was 70.8% (73.9% for 2016/17).

The percentage of 'looked after' children who returned home from care during the year was 37.8% (15.3% for 2016/17).

The same is true for adults in that maintaining the relationships that matter to them is important. Community, family and personal relationships keep people connected and help to keep people engaged.

During 2017/18 we aimed to introduce technology enabled care (TEC) in the form of assistive technology and accessed the Welsh Government's Integrated Care Funding in order to do so. Prior to this action in April 2017 very few people in Powys (almost zero) would have been provided with assistive technology by the County Council.

During 2017/18 we prescribed 893 items of technology to 444 individuals. We have two categories of TEC: Telecare and stand-alone technology for unpaid carers. In terms of the latter, we prescribed 438 items of stand-alone TEC equipment for unpaid carers to look after 257 clients. The total number of carers benefiting would be higher than 257 as some individuals would be supported by more than one carer.

We have set a target to double the number of people using assistive technology within two years from April 2018 onwards.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

Over the coming year we intend to enhance our work with informal carers by providing awareness training, commissioning a carers' rights booklet, and increasing the proportion of identified carers who are offered an assessment. We also intend to work closely with Credu (Powys Carers) to support young carers and to provide effective respite where required.

Whilst the uptake of telecare and the use of technology has increased over the past year, we intend to drive this further and have set ourselves a target of doubling the number of individuals benefitting from TEC over the next two years.

We aim to support individuals to live their lives as independently as possible without social services' interventions and to support people to engage fully with their community. We will do this by investing further into home based support, befriending services, and the community connectors.

(f) Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

What did we plan to do last year?

In the 2017/18 Directorate Plan we stated that we would:

- Reablement - Implement practice and process changes enabling reduction in residential care use

How far did we succeed and what difference did we make?

The percentage of all care leavers who are in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care was 64.7% (71.43% in 2016/17) and at 24 months after leaving care was 62.5% (50% in 2016/17), and the percentage of all care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year was 3.2% (2.7% in 2016/17).

There has been a reduction in the use of long-term residential care and nursing home provision, as more people are supported at home to maintain their independence. Staff have responded very effectively to occasions where urgent action has been required, including closure of a residential care home, winter pressures and adverse weather.

Working in an integrated manner with the Powys Teaching Health Board new joint services have been commissioned and a number are now operational. These include an 'intermediate care facility' in Builth Wells called *Glan Irfon*. This is a short-term residential home where people receive rehabilitation and can be supported when leaving hospital or if they require short term support.

It is recognised that a prudent approach means a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention models. We are using the Integrated Care Fund provide by the Welsh Government to support new developments in order to modernise our offer to the public.

There are promising signs that a more integrated approach to service provision is being developed at both strategic and operational levels in areas such as reablement, Ystradgynlais, Brecon and Machynlleth. In Ystradgynlais, for instance, there is anecdotal evidence that fewer people are moving into care homes and fewer people are requiring domiciliary care following intervention by the multi-agency multidisciplinary team. We intend to undertake an evaluation to understand whether this anecdotal evidence can be supported by qualitative data.

Other services which have been developed in Powys during the last few years include the extra care scheme at Newtown, Llys Glan-yr-afon, which has supported individuals to live independently with care if required. There is some evidence of a reduction in people needing to live in care homes in Newtown following this extra care scheme becoming operational. We have been working also with colleagues in the housing service to develop more extra care schemes and to ensure that there are accommodation options available which provide a home for life.

We have also supported the Shared Lives scheme in Powys and intend, over the coming year to invest further into this scheme to support its further expansion. This service supports individuals who need support to live with families in the community, rather than going into care.

As part of our 'What Matters' conversations we are able to ensure that a person's outcomes and wishes are translated into positive actions to support them to live their lives in a way that maintains their access to their community, families and work. Many people need help in supporting them to live at home, and working with our partners we are able to secure a range of assistance to achieve this.

Case Study

Jane moved to a council bungalow closer to a main town so that she could independently access the community due to feeling isolated in her previous home. Jane had a tumour in her brain stem that left her with left-side weakness and as a permanent wheelchair user with the occasional ability to stand for short periods of time.

We discussed what matters to her and she explained that her key goal was to be able to bake again. Work was undertaken to allow Jane to independently access her powered wheelchair in order to get out of the house. She has regained the motivation and ability to walk to the end of her front path. This is an achievement that Jane didn't ever foresee as possible. As a result, Jane has regained her skills as a baker and is thoroughly enjoying being able to carry out her meaningful activity again.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

As part of our planning for 2018/19 we will:

- Clarify the 'offer' that will be made to children who are looked after and care leavers in line with the request from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.
- Work with the re-established Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP) to engage in supporting a variety of initiatives to support children and care leavers
- Work to develop a pipeline of opportunities for supported employment for Adults

5. How We Do What We Do

(a) Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

We are working in a difficult context but Powys is fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working social care staff who routinely demonstrate commitment and care for the individuals they serve.

Powys however faces a significant long-term workforce challenge because demographic change is leading to an increase in older people (75+) and a decline in the number of people of working age.

Age Group	2014	2019	2029	2039
Working Age (16-64)	77,200	73,500	65,200	56,900
75+	15,100	17,600	24,000	28,200

This is causing recruitment and retention problems for the council as a whole. As part of a “one Council” approach, we acknowledge the need to have the right numbers of people in the right roles with the required capabilities to deliver improvement.

The Council is aiming to respond to how we more effectively deliver:

- Workforce planning
- Attracting and recruiting staff
- Leadership and management development
- Performance management of people
- Workforce development
- Pay reward and recognition
- Professional progression
- Workforce health and wellbeing.

The actions which the Council will take are set out in the Corporate Leadership and Governance Plan and the Social Services Directorate is looking to address similar issues in its Improvement Plans for children’s and adult services. This will help to embed workforce planning as part of the business planning cycle to ensure we are smarter in our planning.

The workforce in Powys are highly skilled and demonstrate an eagerness to improve services. They are also supported by the agile working arrangements which are unique to Powys because of the need to respond to issues around size and rurality. The use of technology to meet staff’s needs is excellent and we will continue to build on this.

As a consequence, in overall terms the in-house social care provider workforce is stable, suitably qualified and competent. The quality of their practice shows that they are intent on improving the lives of people who need support and care. Managers are committed to leading professional practice. Training and support provided to staff at all levels is critically important. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act has led to better strengths-based assessments in partnership with individuals, assisting them to look at all options. Resources (including policies and fact sheets) developed by Powys to support staff in providing quality assessments are complemented by access/links in place to the Social Care Wales Learning Hub.

What did we plan to do last year?

In the 2017/18 Directorate Plan we stated that we would:

- Develop enhanced quality assurance and audit, promoting improvement?
- Enhance systems and processes for learning from complaints and feedback
- Implement timely improvement as a result of regulation and inspection processes
- Implement robust supervision and appraisal processes
- Implement WCCIS

As part of our Corporate Leadership and Governance Plan 2017 – 2020 we have identified a range of challenges that we will address, namely:

- our whole workforce needs to build confidence and become more willing to challenge safely and be assertive;
- that we need to proactively renew staff engagement to improve morale, motivation for change and cultural issues;
- that our leadership needs to be proactive in working with the workforce, creating an environment and culture which enables and supports this while providing appropriate support and guidance; thereby improving morale and motivation for change.

We have recruited 45 agency staff in Children Services to cover vacancies or longer-term sickness absence. On a temporary basis, we have appointed to a number of social worker posts above establishment in order to support staff, reduce caseloads and stabilise the workforce. As well as increasing social worker capacity in front line teams, the Council is also committing to provide additional support staff so that front line practitioners and managers can focus on delivering safe and high quality services to children and their families. This includes strengthening the quality assurance functions (including Independent Reviewing Officers) and increasing capacity in Powys People Direct and the fostering and adoption services.

A workforce strategy is being developed and will be relevant to both children and adult services. Having extra agency staff does increase capacity and experience within the workforce but, if workers change frequently, it can also add to instability for children and families. This too will affect the quality of support as so much of our work relies on relationships. Our priority is to stabilise the workforce as soon as possible. A stable and sizeable core of practitioners and managers, committed to working for Powys, is the key to delivering our statutory responsibilities for the benefit of the county's children and families.

We are committed to equipping staff with the skills they need and to ensuring that additional resources are provided in areas where we need to make most difference. In their recent fieldwork and monitoring exercise, CIW identified some positive steps and early improvements but noted that there is much more work required. Because of this feedback, we will continue to focus on front line practice. The authority has appointed an experienced additional senior manager in Children's Services to add leadership capacity on behalf of the Head of Service. The focus for this role will be to support practice in respect of assessments and in ensuring that:

- children's plans are 'SMART' and effective;
- visits are undertaken in accordance with the child's plan; and
- reviews are undertaken according to the relevant timescales.

During 2018/19 we will be seeking to deliver a range of priorities (as set out in both our Children's and Adults' Improvement Plans for 2017 – 2023) in support of developing improvements in our workforce capacity and capabilities including:

- introduce a staff charter
- ensure that staff comply with their mandatory training requirements
- deliver training qualification opportunities

- secure more effective succession planning

(b) Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

Many local authorities are experiencing difficulties in setting realistic budgets for children's services and in avoiding overspends at year end. There are some consistent features which make resource management especially challenging. Decisions which affect the type and cost of services to be provided are often outside of the council's control and may be unpredictable – for example, decisions taken by the court in child care cases.

Some individual services are very expensive, where placements for children or adults with especially complex needs can easily exceed £150,000 a year and some will cost substantially more. Expenditure incurred in one year may lock the council into financial commitments for many years to come. To balance the competing priorities of managing service demand, improving quality, meeting higher expectations and reducing expenditure is especially problematic in situations where safeguarding children and adults from harm must be the key factor in decision-making. Additionally, there are many factors making the task even more difficult in recent years: increasing demand for services; new requirements from the Welsh and UK Governments; and the need to achieve budget savings in the face of reducing revenue.

Across Wales, social services have received a large measure of protection during austerity. Over the nine years from 2008/9 to 2016/7, council budgets have fallen by 10% in real terms (that is figures adjusted for inflation). Social services budgets have grown by 5% in real terms during the same period and remained stable over the last year in many local authorities. Thirteen of them did see reductions but Powys was by far the highest.

The end of year position for the Social Services Directorate in Powys in 2017/18 is an overspend of £4.408m, on a net budget of £70.488m. There was an underspend in Adult Services of £1.128m, and an overspend of £5.536m for Children's Services. The unachieved savings within Children's remains at £1.1m. Within the Children with Disabilities residential establishments a saving of £556k was not delivered. A further £388k in relation to partnership working with the Powys Teaching Health Board and third sector in respect of the new model for the delivery of Children's Services has not been delivered nor are there plans in place to progress this saving. The numbers of Looked After Children are at a five-year high (208 children), with a 34 % increase in 2017/18. Demand continues to grow, as does case complexity and use of external placements.

The Council has agreed significant investment in Children and Adult Services for 18/19.

In setting out our strategic direction we have a range of plans to improve services over the next 12 months and beyond.

We have good strategies in key areas such as carers services, substance misuse, telecare, older people, Learning Disability, prevention and early intervention. Others are being developed in respect of domiciliary care, physical disability and sensory loss. There is a Market Position Statement in place for accommodation and domiciliary care.

Operationally we have examples of services strongly grounded in analysis of community need (e.g. Llangynog day centre and Llanfyllin Mencap Service). There is good practice in relation to community engagement and planning for change, such as the population needs assessment and a review of accommodation options.

At a corporate level we know that our Council needs to address a range of challenges to improve how we use our resources and plan, including:

- The significant budget difficulties in the next few years where the Council does not yet have the plan in place to respond
- Savings and staff reductions in key areas that have not been underpinned by a long-term strategic plan for the nature and shape of the Council and the services people need;

(c) Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Working in partnership our Area Plan identifies which services will receive greatest priority in respect of integrated working between the Council, the health service and others, including:

- Older people with complex needs and long term conditions, including dementia
- People with learning disabilities;
- Carers, including young carers;
- Integrated Family Support Services;
- Children with complex needs due to disability or illness

In line with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act, the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) provides cross sector leadership through a strong and shared commitment to providing seamless and integrated health and social care services for children, young people and adults living in Powys, with a primary emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

To this end, we have developed a high-level, overarching plan called the Health and Care Strategy which sets out the strategic vision and approach to be taken in Powys. The Area Plan will outline the priorities to be delivered over the first 5 years and identify the lead agency for delivery.

The Health and Care Strategy priority areas are:

- Wellbeing;
- Early help and Support;
- Tackling the Big Four;
- Joined up Care.

The RPB will also address the key strategic enablers outlined in the Health and Care Strategy which will help us to develop and deliver the proposed model of care including:

- Workforce
- Innovative environments
- Digital First
- Transforming in Partnership.

Our renewed focus on our corporate leadership and governance through our 2017 – 2020 plan sets out many challenges for us to respond to:

- The Council's vision for the future is currently insufficiently shared and understood by the Council's officers, partners and residents;
- The Council, members and officers, have too often failed to tackle difficult issues. There is a need to be even more open about what the most important issues are and focus on addressing them;
- The Council needs to create a mutually supportive leadership culture. There are examples of blurring of roles between members and officers. The respective roles need to be clear;
- There is a need for the Council's corporate centre to provide stronger, more enabling delegated leadership;
- Whilst there are some good operational partnerships, joint commissioning, improvement and rationalisation work should focus on ensuring that all are focused on improvement priorities and securing impact from their planned work programmes

6. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

In publishing this annual report, we have relied upon a substantial amount of information, data, progress reports including those that have featured heavily this year following our recent inspections, and surveys.

The annual report identifies the progress of the Council in responding to the wellbeing of those people who need our help and support. This report however is not the only source of information available to members of the public, key partners and service providers.

We have a significant amount of background information that sits behind this report that provide additional detail about what we do and how we do it. Importantly if something is not mentioned in this report as a key priority it doesn't mean we're not doing it, as there is a lot of activity across social services that plays a part in helping us to provide for some of the most vulnerable groups in our community. It's not possible to capture everything which is why we are keen to signpost people to further information.

To access further information about what we do then these are some of the documents that will provide more detail:

- Powys County Council Corporate Leadership & Governance Plan 2017- 2020
- Healthy Caring Powys – Delivering the Vision (Area Plan)
- The Children's Services Improvement Plan 2017- 2020
- The Adult Services Improvement Plan 2018-2023
- The Powys Population Needs Assessment
- The Powys Wellbeing Assessment
- CSSIW Inspection Reports 2017 and 2018

