

Annual Council Reporting Framework 2023-24

Director's Summary

It is with pleasure that I present the annual report as Director of Social Services and Wellbeing for Powys County Council.

My admiration and thanks go to all the staff working across Social Services, I am humbled to work alongside such passionate and dedicated people. As a public servant I am motivated and driven by the aim of improving people's lives, and to work alongside people who share my values and ambition is important to me. Working in social care, whether with children and young people or adults, is challenging and hard work. At times the work can be heartbreaking and having strong committed teams supporting each other is essential.

The local, regional and national position for social care is challenging, but despite these challenges, I am very proud of the improvements being made by Social Services in Powys. However, the future looks uncertain, with increasing demographic pressures, increasing complexity, recruitment difficulties, market instability, placement availability, increasing costs and unknown future Welsh Government funding.

Being mindful of the challenges, we continue to drive forward change and improvements across the service. I wish to highlight the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements undertaken in the Autumn, the process and report was favourable and notes the positive multi agency partnership working here in Powys. It is essential that we maintain the improved performance and continue to drive forward with our improvement journey. There is more to do but I have confidence in the team and believe we have the people and skills required to deliver even better services for the people and communities of Powys.

Within Powys County Council, Social Services has aligned its work with the council's vision as outlined in the Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan, *Stronger, Fairer, Greener*. The leadership provided by the Cabinet Portfolio Holders, along with contributions from various committees, has been instrumental in guiding services. Our active participation in the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and other partner groups has been a key factor in progressing the local authority's improvement and transformation agenda.

The appointment of a permanent Corporate Leadership Team, and the appointments of permanent Head of Children's and Adult Services has brought stability in leadership and a clear direction for the service and the authority.

Our workforce is at the heart of delivering exceptional public services. The teams in Adult and Children's Services play a vital role in the lives of community members. We have adopted a comprehensive People Strategy developed by Powys County Council to support improvement and transformation efforts. We have also successfully reduced the number of agency workers, with several converting to permanent positions within the past year. Staff engagement and feedback are highly valued, and we have conducted various surveys and events to ensure our workforce has a voice in shaping future plans. Our commitment to staff appraisals, reviews, and supervision has seen improvements, contributing to a supportive and well-managed work environment.

Looking forward, we aim to sustain our drive for continued improvement and transformation across the service, whilst ensuring that the voice of individuals, families and communities shine through all our decision making and thinking.

I would like to conclude this summary by expressing my gratitude to all the staff and partners who have supported Social Services in delivering high-quality services for the people of Powys. Without their dedication, professionalism and collaboration, we would not have achieved the progress and improvements that we have made over the past year. I am confident that we have a strong foundation to build on and continue our journey of transformation towards excellence. Thank you for your hard work and commitment to making a positive difference in our communities.

Leadership

The Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan [Stronger, Fairer, Greener - Our Corporate Plan - Powys County Council](#) sets out the council's vision for the future of Powys and our work within Social Services is aligned with this. Our Cabinet Portfolio Holders provide political leadership, challenge and scrutiny, with wider challenge and contributions from Cabinet, Health and Care Scrutiny Committee, and Governance and Audit Committee.

The council continues to be a proactive member and contributor to regional boards and aspects of the local authority's improvement and transformation agenda are being progressed through the priorities of the Regional Partnership Board, the Community Safety Partnership Board and the work of the Regional Safeguarding Board.

The Regional Partnership Board (RPB) provides, in line with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014), cross-sector leadership through a strong and shared commitment to providing improved health and social care services for children, young people and adults living in Powys with a primary emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

The Health and Care Strategy sets out priority areas and key strategic enablers for future priorities for partnership working between the Health Board and third sector partners.

Temporary staffing arrangements had been in place for some time at an Executive Level but, following the appointment of a new permanent Chief Executive, a permanent Corporate Leadership Team has been appointed. Full Council were involved in the appointment process which included the role of Director of Social Services and Wellbeing. Moving forward, this will provide stability and clear direction of travel not only in Social Services but for the authority as a whole.

The following governance arrangements are in place for Social Services:

- Full Council
- Cabinet
- Health and Care Scrutiny Committee
- Governance and Audit Committee
- Corporate Leadership Team
- Joint Leadership team with Powys Teaching Health Board
- Senior Leadership Team
- Social Services Briefings with Portfolio Holders
- Quarterly Performance Management Meetings with Director and Portfolio Holders
- Public Service Board
- Regional Partnership Board – Start Well, Live Well and Age Well Boards
- Corporate Safeguarding Board
- Regional Safeguarding Board
- Responsible Individual Meetings with Director

- Section 33 Boards
- Social Services & Wellbeing Transformation Board

Additionally, across Children's and Adult Services there are:

- Senior Management Team
- Operational Management Team

In Adults and Commissioning there are the following:

- Substance and Alcohol Misuse – Area Planning Board
- Housing Support Grant and Homelessness Board
- Extra Care Programme Board
- Community Equipment Service Board
- Financial regulations, internal procurement rules and the PCR

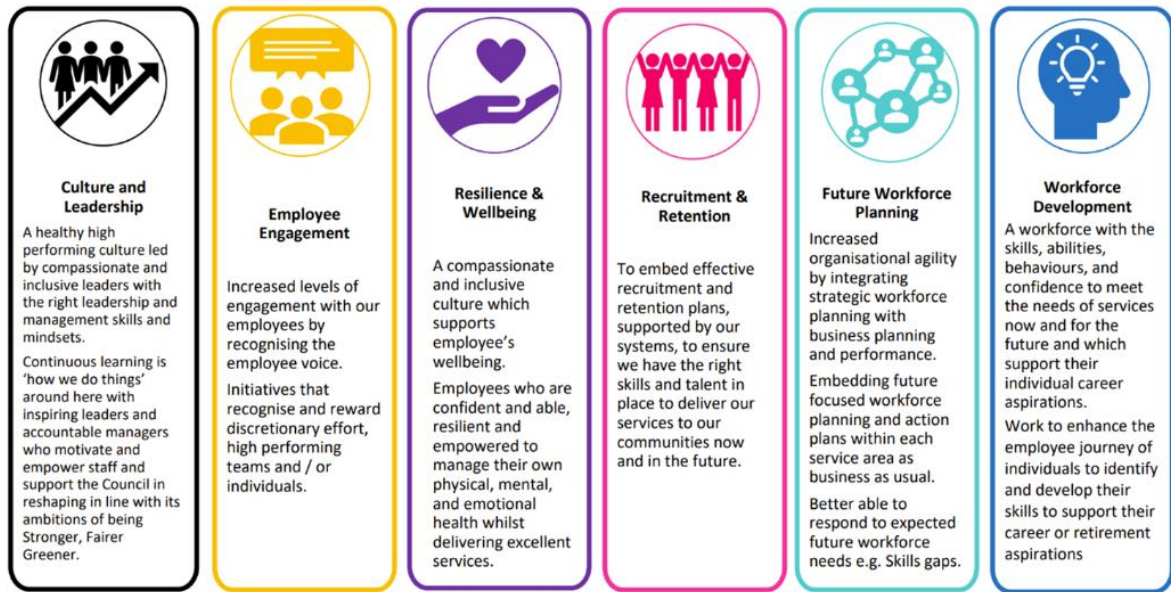
In Children's Services there are the following:

- CYSUR – Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board
- PLOG- Powys Local Operational Group
- Audit and Training Groups as part of PLOG
- CPR/MAPF (Child Practice Review/ Multi-Agency Professional Form) Subgroup as part of CYSUR
- Corporate Parenting Board
- Youth Justice Board
- Closer to Home Board
- Safer Accommodation Board

These all have their own governance arrangements with terms of reference and actions plans.

Workforce

Our workforce is central to delivering great public services. Our Adult and Children's Services teams deliver services to people within our communities, playing an important role in their daily lives. With improvement and transformation at the forefront of our minds, we have fully adopted the following People Strategy, which has been developed by Powys County Council:

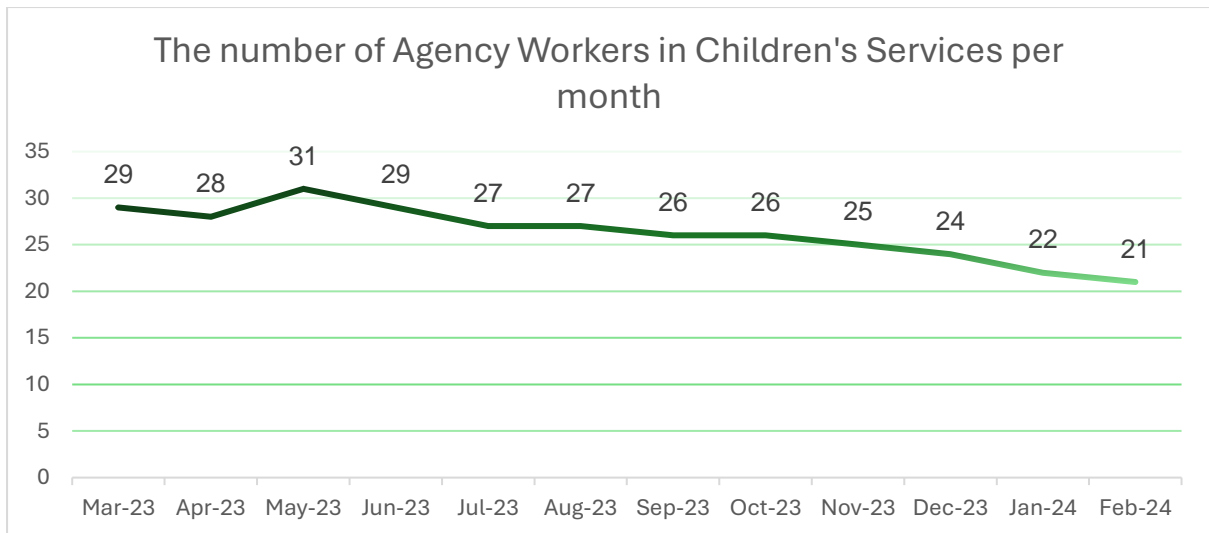


Children's Services

Workforce Detail							
Permanent		Fixed Term		Secondment		Casual by Claim	
2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
266 posts	311 posts	46 posts	80 posts	13 posts	21 posts	18 posts	35 posts
265 people	310 people	46 people	77 people	13 people	20 people	14 people	18 people

There has been increase in headcount within Children's Services due to the move of the Commissioning Team into the service.

We have successfully continued the trend of reducing our agency workers over the past 2 years, from 51 in January 2022, to a low of 21 in February 2024. This year alone we have reduced from a high of 31 agency social workers in May 2023 to our current figure of 21. Of the agency social workers working within Powys, 6 have now converted to permanent positions within our service in the past year.



Children's Services value their staff as the greatest resource for a sustainable service. Feedback from staff in terms of 'you said, we did' is collated through a variety of means. For example, a recruitment and retention survey was held to gain staff's feedback on different strategies that we could use for recruitment and retention. This was put together into a You Said We Did and distributed back out to staff, it was then also used to inform our workforce action plan.

There is a commitment to ensuring that all staff receive their annual appraisals and 6 monthly reviews. Monthly supervision is a priority for all staff. We have made significant improvements in the completion of appraisals and supervisions in the last year. In 2022, 82% of annual appraisals were completed, this year we achieved 98.2% and 100% of our 6 monthly reviews were completed.

Monthly supervision for our operational staff has also increased this year, we saw a significant drop in the summer of 2022 with a low of 45% completed, this improved in the following 7 months but still remained lower than our target at around 70%. Since May 2023 we have seen a consistent improvement and staff supervision has been around 90%. We did see a drop to 76% during December, which was affected by the Christmas period and staff leave however, we were pleased to see this return to its high performance in January 2024 of 92%. The following months of February and March 2024 saw a slight drop, but overall performance has remained significantly higher than the previous year.



In the past year we have undertaken numerous staff surveys and roadshows to promote staff engagement and ensure our workforce has an opportunity to have valuable input into future plans and opportunity to feedback. We have evaluated the outcomes of the Flight Risk Survey. This survey looks at gaining feedback on whether staff are considering leaving the authority and if so, the reasons for this.

We undertook a Staff Recruitment and Retention Survey in February 2023 and received 91 responses. The responses to this survey have been used to inform our social services workforce strategy action plan for 23-24 and were collated into a presentation to feedback to staff. A standout area for why people like working for Children's Services and why they stay was the support that they receive from their manager and team. With nearly 60 of the 90 responses stating that they always feel supported by their manager. Key areas identified as affecting the workforce were the number of fixed term contracts, workload and WCCIS and IT issues.

We have also conducted surveys with Children's Services staff on Wellbeing, the Exiting Prostitution Toolkit, Integrated Disability Service Review and the Child Protection Rapid Review.

On Friday 13th October 2023 we held a Staff Wellbeing event. This event was all about celebrating the importance of wellbeing in our personal and work lives. The day focused on fun, learning and our staff having an opportunity to come together to connect with each other, share, experience and learn about what can support and promote our wellbeing.

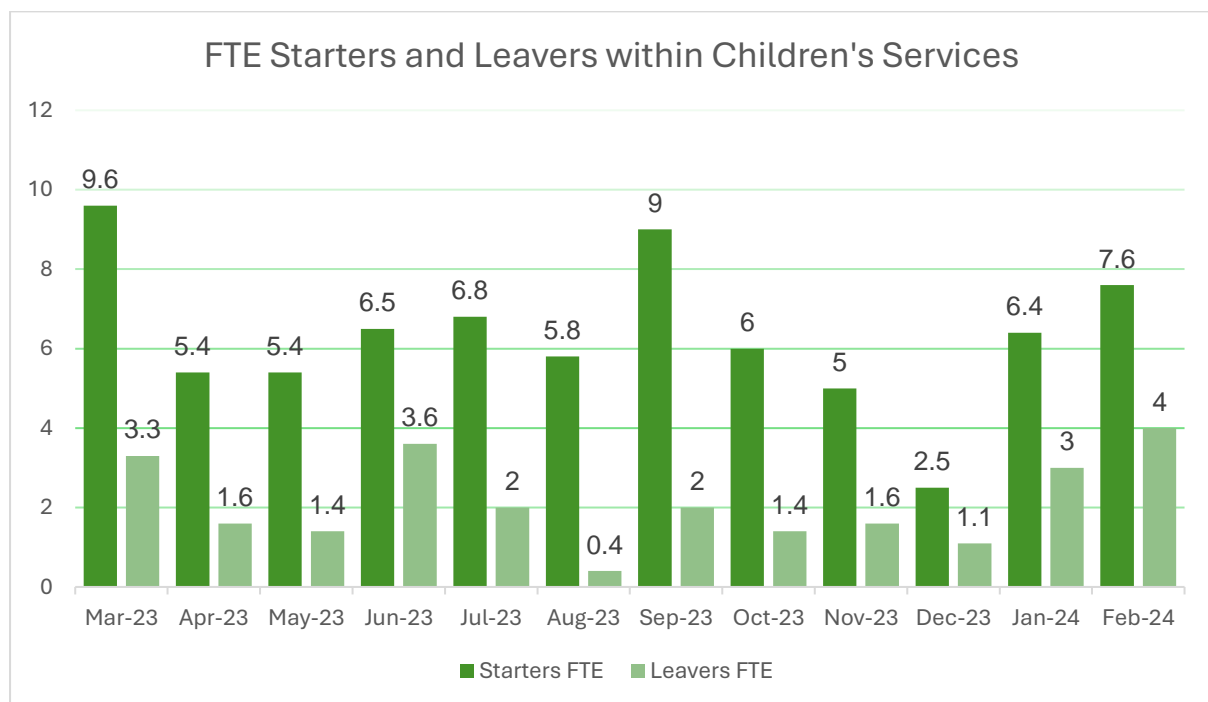
Powys Children's Services was nominated for an accolade in the 2024 Social Care Wales for the category of "Supporting workforce wellbeing". This nomination recognised the initiatives that the service has been developing to support the wellbeing of staff in the last 18 months. These include; piloting decompression sessions to support newly qualified social workers on our "Grow our Own" scheme, providing debriefing support to staff who have been affected by traumatic events in work, holding a staff wellbeing event and implementing Schwartz Rounds, which we will be running bi-monthly from March.

We have undertaken staff roadshows throughout the year, these have been undertaken in different venues face to face around the county and virtual to provide staff with as much of an opportunity to attend as possible. We have held Children's Services roadshows and joint roadshows with Adult, Housing and Education Services.

We have created specialised roles within the service to provide more opportunities for staff, for example a programme officer to focus on our recruitment and retention, and a principal social worker for pre-birth.

Staff are able to apply for courses through Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) funding to support career aspirations via appraisal process and qualification panel. This panel and fund have supported the whole workforce and has included staff wishing to undertake social care modules and degrees and also business and programme staff undertaking project management and masters level courses.

Children's Services continue to experience recruitment challenges with our hard to fill posts, however, significant progress has been made in the last year, and for the past year we have consistently seen a higher starter rate than leaver rate per month.



Initiatives to overcome this have included;

- Regular recruitment and retention meetings with Children's and Adult Services to develop a workforce action plan.
- This year both service areas undertook the Recruitment and Retention survey. This captures why staff stay with Social Services and what our strengths are, which we should be promoting in recruitment efforts and what areas we need to improve on.
- We have updated the way in which we now advertise our vacancies, this includes a more detailed summary for each vacancy, such as the tasks and roles the applicant will be undertaking, skills and values the candidate must possess, as well as including the new ways of working statement.

- We have undertaken a corporate rebrand and have rolled this out over our job descriptions, brochures and leaflets as well as including adverts in our social media campaigns and adding branding to some of our highway's vans. We have also created several information packs for applicants looking to work for Powys.
- We have been holding regular meetings with our corporate recruitment and contracts teams to ensure that successful applicants move through the process as efficiently as possible.
- We have implemented a fortnightly recruitment bulletin to be sent out internally to Children's Services.
- We have attended Compass and Royal Welsh Show Events for recruitment.
- We have been working with the Health and Care Academy to engage with young people with an interest in Social Care. Our Practice Development Manager attended Ysgol Bro Caereinion in December 2023 with the Academy to present to years 7 to 13 for the day. We have worked closely with the Academy on the Academy Careers and Education Enterprise Scheme which has now been delivered to about 4000 pupils.
- We held a Residential Recruitment Drop in during May 2023. This event targeted recruitment for our Safe Accommodation Residence. We held 2 drop in events, as well as a leaflet drop with a web landing page and online video.

Our Grow Our Own Social Worker project has continued, and this year produced 8 Newly Qualified Social Workers who are now in post in their permanent teams. We have also granted 2 further Master student placements to employees who started their course in September 2024. The Grow Our Own offer has now been extended to the wider council. We are predicting to provide 28 placement opportunities at the start of 2024. We currently have 39 practice educators in place.

Challenges

- An over-reliance on agency staff, which entails high-cost payments and a standard 1 week notice period creating workforce instability. The number of agency workers within Children's Services has reduced in the last year from 32 and is currently at 21. However, this area remains a challenge.
- An overly competitive market that prioritises private profit in regard to recruitment agency rates and Local Authority competition in regard to market supplements.
- An inability to select the most skilled and experienced candidates due to an extremely low number of applicants applying for positions.
- A high number of vacancies, which increases pressures on existing staff.
- Difficulties in competitive succession planning due to shortages.
- Challenges in ensuring office spaces are conducive to social care activities.
- Budget challenges within Powys County Council, that may impact on capacity and workforce stability.
- Cumbersome recruitment processes that impact negatively on manager capacity.
- Fluctuations in the effectiveness of ICT system WCCIS.
- Children's Services has a number of posts that are reliant on grant funding. This includes team coordinator positions and positions within our Front Door.

Workforce: What we plan to do in 2024-2025

Continue the implementation of Grow Our Own Social Workers

Review and implement workforce strategy action plan
Progression of staff wellbeing plans, including the introduction of “Schwartz rounds”
Continue to have a presence in national recruitment events and organise local recruitment events to target specific posts
Continue to monitor and promote the delivery of annual appraisals and mid-point reviews.

Adult Services

The headcount for Adult Services is as follows:

Head Count Detail (previous year figures in brackets)						
	Permanent	Fixed Term	Secondment	Casual by Claim	Other	Total
Number of Posts	549 (484)	31 (27)	28 (22)	18 (21)	0	626 (554)
Number of People	548 (483)	30 (27)	28 (22)	16 (19)	0	622 (551)

There has been increase in headcount within Adult Services due to the move of the Commissioning Team into the service.

Workforce planning workshops have been undertaken in Adult Services to understand workforce aspirations and gaps and to make sure we have the right workforce arrangements in place for the future. We recognise that we have an ageing workforce and as part of our ongoing work we have considered succession planning as a way of continuing to support our “grow your own ethos”.

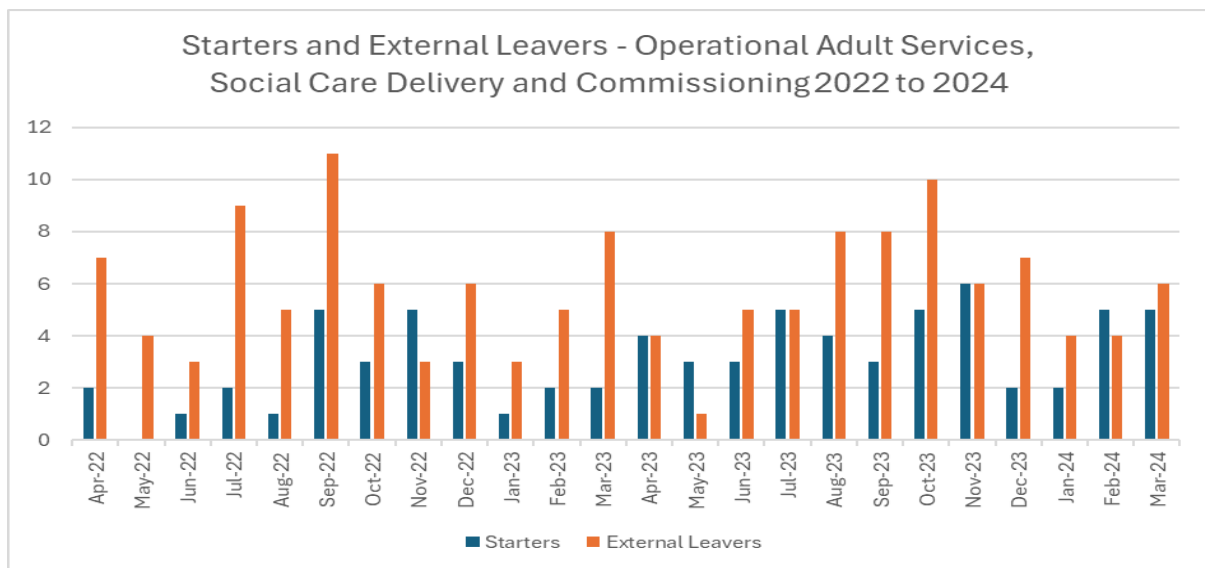
In continued support of our successful “grow your own ethos” and ongoing efforts to provide existing staff with the opportunity to fully develop their potential, we encourage them to participate in training and shadowing opportunities. During the year, through competitive recruitment, we have seen some of our existing staff step into promoted positions. We also have a number of staff who are at various stages of completing their social work degree creating the social workers of tomorrow. Additional information on “grow your own” can be found in the people section of this report.

Adult Services have continued to experience significant difficulties in recruiting to a number of posts across the service, most notably within our Reablement, Mental Health and Hospital Patient Transfer teams. This is not isolated to Powys, other local authorities and health and care organisations are reported to be experiencing similar issues. During the year we have carried out focussed recruitment campaigns to try and attract applications for posts which have been labelled as “hard to fill”, attended job fairs and undertaken a number of face-to-face events across the county to provide opportunities for citizens to understand vacancies and opportunities available to them alongside the benefits of working for the local authority. The Hospital Patient Transfer team, despite focused recruitment campaigns, has struggled with recruiting permanent social worker positions over the last two years. However, in early 2024, for the first time since its inception, the team had a full complement of permanent staff. To support recruitment of Reablement and Care Support Workers we held two focussed recruitment events at which we were able to undertake interviews and

provide conditional offers of employment on the day; this saw a number of positions being filled. However, it should be noted that our Social Care Delivery team still has a significant number of vacant posts across the county and we have had to employ agency workers to enable us to continue to support individuals home from hospital to maintain their independence within the community.

Following attendance at a jobs fair, a Team Manager said “Listening to the experiences and circumstances of social workers, living, and working in cities and the challenges that they face with increased living costs made me reflect on the benefits of working in Powys. This is something that I will be sharing with my team. It was great to be able to speak directly with individuals looking for opportunities within other authorities and to be able to share what working for adult services in Powys looks like.”

In terms of retention of staff, we have received feedback from current staff and those completing exit interviews that neighbouring organisations to Powys provide better terms and conditions including higher salaries and are therefore deemed as potentially more desirable employers. We are currently undertaking a benchmarking exercise to ensure that we are comparable with other statutory organisations. We recognise that we have had a high number of leavers but by way of example these have been due to retirement and ill health.



We are reliant on grant funding to support project, improvement and transformational activity as well as some core business. It is anticipated that grants will reduce in the future and alongside budget pressures this will have a significant impact in terms of what can be delivered at pace by our substantive workforce in terms of transformational change and re-design of our services whilst delivering on our day-to-day statutory duties.

Our commissioned social care providers, ie those we purchase services from, report that recruitment and retention has been challenging for them over the last 12 months. Our Commissioning Team continues to work alongside all providers to seek assurance that all employees are receiving the Real Living Wage. At various points throughout the year, a number of domiciliary care providers have issued notice to the local authority stating that

they cannot continue to deliver on a large number of packages of care within the community meaning that this has had to be re-commissioned or delivered by our in-house team. Some of this has been a direct result of recruitment and retention difficulties. Additional detail on our brokerage functions can be found in the Prevention and Integration section below.

We have developed and launched an induction e-book which maps out a range of information to support members of staff into their new job roles in Adult Social Care. Feedback has been positive with new staff stating that it has provided them with a really helpful start to their careers in Powys. In addition, existing staff have found this to be a useful aide memoir. Following the positive feedback we plan to develop further e-books to support our workforce.

Work has continued to progress with the Health, Care and Social Care Academy which is a joint Regional Partnership Board initiative. The Academy has continued to expand its efforts to recruit and develop younger individuals who have an interest in following a career in social care. <https://www.powysrpb.org/powyshealthandcareacademy> More information on the work of the Academy can be found in the partnership section of my report.

We are proud that the council's Staff Awards scheme recognised two of our teams. Our Hospital Patient Transfer team won the small team of the year category with our Continuing Health and Complex Care team being runners up in the same category. A member of the Practice and Development Team who supports both Adult and Children's Services was not only recognised at the staff awards but also by the Regional Safeguarding Board for "Long Service / Lifetime Achievement Award for contribution to Safeguarding Practice and Development for Children or Adults at Risk".

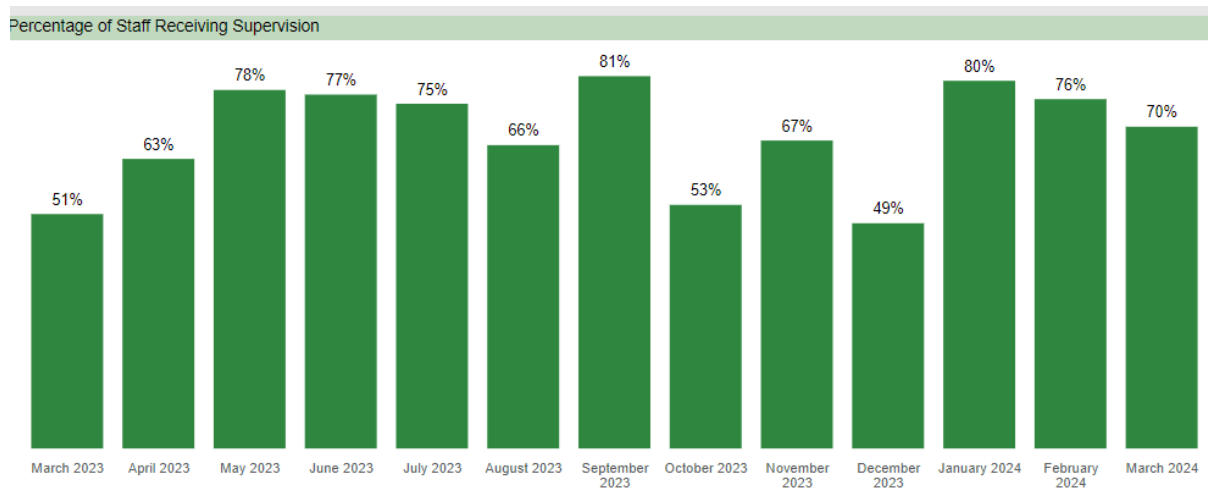




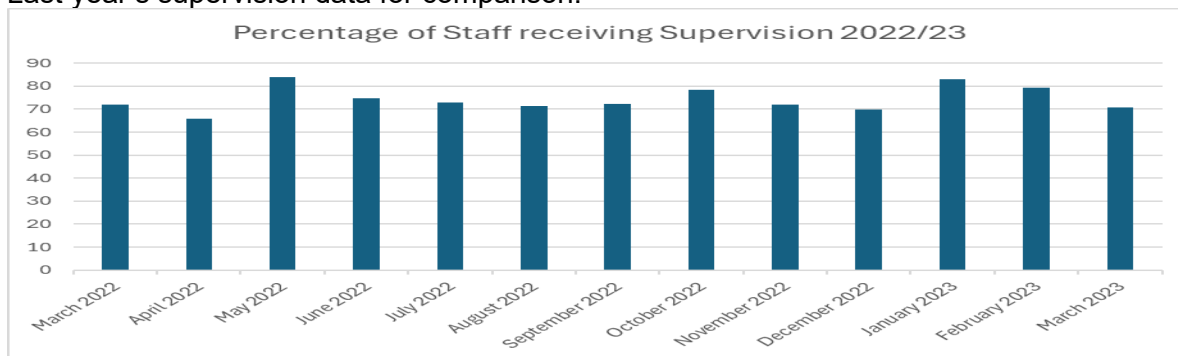
Case Study:

Disability is not a bad word – we have a culture of inclusion and belonging in which everyone can thrive. This case study is about supporting a member of staff who is autistic with fibromyalgia and lupus. By working with her manager, they have created a safe space for the staff member to grow and thrive in her role. Simple reasonable adjustments like ‘being able to be more flexible with her work’ means if her breathing is not good, she can do more administration work rather than telephone work that day. Her workload is managed by her manager to prevent her becoming overloaded as her condition can lead to chronic fatigue, especially as she loves her job and can often not realise the time. Her supervision is based on an action plan developed with Adult Services Disabilities Team. The team member said, *“We check avoidance, communication, boundaries and my innate inability to say no which leads me to taking on work that isn’t mine to do. It means that my supervision and appraisal are autism friendly”.*

We are disappointed that our adult services frontline staff supervision statistics have not been as high as we would expect to see. However, whilst formal supervisions have not always been undertaken, we are reassured that managers are providing professional advice and guidance on a daily basis in support of individual members of staff and teams. Managers have been reminded of the need to undertake timely monthly supervisions and this is a priority for 24/25.



Last year's supervision data for comparison:



Workforce: What we plan to do in 2024-2025

Following on from the success of the induction e-book, develop an e-book for new managers and one on the "strengths based approach" under which we operate

Under the modernising domiciliary care agenda, to support providers, review and seek to improve how we broker packages of domiciliary care

Develop a training programme to support the development of Team Managers – number of new team managers in post

Review grant funding, budget availability and baseline structures to enable Adult Services to undertake improvement and transformational activity

Increase rates of formal supervisions and appraisals.

Financial Resources

The 2023/24 service area budgets and actual spend.

Service Area	Total Working Budget £000's	2023/24 Outturn £000s	Outturn Variance Under / (Over) £000s	Variance %	Transfers (to) / From Reserves £000s	Variance Under / (Over) Spend £000s
Adults	£82,501	£82,355	£146	0.18%	-£100	£46
Children's Services	£30,775	£31,811	-£1,036	-3.26%	£895	-£141
Commissioning	£2,187	£1,559	£628	40.28%	-£440	£188

Performance Assessment

New guidance was issued for 2023-2024 and the foundations for the new reporting framework are 8 high-level-quality standards under four headings:

People

All people are equal partners who have choice, voice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them

Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision

Children's Services

Develop and deliver a new participation strategy for 2023-26

We have completed the draft participation strategy and this is currently undergoing the approval process. The development of the participation strategy involved our participation officer meeting with the Children's Leadership Team to agree the terms of reference and the principles of the main strategy. The participation officer has also gained the views and thoughts of young people who engaging with Social Services through in person conversations and WhatsApp messages.

Implement our Bright Spots action plan to better support our looked after children

In 2021-2022 Powys Children's Services worked with Coram Voice to undertake Bright Spots, a programme to improve the well-being of children and young people in care by identifying and promoting practices that have a positive impact. This was a large piece of work and illustrated our on-going commitment to improving outcomes for looked after and care experienced young people.

The initial part of the Bright Spots programme entailed distributing a survey called 'Your Life, Your Care' with our children looked after population aged 4-18. We decided to undertake this survey initially. We developed bi-lingual communication for the children and young people as well as identifying the trusted adults who supported the younger children. The survey ran between 1st and 29th November 2021. We reached a 33% response rate (61 children). The second survey 'Your life beyond care' was undertaken thereafter, 46 young people responded to the survey from a care leaver population of 100: this is 46% response rate.

This gave us an opportunity to really listen to young people in a focused and systematic way to ensure we better understand how children and young people perceive their care, well-being, the people they know, and their rights. We delivered a multi-agency hybrid in person/virtual webinar in September 2023 on "How has the Bright Spots Programme helped shape change in Powys to about 65 staff, including the Director and Portfolio Holders. This was led by Coram Voice and chaired by Powys CS. It included gaining staff views on how we respond to the findings. The findings were also shared with children and young people.

<https://youtu.be/NS2zDhmW2bU>

The Bright Spots action plan was developed into four areas; social work retention, life satisfaction, supporting children and young people to understand why they are in care and family time and placements. Some of the areas for development were embedded within existing development plans such as the retention and recruitment plan. There has been increased efforts to ensure children and young people are clear on their allocated workers and explaining the particulars of specific roles. Support with budgeting skills has also been enhanced. A more comprehensive Life Story Work strategy is being developed to support the development of staff skills in this area. There are further developments which are ongoing in relation to housing support for care experienced young people.



JUNIOR START WELL BOARD / YOUNG ADULTS START WELL BOARD

We are a group of young people who live in Powys and are between the ages of 11 and 17 years or 18 and 25 years. We meet regularly to talk about what it's like to be a young person in Powys. We talk to our friends and peers to find out what problems they are facing. We also try to find ways to make sure young people have everything they need to be healthy and happy. We meet regularly with the Start Well Partnership Board in Powys, to help to plan services and projects so that they meet the needs of children and young people. Sometimes we work on our own projects to help make things better for young people in Powys.



The Youth Café

On the 30th of November 2023, the Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle met Junior Start Well Board members to talk about their work and how they have helped to set up the Youth Café in Newtown. The JSWB have established a partnership of local organisations to support the projects development, with the goal of increasing opening hours and enhancing sustainability.

"The Youth Café is a project that all of us on the Junior Start Well are very passionate about.

It was created to be a safe space where young people can go for free drinks and low-cost food to just sit and talk to friends or use as a quiet space for homework or revision if nowhere is suitable at home.

Our aim with this project is to create a safe place for young people to go and socialise as well as seek support if needed"

Increasing awareness & support for emotional wellbeing

Early prevention & healthy lifestyles has been one of the key priorities for the members this year. They have met with sports ambassadors about how to build mental health awareness into training, as well as thinking about how schools, colleges and communities can increase opportunities for healthy activities, increasing the awareness of how being active can support emotional wellbeing. They would like 'pop up' activities and games which are more focused on wellbeing rather than competitive sport.

Peer support is also an important area for the members. They believe that the impact of covid has meant that

young people look to each other for support far more than they used to and have spoken with schools and other services about how important it is to consider this option in their service delivery, as well as giving young people the knowledge and support to do this.

Information on advice and specialist services for schools & trusted adults is also important to them, and they have continuously advised that it is vital that trusted staff working with children and young people know exactly where they can go for more specialist advice and support if needed. They have recently supported the design of a directory of services for schools and would like to see something similar for young people.

Increasing awareness on Children's Rights is something all members are very passionate about, especially the right for children and young people to have their say. Some of our members have already provided resources and information to their school. Members have received training from the Childrens Commissioner for Wales Office, with an aim to roll out their own awareness campaign, including a video. They will also prompt all services and organisations that they have contact with, that it is their duty to ensure all the rights of the child are upheld, as well as help to provide resources

Additional Information to support the objective

Powys Children's Services Participation and Engagement Officer has been supporting and advocating for young people engaging in social services in a variety of ways. Including acting upon their voice individually and advocating for the voice of the child/young person at a strategic level locally and nationally.

Wellbeing Ambassador groups have been formed in Calon Cymru Campuses and Maesydderwen High Schools. Representative groups of young people discuss wellbeing in their school and local communities, including supporting the Child Poverty task force and Children Services Child Exploitation teams.

Young people from Powys have attended CYSUR residential events to discuss safeguarding across Mid and West Wales.

In May, Care Leavers from Powys met with Welsh Government ministers Emai Drakeford, Jeremy Miles, Julie Morgan, Lynne Neagel and Jane Hutt to discuss the Radical Reform of Childrens Services.

PCC in collaboration with Cyfle Cymru, Aferiad and others brought together substance use recovering young adults and PCC Service leads for creative arts activities and Coasteering.

The Sunflower Lounge ran 6 fun activity days in Calon Cymru for our young people in foster care. As well as a day at Llandrindod Wells Lake for all our young people in care and a trip to Wrexham University to look at options and how they can support.

Care Leavers were part of interview panels for new Head of Service, Social workers and Personal Advisors.

Care leavers reported having financial difficulties, HD Cymru kindly agreed a large discount for them after conversations with PCC's Participation Officer.

Groups of Care Experienced young people have advised on documents and practise through Whatsapp groups and in person.

Participation Officer has trained Childrens Services, Credu, TGP Cymru, CAMHS, relevant PTHB staff and TAC leads for all High and Primary schools and NPTC Wellbeing leads on the Mind of my Own app. A way for young people engaging in Social Services to express their wishes and feelings direct to their Childrens Service's worker from their own electronic devices.

There has been a steady increase in the use of the Mind of my Own app. Children now have the option to directly message the Head of Children's Services. This has happened several times and our Head has acted upon their voice.

Powys Care leavers met with Gloucester LA's Care leaver Ambassadors to discuss how they ensure co-production and accountability. Our young people would like the same in Powys, so PCC's Participation Officer has been working on this with Service leads and Councillors.

Young people in our Residential care homes wanted a beach holiday, so we organised for a summer holiday camping for our young people in our residential homes and it went really

well. With the young people having a fantastic time and experiencing things that they had never done before.

In October, Powys young people in care attended a meeting with Deputy Health Minister Julie Morgan to discuss reform in Childrens Services.

Participation officer has been meeting with young people working with our Youth Justice team and Detached Youth team, to listen to their views on Dyed Powys Police. When and if they are comfortable, the Participation Officer will facilitate a meeting between them and Police Chief Detectives and the Dyfed Powys youth engagement forum.

Care Leavers wished for bikes, thanks to the dedication and kindness of Brecon's Big Friendly Group. They have fixed up and provided 11 bikes for them.

Thanks to the support of staff from PCC, Llandrindod Wells public and Tesco's Community Champion; Care leavers received fantastic hampers for Christmas. The charity 'Quilts for Care Leavers' also sent them beautiful handmade patchwork quilts, that take months to make each one.

Young people in care wanted to use their voice via music. Our Participation Officer has been working with a Welsh recording studio to facilitate this. The music produced has been incredibly powerful, raw and inspiring. There will be more sessions throughout 2024, including paying the young people for songs we can share regarding being in care.

Some of our asylum-seeking young people asked for ESOL classes, the offer in Powys was half a day a week. Participation officer worked with 14+ Education lead who worked with NPTC and improved provision up to three days a week.

Young people from schools and those in foster care, interviewed candidates for PCC's new Director of Social Services of Wellbeing and Director of Education. Their input had a significant role in the final decision.

Care experienced young people from Powys met Welsh Governments top Ministers (led by the former First Minister) in early March to discuss radical reform in services and hold them to account.

We will be creating a Children's Services Liaison Committee. Made up of care experienced young people and those who have current or previous experience of social services being a part of their lives. The Committee will be remunerated for their time and coproduce policy and practise, whilst meeting regularly with Children's Leadership team and Corporate Parenting group who commit to action and feedback with accountability.

Childrens Services will also be creating an official youth interview panel. Members are trained, remunerated and have life experience of Children's Services.

On 20th March 2024, PCC held an event entitled "Your Powys". High schools were asked to bring 10 young people to a roundtable event; Heads of services for areas such as Recreation, Transport, Wellbeing etc sat at each table and listened to young people's views. We will then ask them to feedback 6 months later on how the voices have been acted upon.

There will be many sessions in three High Schools across Powys with The Sunflower Lounge, funded by Reaching Wider for our young people in care. With fun, innovative vocational activities, and trips to Colleges and Universities.

We will also be facilitating sessions for those young people engaging with Social Services through the National Music Plan, which may include Welsh Rappers, Beatboxers and Taiko drumming.

Powys Wildlife Trusts are running 12-week sessions for groups of our young people in care and those on the child protection register. The emphasis is on fun, empowerment and knowing they are not alone.

Some High Schools will be offering Forest school sessions for our young people, PCC's Participation officer will invite service leads to attend and listen to their voices.

Practitioners

Social Services offer an extensive and high-quality annual training plan based on a range of sources e.g., a Training Needs Analysis, local findings from audits and learning events and national developments (Continued Professional Development).

Social care staff are required to continually engage in learning and development. This is supported through supervision with managers and appraisal objective setting. Social work staff are required to engage in learning and development which ensures they can renew their social work registration.

Social work is a relationship-based activity. Staff who have contact with families require core skills and values to ensure a high-quality service is provided and people's rights are protected. This requires space for reflection and reflexivity. This can occur within supervision, learning events, mentoring sessions, case discussions, audit feedback sessions and case mapping sessions. Peer support is also invaluable.

Social care staff need support to navigate a complex statutory arena. Changes occur through legislative changes, the revision of regulations, engaging in best practice guides, findings from child practice review and serious case reviews.

This year we achieved a permanent structure within our Children's Services Leadership Team, with the appointment of our new Head of Service, and the Senior Manager for Care and Support.

People: What we plan to do in 2024-2025
Improve participation of children on the child protection register in the child protection conference process.
Implement the new Participation Strategy 2023-2026 (and action plan)
Creation of a Childrens Services Liaison Committee
Creation of an official youth interview panel

Adult Services

We have launched and published our Social Services Customer Care Charter and Standards which details what people can expect when they contact Adult Services for either a general enquiry or when making a complaint. We are committed to providing a consistently excellent standard of service by putting citizens at the centre of everything we do. [Resources and Information - Powys County Council](#)

Citizen feedback is important to us and during the last year we have enhanced the mechanisms we have in place for citizens to feedback to the Service. We have promoted and embedded our specialist “text” line to enable citizens with a hearing impairment to contact us as easily as possible. We have also established automated feedback options at the end of every phone call to ASSIST (Adult Services front door) to allow citizens or professionals to provide real-time feedback on their experience should they choose to. Callers also have an option to provide us with additional feedback via an independent callback should they choose to. Those using the text line receive a written questionnaire to ensure feedback is accessible to all. In addition, we have developed an ‘all service’ feedback survey which can be completed at any stage of an individuals’ journey with Adult Services. The feedback is collated, analysed and discussed with managers with good practice celebrated and issues taken forward as learning opportunities.

As part of the feedback, people have told us:

“all been very good when visiting or phoning, am always pointed in right direction”,

“made a massive difference talking to someone face-to-face rather than on phone or email”;

“easy meeting, advice from the social worker, very thorough keeping things up-to-date, thank you”;

“I wish it was like before having a named social worker, than we just have anyone available. This means you can’t get a a relationship going with the person”;

“you were very helpful and took time to make sure we understood”;

“Tremendous difference. Little stickers on microwave and oven. Small things that really helped. Felt that someone really cared and was trying to help”;

Mattie’s Story is ‘lived experience’ of the shared lives service.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFC_Y4eYXgQ

Following feedback from one caller to ASSIST, it was really clear that we needed a more robust pathway for people who had been in hospital and needed to reinstate their previous care. A new process has now been developed and implemented to make it clear for all concerned.

Our Reablement Team have been praised for their care and support by a gentleman who shared his experience with the Improving Cancer Journey in Powys. Whilst he praised the wrap around support he's been given by a mix of professionals, he particularly commented on the support provided by his county council care team, the housing service and the money advice scheme; "I can't speak highly enough of the care received. The carers are all saints. I trust them and listen to their advice. They don't treat me like a number and have gone over and above on numerous occasions to help me be as comfortable as possible as I live with the side effects of my cancer".

We have been transforming the way in which direct payments are managed with the Information and Support Service now having transferred under the management of the local authority. During the year we consulted with individuals in receipt of direct payments via a survey and also with professionals such as social workers who advise individuals on what services direct payments might be used for. Following analysis of all the information received, we have developed key information documents based on frequently asked questions along with other tools and guides for professionals and in 2024-25 will launch a new Direct Payment Policy. We have also developed a Direct Payment Marketplace Portal which has a dual purpose; this will enable personal assistants and small organisation to advertise their availability for support and direct payment recipients to use it to find care and support. During the year we established a Direct Payment Forum which has provided additional opportunities for those in receipt of direct payments, to provide and co-produce change as part of our activity to modernise the service. We have also seen a marked decrease in complaints/concerns received and instances of personal assistants not receiving their pay on time.

In 2023/24, following cessation of the funding for Community Catalysts and a period of handover to in-house support, we have continued to develop a range of direct payment carer options including employable personal assistants, self-employed personal assistants and all types of community micro-enterprises and small businesses. For all self-employed personal assistants we now have in place a dedicated forum and have provided detailed information in terms of our offer of support.

To help challenge the stigma and raise awareness of mental health and the support our services can provide, our Mental Health Support Service arranged a "mental Elf" fun run/walk in Newtown.



Following a competitive process, we have awarded a three-year contract for the provision of an Independent Professional Advocacy Service for Adults in Powys; this service is impartial and will act in the best interest of the individual. As part of the contract, the provider will work in partnership with the community and voluntary sector to ensure advocacy is understood and support is available to

citizens who may have difficulty articulating or negotiating their needs and personal goals.

Following a suggestion from a staff member, we have changed our working practices to support our disability case workers to work out of day service bases. Staff within the bases have said “this is an amazing service where individuals have a face they know and a person to approach with anything they feel is important. One individual has made huge progress and is always eager to show the case worker what he has achieved since their last visit”. A wide range of feedback from individuals has been received, including; “It is good to have X because if we need her for anything then she’s here and we do not need to message her to come in because she’s already here every two weeks”; “It is good to see X and to see a familiar face”; “It is good that X comes as she can actually see me engaging in activities”; “I can go to her when I need something”; “She helped me with Makaton”. Feedback from day service support workers has also been positive in that they have been able to discuss issues with the case worker who has supported them to understand processes in place and it has enabled us to respond quickly to requests.

As Interim and now permanent Director of Social Services I have led staff roadshows across the county giving staff the opportunity to meet me and my senior management team face-to-face or virtually and to help shape our improvement and transformation journey. One of my roadshow themes was ‘Transformation and Wellbeing’, staff were encouraged to provide ideas on what was ‘working well’ or not ‘working well’ and ‘what they’d like to change’. This led to some very rich conversations as shown in the word art with 399 comments made. I have also continued to hold quarterly staff meetings where representatives from all teams can ask questions or raise anything they wish to with not only myself by Heads of Services too. I have committed to providing responses on any issues or concerns raised if not answered within the meetings.



Following the departure of the Head of Adult Services at the end of last year and subsequent interim arrangements being put in place, we successfully appointed a new Head of Adult Services who will, from April 2024, also take the lead for Adult Services commissioning. The Head of Service will review current staffing structures and any interim posts with the aim of providing stability across the workforce.

The Adult Services Senior Management Team meet on a regular basis which gives opportunity for them to resolve any issues, approve policies and set plans for the future direction of travel. Monthly update meetings are held with Team Managers to enable the flow of information and problem solving up, down and across the service. Through supervisions, annual appraisals and general discussions managers promote the corporate Employee Assistance Programme to support employees in making the most of their physical, emotional and financial well-being.

In continuing our support of the “grow your own ethos” following an application process and subsequent interviews, we have enrolled five members of staff in Adult Services on the Open University Degree in Social Work Training course. In addition, we have enrolled four members of staff to undertake their Social Work Practice (K102) and Foundations for Social

Care (KZW123) training which will count towards the first year of the Social Work degree programme. The Practice Learning and Development Officer provides support and guidance to staff who are looking to apply to undertake the Degree in Social Work meaning that staff are clear on the commitment and qualifications required for the training. We recruited a new Shared Lives Manager during the year; the new manager had completed their diploma through the council which enabled them to apply for the post.

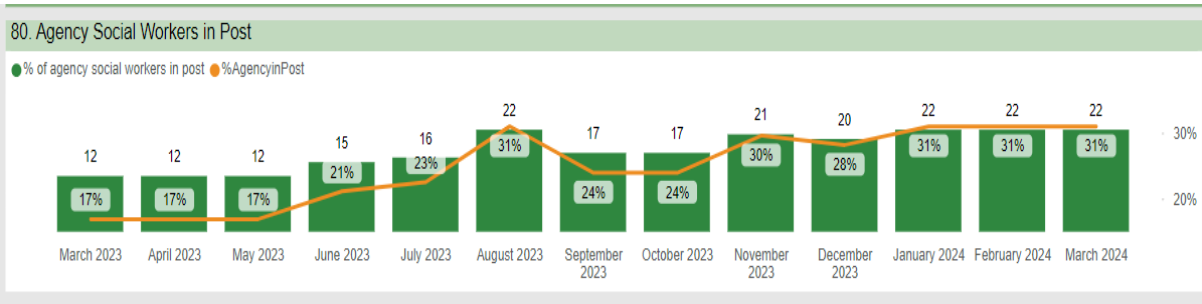
In support of succession planning, learning and ongoing leadership for a team, we successfully appointed an Adult Services Team Manager to cover a Senior Manager whilst on a period of planned absence. Also, some of our new managers are undertaking middle management courses to develop not only their own skills but to further enhance the leadership and support they can provide within their teams and across Adult Services. An internal staff survey found that 20% of respondents are keen for career progression within the next twelve months; continuous development and learning will remain a key priority for staff to support this natural succession to new or promoted roles. We will also continue to provide opportunities for staff to receive mentoring and coaching. Through the work of Workforce Futures and the Health and Social Care Academy we will consider how we can support Apprenticeships with the aim of attracting new workforce. We will also support, wherever possible, secondment opportunities for our existing workforce to support personal development. Some of our Team Managers are undertaking the Team Manager Development Programme, commissioned by Social Care Wales, which will support which will enhance their leadership and covers improving practice quality, managing teams effectively and handling change successfully.

“Grow your own” - aspirations of a Reablement Care and Support Worker

<https://youtu.be/EJVs1mVXO0g>

As part of our efforts to deliver more services through the medium of Welsh, we continue to encourage staff to take up the Welsh language training on offer within the local authority. Within Adult services and commissioning we continue to have a breadth of languages spoken and wherever possible we make use of these skills to ensure Powys citizens are supported in the language of their choice. During 2023/24, 58 members of staff with Adult Services started a Welsh Language course through the local authority.

Due to recruitment challenges noted in the workforce section of the report, we have had a higher reliance on the number of agency staff employed to deliver core services than we would normally like to see. However, work to reduce our reliance on agency staff has continued throughout the year with recruitment events being held, job fairs attended and promotion of roles within the local authority continuing. You will note that the table below shows an increase in agency social workers, however, some of these relate to grant funded project work and are not core funded. We ended 6 of these posts at the end of March 2024 with others due to terminate in the first quarter of 2024/25.



“I’ve been a social worker/approved mental health practitioner for nearly 30 years and have worked in many different areas. I would just like to take this opportunity to say that I have recently very deliberately returned to work in Powys County Council mental health services (in these difficult times) due to the high calibre of my colleagues and the excellent leadership support within the team.”

People: What we plan to do in 2024-2025
Review staff staffing structures and any interim posts with the aim of providing stability across the workforce.
Review locality team project and develop options in line with the Sustainable Powys placed based support ethos.
Implement new co-produced innovative models of day opportunities (all age) within communities across Powys in appropriate, modern and fit for purpose facilities which support people’s health and wellbeing alongside voice, choice and control.
Implement a new co-produced Direct Payment Policy

Prevention

The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented whilst ensuring that the best outcomes for people are achieved
Resilience within communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively supporting people who need care and/or support including carers to learn develop and participate in society

Children’s Services

Continue and expand the work of the Intervention and Prevention Service working with families to allow them to stay together safely.

Throughout the past year, our intervention and prevention service has supported teams with family network meetings to guide them through the process with a view to take on these themselves and develop the social worker role to consistently provide these meetings as part of their support.

Within the intervention and prevention service we have staff developing roles in therapeutic interventions to assist children and their families to build on their relationships to keep children with their families.

The intervention and prevention service has been developing more staff training with the Adverse Childhood Experiences’ toolkit, which is allowing parents to consider how their

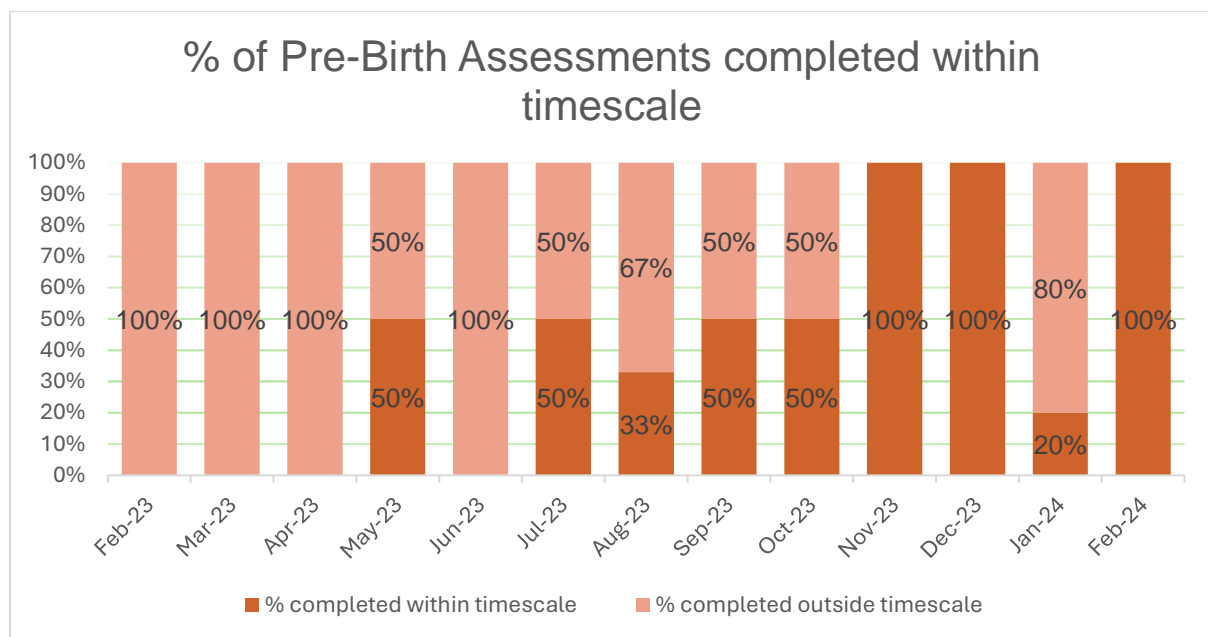
childhood and life experiences have affected their roles as parents. This is assisting parents to self assess how they parent and build in motivation to change.

The intervention and prevention service are working on their working relationship with the Front Door team to ensure that any cases that contact Children's Services in crisis can have an immediate response from a practitioner while other background checks and social work allocation is pending.

Develop a plan for providing pre-birth support which aligns with our regional partners

In Quarter 1 a multi-agency baby steering group was established. This group will focus on how we support babies to remain at home and will link in with our pre-birth regional pathway and in quarter 2 we built on this work by creating a flowchart to explain the process and pathway. At the start of the financial year we also permanently appointed to the Principal Social Worker position who will lead on the development of implementing the pre-birth pathway throughout the service.

We identified early in the year that there were improvements to be made with the completion of our pre-birth assessments within timescale. Therefore, the initial focus of this work, was to improve the pre-birth assessment stage. This increased our performance in this area. The next steps will be around the offer of intervention following the assessment and ensuring there is a clear pre-birth plan in place prior to the arrival of the baby.



During this work we have established ongoing dialogue with midwife colleagues and we are now undertaking fortnightly tracking for pre-birth. The Powys pre-birth pathway is in draft and is currently being considered by other agencies alongside the regional pathway.

The Pre-birth principal social worker has been working alongside practitioners to improve the performance in completing assessments within timescale.

Ensure there is the right support for parents who have had their children removed from their care

We identified in Quarter 2 a drop in referrals to the Reflect Service. Reflect is a charity that provides support to women who have had children removed from their care. We undertook a review of the effectiveness of our active offer. The lead commissioner for the Reflect Service attended our Operational Management Team Meeting in Quarter 3 to promote the referral process and the service that Reflect offer. Reflect are also being included in the pre-birth multi-agency work which the Principal Social Worker for Pre-Birth is leading on. A Reflect referral is being considered for every mother who has had a child removed from their care. Due to the above work we have seen an increase in referrals to Reflect in Quarter 3.

Additional Information to support the objective

Our Family Information Service continue to send out regular newsletters to professionals and families. As an example, December's newsletter included some helpful and preventative tips for supporting families through the Christmas period and provided signposting to some key partner agencies.





Gwybodaeth a chefnogaeth
Weithiau, yr anrheg gorau i'ch hunan neu'ch plentyn yw gofyn am help neu gefnogaeth

<p>Byw Heb Ofn 24/7 Llinell Gymorth Trais yn y Cartref 08088 010 800</p>	<p>111 opsïwn 2 Os ydych chi, aelod o'r teulu neu ffrind mewn argyfwng ac angen help, ffonwch 111 a ddiol opsïwn 2. Byddwch yn cael eich cysylltu â'r ganolfan gyswilt ble fydd staff hyfforddedig yn darparu cymorth priddol a chynghor 24 awr y dydd / 365 dydd y flwyddyn.</p>	<p>Adferiad Darparu help a chymorth i bobl ag iechyd meddwl, dehydiddio sylweddau, dibyniaeth ac anghenion cymhleth eraill adferiad.org/cym/</p>
<p>Calan Dws Cymorth ar gyfer unigolion sydd mewn perthnasoedd candrinol 01874 625 146</p>	<p>Young Minds Young Minds Anfonwch neges destun at YoungMinds Crisis Messenger i gael cymorth 24/7 am ddim ar hyd a lled y DU os ydych yn dioddef argyfwng iechyd meddwl. Os oes angen cymorth brys amoch, anfonwch neges destun yn dweud YM at 85258.</p>	<p>Banciau Bwyd Sganwch y Cod QR neu ymweld â'r wefan www.powys.gov.uk/article/143355/banciau-bwyd-powys</p> 
<p>Step Change Cynghor am ddim ar-lein am ddyled, 24 awr, 7 dydd yr wythnos www.stepchange.org</p>	<p>Llinell ddydd Genedlaethol Gwybodaeth a chynghor i reoli dyled 1800 007 007</p>	<p>Magu Plant rhwng amser iddo Tîps a chynghor am heriau rhiant www.powys.gov.uk/magu-plant-rhwng-amser-iddo</p>
<p>Samaritans Cefnogaeth 24 awr i'r rhai sy'n profi trallod emosiynol support 126 113</p>	<p>DAN 24/7 Llinell gymorth gwybodaeth a chynghor cyffuriau ac alcohol 0800 808 2234</p>	<p>Siarad Rhieni Cynghor rhianta ar-lein a sgwrs 1 i 1 parents.actionforchildren.org.uk</p>

Our Family Information Service sends regular directory style lists to professionals and families on parent and toddler groups and school holiday activities in each locality, which includes contact details for the groups, and the age ranges that can attend.

The Integrated Family Support Team and Intervention and Prevention Team have carried out a piece of work to identify teenagers who are subject to section 76 and the themes around this. There is now work being undertaken around what we can do to further support families with breakdown.

Flying Start is a Welsh Government funded programme, built around the four pillars of funded high quality, part-time (12.5 hours a week) childcare for 2–3-year-olds, an enhanced health visiting service, access to parenting support, and support for Speech, Language and Communication development.

Flying Start funded Family Support Workers and Practitioners based in the Council's Early Help team, work with Flying Start families across Powys through 1:1 interventions and parenting groups such as Incredible Years to offer them support, ensure the best outcomes are achieved for the families and this helps reduce the escalation of need.

Powys Children's Services commission an element of the grant to provide an enhanced health visiting service and the support for Speech, Language and Communication development is focused on early intervention and prevention. Through increased capacity and targeted support, these professionals work closely with families to identify needs early on, and ensure the right care and support is there at the right time to delay or avoid the escalation of need.

Over the past year Flying Start has continued to expand funded childcare for 2-year-olds across Powys, through the phase 2 expansion. The programme has taken on additional areas in Ystradgynlais, Brecon, Llandrindod Wells, Howey, Welshpool and Llanbrynmair. Since April 2023, over 60 additional children have now received Flying Start expansion childcare, and this rollout will continue into 2024-25. In addition to the funded childcare being provided, the childcare providers who join the framework to deliver Flying Start childcare

benefit from additional funded training that goes above and beyond CIW regulations to enhance their practise, and in doing so, equips the staff to be able to better support children and families to receive the right support at the right time.

Flying Start Community Managers serve the five towns of Ystradgynlais, Brecon, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown and Welshpool. These roles are highly collaborative and bring together pieces of work that engage all elements of the Flying Start programme, as well as the Family Information Service and other third sector and voluntary groups to best serve the needs of their local communities. Community Managers are involved in groups such as Baby Massage, Rhyme and Sign, Let's Talk with your baby, Christmas parties, summer holiday events and local parent and toddler groups. Engaging with informal groups such as buggy walks is often an important first step on families Flying Start journeys and through attendance at events like this key messages can be delivered, advice can be given and appropriate signposting can take place, in addition to parental friendships being created and support networks established. This work is key to creating resilience within communities and ensuring families feel supported.

Credu support young carers across Powys. Since April 2023 Credu have supported 244 young people on a 1:1 basis. Credu work with Young Carers 1:1 at home or in school, as well as providing local support groups that meet regularly in Brecon, Llandrindod and Newtown, as well as family groups in other areas. Credu have also co-produced the Young Carers in Schools policy which has been shared with all schools and outlines best practice and raises awareness on how to best support young carers in schools. Credu also take Young Carers away on trips and residentials. Credu connect young carers with other group opportunities such as Wildlife Trust events and support with issues such as Additional Learning Needs.

Montgomery Family Crisis Centre (MFCC) have five Support Workers supporting young people across Powys. MFCC have worked with 198 young people on a 1:1 basis over the last year in Powys, support often takes place in schools. MFCC also run STAR clubs, which are small support groups for children and young people. MFCC are piloting an ACE programme and are also delivering Break 4 Change which is a programme for families.

Powys Youth Justice Service received a grant of £127,396.75, split over a 3-year period with the grant being received from December 2022 and the final instalment will be received in September 2024. The grant is for the Turnaround Programme which is due to end in March 2025. The programme has run, and continues to run, over an approximate 3-year period and aims to improve outcomes and prevent offending for children who are on the cusp of the Youth Justice System but do not meet the threshold for statutory support.

To date, over the course of the Turnaround Programme, Powys Youth Justice Service has been able to support and engage with 20-young people who have been referred to the programme through our Prevention offer or through our Out of Court Disposal process. Of those who have engaged with the Turnaround Programme to date, 85% have successfully gone on to make positive changes to their circumstances, whilst 15% have gone on to offend post-programme.

We have enthusiastically used the money to support young people referred and accepted into the programme. Such examples of spending include recruiting a full-time member of staff to join the team enabling an increase in the number of young people we are working with. **Increasing our staff team has allowed us to ensure that, with the increase in young**

people we are working with, staff are not over-burdened with an increase in the number of young people they are working with and more importantly, young people are not being impacted by having to work with a member of the team who is over-burdened. Other areas of spending have included purchasing school uniform enabling those young people to feel included in their education setting and thus, encouraged them to attend school. We have further used the money to purchase horse riding lessons, family activities and gym memberships. Using the grant for the aforementioned activities has supported young people and their families to spend time together in a pro-social way in ways that previously, they may not have been able to do.

The Turnaround Project has allowed Powys Youth Justice Service to reach those young people and families that may not have had access to support previously, it is evident from the feedback that the programme has had a positive impact on those who were involved.

Prevention: What we plan to do in 2024-2025

Evaluative review of the pre-birth practice and pre-birth practitioner role

Renew Edge of Care Offer

Adult Services

In collaboration with Aberystwyth University, we were successful in securing some grant funding from the Health Foundation's 'Tech for Better Care' programme. We successfully completed phase 1 of the programme which entailed a series of workshops with stakeholders including paid and unpaid carers, individuals who use the service and professionals; the workshops enabled us to identify the types of sensors that are acceptable to stakeholders and need further exploration. We have secured funding from the Regional Partnership Board to take this exciting project forward to phase 2 when we will continue to work in collaboration with Aberystwyth University and other stakeholders with the aim of co-designing a prototype product by Autumn 2024. The prototype product will entail a range of acceptable internet of things (IoT) sensors and an internet based bespoke dashboard which will join up an individual's care circle.



Supporting Care Circles Animation #1.mp4 (Command Line)



Supporting Care Circles Powys Animation #2.mp4

Our Technology Enabled Care Team have been working in collaboration with our Digital Transformation team to pilot the use of LoRaWAN sensors to support unpaid carers to keep a remote eye on their relatives / those they care for; these devices transmit useful information such as temperature and movement. Following previous funding support from Welsh Government, the council has installed an infrastructure of LoRaWAN gateways. The LoRaWAN® specification is a Low Power, Wide Area (LPWA) networking protocol designed to wirelessly connect battery operated 'things' to the internet in regional, national or global networks. The sensors can be relatively inexpensive and can operate in the field for years without maintenance). The outcome from the project will be known in the coming months.

To support digital switchover we have a new fully digital compatible lifeline to support users of our Telecare service in Powys.



To promote digital friendly products in preparation for digital switchover, our Technology Enabled Care Team attended a help and information day in the Dyfi Valley which was organised by Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO). One outcome from attendance at the event was that we were able to support a daughter who was trying to help her mum who told us after the event, “I had about £500 worth of aids for mum in my Amazon basket. I didn’t know what would help and it felt too much. The team were so good to me. I was really tearful as I couldn’t believe there was that much help out there. I actually slept that night knowing I could get the stuff I need to help mum”. The team also attended a community wellbeing event in Ystradgynlais to enhance understanding of what equipment is available. In support of helping individuals at the earliest opportunity to live as independently as possible and to remain in their own home for longer, we have supported 669 individuals with assistive technology throughout the year.

Whilst we have not been able to promote our new equipment and assistive technology assessment website, the new self-assessment, previously branded as Ask Sara, has been re-developed following a change to a new provider. It is hoped that we will be able to launch this, following translation, early in 2024/2025. This website will allow individuals / friends / family members / carers to go through a simple online assessment to see what low-level technology/equipment may be of benefit to them and provide them with information on where the items can be purchased from. The aim is to allow individuals to recognise that they may need some help whilst maintaining independence and leaving them in full control over how they meet that need without intervention from social care. To further promote independence for individuals and less reliance on statutory and non-statutory social care services within a specified locality, we have continued to promote DEWIS which has lists of organisation which may be able to provide support [Dewis. Wales](#)

Case Study:

Concerns were raised about medication administration due to no formal support provision and a carer’s potential admission to hospital. The use of a Memrabel (digital technology) as a medication reminder was discussed; the wife was unable to read but was reassured that an alarm would sound and a picture would pop onto the screen to remind her to take her medication. The case worker was able to enter reminders for both the husband and wife’s medication. This is a good outcome and example of early prescription of assistive technology which has likely reduced the

need for statutory input until circumstances change as they did not wish to receive formal support.

Our home support service is being delivered in four out of the thirteen localities in Powys. The aim of this early help and prevention service is to enable people to live at home with confidence, in good health, independently and safely. We are in the process of securing permanent financial resources for home support services in all 13 localities. This will be done under the auspices of the newly established Early Help and Prevention @ Home Collaborative which sits under the Regional Partnership Board as well as the Live Well and Age Well Partnership Boards. It will be part of a wider locality-based prevention approach with key local services and communities including community frailty, falls prevention, befriending and community connectors. The aim is that each locality will establish a local delivery group that will co-produce an early help and prevention @ home offer/service model that is outcomes focused, based on proven local models of care, needs and assets. The Collaborative will support and facilitate each locality delivery group on an incremental basis, locality by locality, to establish a unique model for service delivery under a countywide framework and will develop county-wide and locality information hubs which are relevant to each locality.

We have continued to promote our Shared Lives Service which is a service where people who need some support, live with or visit people who have decided to share their homes, community and family life; these are called Shared Lives Carers. During Shared Lives week, we undertook a number of promotional events to try and recruit more Shared Lives Carers and also supported events within the community. One such social event was a picnic attended by individuals using the service and also Shared Lives carers which was appreciated by all as a great opportunity to meet and network with others in similar situations. We have held awareness raising sessions with our frontline line teams which was also an opportunity to provide updates on the service. We have now put in place new sessional support/short break arrangements to support demand for such requests. Along with meeting with colleagues from the Vale of Glamorgan, we also have showcased best practice processes and pathways of running our Shared Lives Service with colleagues from Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council.

Feedback from individuals who uses the Shared Lives Service:

“Going to see X is like winning a million pounds to me, it means a lot to me and makes a big difference to me. It helps me relax and makes me feel good doing little jobs to feel part of something”.

“Staying with them (Shared Lives Carers) is excellent, can't be happier. I am very happy here. I am getting on really well with everyone here. It's quiet here which gives me a lot more space to think and I find this really helpful. I feel really valued and like I've found a real connection with people. I can't thank Shared Lives enough for introducing me to Shared Lives Carers”.

Feedback received from the Vale of Glamorgan Service Manager following a visit to Powys' Shared Lives Service – *“Thank you to you all for a great day with you on Wednesday, went away buzzing with ideas enthusiasm and optimism. The operational approach to the regulations* is just what we needed to see and you brought it to life for us perfectly. Was also personally struck by the skill, knowledge and confidence of X and X and most of all their passion for what they are doing, and we were struck on the day by how much you all invested in the day to make it a success for us. We learned a lot from you all and have arranged a session to explore where we go from here and identify a plan/proposal for our team to take forward. Maybe one day it would be nice for Powys colleagues to visit us to see how their work and their inputs this week had an impact on the lives of people in the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend. We will always be grateful”.*

*Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

We have continued to support unpaid carers through the core carers contract and via Regional Integration Fund funding. We have worked with our commissioned provider to deliver respite and short breaks. Opportunities delivered include day trips, spa breaks, art classes and groups, as well as one to one support for people who need to talk through the challenges they face in their caring role through counselling. Respite has been accessed via discrete short breaks but also through statutory assessments, and review work has taken place to reconsider what respite is needed for carers. Carers continue to raise awareness in strategic work, including the Carers Steering Group and also through playing a central part in the day opportunities engagement events. Commissioners and social services recently reviewed the process for accessing support and assessment for carers, ensuring that more carers can access the right support at the right time, and reducing escalation to statutory services. Within our frontline teams we have taken a proactive approach by having a dedicated carers worker within some teams; this means that we have been able to concentrate solely on the carers referred and the workers have built up specialist knowledge of services available in the area. This has helped reduce some of our backlogs for carers assessments and enabled us to put in support service where appropriate.

We have continued to develop and progress the Extra Care programme (an alternative to more traditional forms of residential care or sheltered accommodation) **across Powys.** Neuadd Maldwyn in Welshpool is nearing completion and will welcome its first tenants in Summer 2024. Applications for apartments within this scheme are currently being processed and allocations are expected to be made over the coming months. The scheme offers 66 self-contained one / two bedroom high quality apartments for rent to individuals over the age of 60 who have a care or support need. All tenants will have their own 'front door' leading to a self-contained apartment with additional on-site communal facilities such as a restaurant, lounges, on-site parking and landscaped garden areas. Housing management and ancillary services will be provided by Clwyd Alyn, whilst Powys County Council will take responsibility for the provision of the on-site domiciliary care. Following a competitive tendering exercise, we have recently awarded the new care and support provider contract. Drone footage from January 2024 <https://bit.ly/4c2xly3> and additional information on the scheme <https://www.clwydalyn.co.uk/neuadd-maldwyn/>

The extra care scheme in Ystradgynlais, Pont Aur, has progressed at pace following the original building contractor going into administration; this scheme is due to complete in August 2025. In Brecon, we are progressing through the rigorous planning process required

within the National Park area and this will continue. We are also investigating other potential extra care schemes within our local authority boundaries and will link this work into the review of Powys owned care homes.

Prevention: What we plan to do in 2024-2025
Continue to progress the Extra Care programme within Powys
Work in collaboration with partners to progress the home support model across all 13 localities in Powys
Increase the number of Shared Lives Carers

Partnerships and Integration

Effective partnerships are in place to commission and fully deliver fully integrated, high quality sustainable outcomes for people

People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners

The Powys Regional Partnership Board (RPB) brings together a range of public service representatives and other key people, including citizens, to ensure that organisations work better together to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Powys. The RPB's work is driven by Powys' [Health and Care Strategy, A Healthy Caring Powys](#) which sets out the priorities for transforming health and care in Powys up to 2028. Last year all partners came together to review and refresh these priorities and to produce our second [Regional Partnership Board Joint Area Plan](#). The new Joint Area Plan builds on the progress and learning of the previous five years and responds to what people of Powys have said about their health and care, and what matters to them.

Key to delivering on the ambition and priority areas, are the four subsidiary partnerships: Start Well, Live Well, Live Well (Mental Health) and Age Well. They each involve a much wider group of people and also have their own sub-groups that carry out more detailed work. Each group has a particular focus on a specific population group – children, young people and families (Start Well), Adults (the Live Well partnership), and Older People (Age Well). Some areas of focus are relevant to all these age groups and therefore are cross cutting. These include unpaid carers for example, as well as the requirement to provide relevant information, advice and assistance. There is also the Partnerships Innovative Environments Capital Group which has oversight and management of the Powys RPB Capital Programme. The RPB Executive Group acts as a strategic oversight and co-ordination group to help drive the work of the RPB Board forward across partners and offer support and challenge for key decisions.

The Start Well Partnership has worked to improve services for children and young people, with a focus on complex needs. This year the partnership has worked to further develop the NEST/NYTH model, which ensures a comprehensive approach to mental health, well-being, and support services. The partnership has achieved positive outcomes, such as increased access to emotional health support, appropriate referrals to services, and the development of therapeutic teams.

The Live Well Partnership focuses on creating a supportive environment for individuals to "Live Well" and access the right help and support. The partnership seeks to strengthen services for people with disabilities and enables community development to support

wellbeing at a local level. This year the partnerships Closer to Home project has worked further towards developing the systems to be able support individuals to have the opportunity to reside in communities they consider to be their home. The Live Well Mental Health Partnership specifically works on enhancing mental health services, engaging with service users and third-sector providers. This year the partnership has implemented a model and monitoring framework that provides specialist support for perinatal services for families.

[Partnership team helping people access digital healthcare wins award - Powys County Council](#)

The Age Well Partnership works to support older people to live independently, addressing issues such as frailty, memory loss and homelessness. It strives to deliver care closer to home and has rolled-out programmes such as Home Support, promoting community-based care, to other localities in Powys. The partnership's Befrienders Service, Community Connectors and Technology Enabled Care Project have also made significant contributions to enhancing social connections and supporting independent living.

The RPB's Innovative Environments Capital Group has oversight and management of the Powys RPB Capital Programme. This year the group has overseen the development of the Powys RPB Strategic Capital Plan and management of associated capital funding streams. The group has developed significantly over the past 12 months and is now in a strong position that enables collective capital planning and management across RPB partners.

The partnership arrangements have matured further this year across all population groups, ensuring there is a recognised space in which partners can come together to plan and deliver services in a more joined-up way for the population of Powys, and therefore making better use of resources and delivering better outcomes for people in Powys. Partnership working remains challenging however, particularly in light of current financial challenges and changing landscapes in which organisations are trying to plan and transform delivering of services. The ability to identify sustainable funding for proven concepts also remains a challenge across partners. We have learnt that developing strong working relationships based on honesty and trust across partners can help to support the required changes and manage risk but this does take time and a consistency of approach.

Powys RPB recognises the importance of involving Powys citizens across RPB partners, making best use of resource, and maximising voice and impact for people.

The RPB is proud of the work it does in supporting citizens and carers to get involved with the work of the partnership, adopting the RPB National Engagement Charter for RPB Citizen / Carers Board Members last year to ensure this commitment was formalised and acted upon. The Board citizen and carer representatives are full members of the RPB and equal to all other members. The involvement of these representatives not only informs and shapes decisions, but it continues to provide a better way to identify and tackle 'what matters' to people. There are a wide range of user and provider groups who are involved in the work of the Board, and they do this through commenting on proposed work, helping to recruit key roles, and informing various processes and procedures. A huge thank you to the Carer and Citizen members for their valued work on the board and beyond.

The Powys Engagement and Insight Network was established to ensure that how we engage with Powys citizens across the partnership is joined up and to enable citizens to be more meaningfully involved in shaping policy, service design and delivery. The network has started to strengthen co-productive practices by taking forwards an agreed action plan around defining co-production, understanding our baseline against this, and developing a set of actions to improve this. This work has been carried out collaboratively with the Public

Service Board. Developing a shared definition of what we mean by co-production in Powys has been the first step. Workshops to define co-production in Powys took place in January and March 2024 to bring together a group of people with different lived experiences and also professionals from across the health board, council services and third sector reps.



Out of these sessions which involved wider feedback from a range of fora and networks a definition of co-production in Powys has been established: ***“Working together as equals for positive change in Powys”*** Further sessions with the group will now follow to finalise and agree a set of principles that will guide our work.

Wider engagement with people is hugely important and the partnership and subgroups have various ways in which they can hear the voice of people to help shape decisions. Start Well for example have a Junior Start Well Board made up of young people who can discuss key issues and feed these in. A lot of work has been undertaken this year to strengthen the Live Well Forum, with membership being increased by 75%. There has been a positive shift towards the Forum being for the individuals and hearing their voice, as well as being heard by different partners around the table. The group have worked co-productively to create an identify for the group and to help recruit others to join.

The Powys Social Value Forum also enables community organisations to help decide where best to target resources to improve health and wellbeing in Powys.

The refreshed Joint Area Plan draws extensively on our understanding of life in the county with the updated views and evidence gathered as part of the Powys Population Needs Assessment (2022), Wellbeing Assessment (2022), Powys Market Stability Report (2022) as well as other new research, feedback and policy. This year an initial review has been undertaken against the Market Stability Report to ensure any significant changes are highlighted.

This year the Powys Strategic Capital Plan has been developed, which has utilised the input from stakeholders, plus key documents and reports, with a view to expressing how the RPB will make best use of its funding and capital assets to deliver those strategic priorities stated in the Powys Area Plan - the Health and Care Strategy. The Strategic Capital Plan puts us in a stronger strategic position in which to plan and implement our joint capital programme going forwards.

Children’s Services

The setting up of a Therapeutic Attachment Team. This team is being built in collaboration with Powys Teaching Health Board, so that young people can access interventions where the criteria for a CAMHS service is not met. This is a new initiative through Start Well Board.

In the previous financial year we were granted Regional Integrated Fund monies to set up and deliver a bespoke Therapeutic and Positive Attachment service aimed at meeting the

needs of children, young people and families affected by attachment issues, developmental trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences. This team and model will include

- Direct therapeutic 1:1 support.
- Group work for families/ professionals/ young people.
- Consultation, oversight and supervision to support professionals.
- Webinars and workshops for professionals.
- Resources for professionals, parents, children and young people.

At the start of the 2023 financial year, funding and a project group was in place for the Therapeutic Attachment Team and a model of care was agreed. We have been unsuccessful in numerous rounds of recruitment for the lead psychologist to the team, and are now reevaluating the service proposal with a target launch date of September 2024.

Further develop multi-agency centres in the south of the county



Our Integrated Family Centre in Welshpool continues to be a success. The centre provides a single point of access for Early Help services across multi-agencies.

The Centre runs drop-in clinics for health & speech and language development, baby groups, internal and external training courses, family engagement activities, baby banks that provides much needed clothing, toys and equipment for babies and older children, made available for free from donations received from the public. We also provide a facility for other agencies to provide counselling, family time contact and support services to our flying start families and the wider community.

During the last 12 months the Welshpool Integrated family centre has supported flying start families and the wider community as follows:

- We have welcomed 4560 visitors to the centre, 52% of them were flying start families attending drop in sessions, group, activities or a training session.
- 396 hours of support was provided to Young People through CAMHS.
- 320 hours of support in the form of counselling, guidance or training from the following organisations: Mind, NHS Smoking group, Montgomeryshire Family Crisis Centre, West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre.
- 55 Community events took place supporting and bringing the local community together.
- 330 families attended our Baby Banks.

Improving outcomes for families is at the heart of everything we do, collaborating with organisations and agencies outside the flying start programme, our impact goes beyond the Flying Start 0-5 age range and supports all families, young people and our local community.

We have started to scope out additional potential sites for an additional multi-agency family centre in the South of the county and work has begun to progress the bid for capital grant funding.

Work has continued as part of the RPB Capital Executive Group to identify opportunities to develop a multi-agency family centre in the South of the county, and this has been included within the 10 year Strategic Asset Plan. Initial discussions have taken place with Powys Teaching Health Board around utilising the new Health Board building in Llandrindod Wells.

Continue to implement our child exploitation strategy

The Multi Agency Child Exploitation group continues to work well and data set is provided to consider best practice.

In Quarter 2 we held an initial meeting for the Child Ambassador Programme for Child Exploitation, working with the Powys Pupils Voice group to support children to participate in the development of the programme. The aim is to pilot the module at the beginning of January in Ysgol Calon Cymru before creating a plan to deliver across all Powys sites. The Child Exploitation Manager has met with Wellbeing leads from schools across the County to consult on the content of the Child Ambassador Programme for Child Exploitation.

The Child Exploitation strategy document and action plan have been updated and implemented.

Additional Information to support the objective

At the start of the year we embarked on a multi-agency project to undertake the exiting prostitution toolkit. Meetings were held early on in the year with 19 teams and agencies attending. The fieldwork for the exiting prostitution toolkit has been completed and we are now in receipt of the draft report. We held a training session on the toolkit, which involved 25 multi-agency partners and was delivered in September 2023. We also distributed a survey which received 40 responses, the analysis of these responses is included in the draft report. A survivors panel is being engaged with in respect of recommendations. We are also reviewing and updating the action plan and are preparing to go into the 2024-2027 child exploitation strategy and this will be taken through Cabinet. This is based on the regional Child Exploitation Strategy which Powys led on.

During Quarter 2 we undertook a joint Police and Local Authority audit on Section 47 Enquiries, which aimed to support learning and developing within Children's Services and Dyfed Powys Police. The audit concluded that in the 6 samples, the joint work between the police and the Local Authority was effective. There are several learning points which will be taken away from the audit to improve outcomes. Following this audit a multi agency feedback webinar took place on 6th February 2024.

The regional multi-agency threshold document for referrals is going through the approval process. Powys has fed into this process and has provided feedback. Plans around multi-agency training around thresholds will follow the approval of the threshold document.

Our Safe Accommodation home (Ty'r Orsaf) will provide placements for children in care with complex needs and is in partnership with Health colleagues. Work was undertaken throughout the year to get the home ready for residents and gain CIW registration. The home is now set up, with CIW Registration granted in March 2024 and young people have moved into the home. The aim of the joint PCC and PTHB home is to support Powys Children and Young People who are at the highest end of the continuum of need who may have acute or complex social, emotional, mental health and/or behavioural issues. The model of care provides clear pathways to community-based care and avoid unnecessary admissions to inpatient care and secure accommodation and provide a step-down solution.

The Powys Engagement and Insight Network was established to ensure that how we engage with Powys citizens across the partnership is joined up and to enable citizens to be more meaningfully involved in shaping policy, service design and delivery. Workshops to define co-production in Powys took place in January and March 2024 to bring together a group of people with different lived experiences and also professionals from across the health board, council services and third sector reps. Further sessions with the group will now follow to finalise and agree a set of principles that will guide our work.

We now have increased our pool of Spring Board Properties available to Care Leavers who require less support but are not ready for full independent living. These Spring Board properties are across Powys enabling young people to remain in their communities.

There are fortnightly meetings between Childrens Services and Housing where care leavers and those aged 17 years and are likely to require housing within Powys are tracked. This enables us to look at throughput within Childrens Services 16 + accommodation and ensure that there is movement with our Care Leavers accessing their own accommodation at the earliest opportunity. There is a proposed policy change being considered now for Care Leavers to be given priority status (band 1) which housing are overseeing.

Our contracted supported accommodation provider Llamau continues to offer housing to Care Leavers, a member of staff is available 24/7. The current properties are in the North and Mid of Powys with the future plans for the South of Powys to be implemented later this year.

Partnerships and Integration: What we plan to do in 2024-2025
Further develop multi-agency family centres in the South of the county
Review and evaluate the child exploitation strategy
Implement Therapeutic Attachment Team
Implement the revised regional threshold document and deliver multi-agency training

Adult Services

We work alongside our Powys Teaching Health Board colleagues in terms of the delivery of our mental health service and also our reablement function. We have held some initial workshops to understand what works well and what we need to change to make things more efficient and effective. It is early days with no decisions made or recommendations developed.

Following recruitment of more citizen representatives to the Older People's Forum, we said that we would move to a co-productive model whereby people would have the opportunity to co-design and co-deliver services, eg services delivered in collaboration with communities. The forum is citizen centred, providing a voice to the citizens of Powys through pivotal feedback on themes and our proposed direction of travel for adult services. Unfortunately, due to unavoidable staffing capacity issues, we were delayed in progressing this work. However, by January 2024, we had held meetings to enable introductions and to have in-depth discussions on the terms of reference and proposed agendas for future meetings. One member *commented "Although I didn't fully participate in yesterday's meeting, I enjoyed listening to what everyone had to say. We have a long road to trek and I do hope that once we've got a plan and targets, we can begin to do what we can for the older people who dwell in Powys. Looking forward to meeting with you all in person in 2024"*. Our future plans mean that we will facilitate face to face forum meetings in Newtown, Llandrindod Wells and Brecon with the option for members to join virtually. We have also agreed that sub-groups will work on specific issues and these will be developed and facilitated by PAVO with escalation into the Older People's Forum for support. This is linked to the Age Friendly Communities work with citizen representatives as part of the agenda and future work. As part of our ongoing work we will consider how the Older Peoples Forum can support communities with facilitating information and advice, for example, in one area a citizen representative is being supported to facilitate a session on financial safety / scamming with a national bank. We will also, as part of the work of the forum, capture and review good news stories.

To provide opportunity for citizens to have their voices heard and to contribute to the future of day opportunities for adults, the commissioning team held 33 face-to-face engagement events across the county which considered options for the future. These events were well attended and over 400 responses were also received via paper/electronic surveys. The team have collated the results and will bring together an options paper for decision.

To support the expansion of opportunities for supported employment across sectors and communities in Powys, we have undertaken a review to understand any known barriers to this whether that be paid or voluntary employment. To do this, we have engaged with providers across Powys including day services, social enterprises and third sector organisations in relation to younger adults with disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health needs and with individuals through 'what matters' conversations to understand future aspirations. Our intention from the review is to co-produce and develop more opportunities for adults with disabilities to access meaningful employment. Partnership work with the Department of Work and Pensions has commenced to establish a data pipeline between our two organisations. We will take the learning from this review to help inform the daytime opportunities review as a whole, options for which will be presented to our council's Cabinet for decision.

Our ASSIST (front door) Team is working in partnership with IMPACT, a UK centre for implementing evidence in adult social care. IMPACT believes, as do we, that 'good support isn't just about 'services' – it's about having a life'. Our current work with IMPACT is about remodelling our front door to ensure that it is fit for purpose. We have commenced, and will continue to run, a series of workshops with the sole intention of citizens supporting us to co-produce a front door service which works for the individuals who contact the service in the most friendly, effective and efficient way whilst providing Powys citizens with the

maximum amount of control to achieve what matters to them. We will continue to progress our early prevention and intervention service including making sure all the information on our website is up-to-date and continue to promote Dewis Cymru, a database of organisation which can provide independent help and support, as well as providing a signposting service to Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (PAVO).

Our Mental Health Social Work teams in Brecon and Ystradgynlais continue to support the recently formed Domino Group for individuals who use the mental health service to facilitate:

- Social Inclusion
- Social interaction and friendship groups
- Promoting confidence to use public transport



One of the group members came up with the name for what is very much a social group and it is hoped it will have a “domino effect” in a positive way. It is anticipated that the group will eventually become led by individuals who use the service. The group have used public transport whenever they are able and have visited many places in the last 12 months including castles, the Hay Festival and Aberglasney and have taken part in an art course with the Big Skill. In addition, they have had cinema, shopping and bowling trips, used the warm hub at Brecon theatre to play board and card games and had a wonderful Christmas lunch. Members paid tribute to one of their most loyal members who sadly passed away during the year; they have worked alongside Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority, colleagues in the council and Brecon Rotary to re-wild an overgrown area at the promenade in Brecon and have placed a bench in memory of their friend in the garden area too.

Quote from a member of the Domino Group “ *I love coming to the group, you don’t treat me like a patient*”.

As part of modernising our brokerage function, we have developed and implemented a digital solution for advertising packages of care which need to be brokered to all external domiciliary care providers. This is called a digital Croft and is an anonymised interactive visual map of Powys that providers now access to see what is needed for each package of care, how urgent it is and how many carers are required to meet an individual’s needs. This digital Croft updates daily and providers have reported that they have found it ‘user friendly’ as instead of receiving numerous spreadsheets on a weekly basis, they now have one website link which is easier to review. Providers are able to submit an offer for a package of care directly from the digital Croft, which saves them time and automatically alerts the brokerage team who can progress to the next step in the process. We have also appointed an integrated Brokerage Officer whose remit is to develop an effective brokerage system for

all Powys citizens regardless of which organisation is purchasing the service which will go some way to enhancing the integration between Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board. We have presented a briefing document to the Health Board to support us in determining what will work best for both organisations.

We said in 2023/2024 that we would develop a Trusted Assessor model with our Powys Teaching Health Board colleagues to support earlier patient flow from hospital. We undertook some preparatory meetings with other health boards to understand what worked well and what they would do differently in their areas. However, whilst Powys Teaching Health Board identified a pilot ward for this work to progress, with the aim of facilitating earlier discharge and reducing the waiting lists for assessments, we have not been able to progress this further as we are waiting for data sharing agreements to be put in place. The Integrated Brokerage Officer, who was appointed towards the end of 2023, will continue to work on the Trusted Assessor model into 2024/2025 in partnership with health board colleagues.

To reduce the number of reviews outstanding we have put in place Trusted Assessor arrangements for our day centre / day service managers to review individuals who have access to their service and receive no other statutory services from the local authority. This supports the individual accessing the service as they will be familiar with the person undertaking the review who will be aware of their support networks, preferred methods of communication and will have some knowledge of family / carers; should there need to be social worker intervention this will be stepped up to the social work team. We have also arranged for members of our Reablement Team to act as trusted assessors for the individuals they support; they are required to review personal plans of care every three months which provides an ideal opportunity to review the whole support an individual receives to avoid duplication and people having to tell their story more than once.

We had hoped to progress to a Trusted Assessor model within care homes but despite initial interest, we have not been able to progress this further with the work now being paused to reconsider options and viability of this as a future model.

We have commenced our review of Powys owned care homes and following a detailed appraisal of all options, which was presented to the Council's Cabinet for decision, we have extended the contract with our existing provider for 2 years. We have reviewed our contract monitoring regime and introduced a number of new daily reports which gives us more timely information on vacancies within the homes and supports us in managing our block contracts whereby we pay an 'up front' fee for a certain number of beds in each care home. We have also reviewed how we manage respite to make information more readily available for social workers who are looking for a short-term placement in support of unpaid carers.

Our next steps are to review and update our market position statement (understanding demand) to support the strategic redesign of older people's accommodation, ensuring that we capture the 'true cost' of care whilst maintaining the quality of services and maximising the desired outcomes for individuals. We will link our ongoing review with Extra Care developments and daytime opportunities in Powys. On a wider note, we acknowledge that most care home providers have had a difficult year in terms of recruitment and retention of staff which has restricted their ability to fully utilise all of their accommodation to capacity. However, our commissioning team have worked with providers in Powys to minimise the number of vacant beds and to avoid individuals of all ages having to go out-of-county for a care home placement. What has been challenging is the lack of availability of dementia and nursing beds across the county.

In conjunction with our partners, under the ‘where people live’ programme of work, we have developed a ten-year strategy capital plan which sets out the intentions to provide accommodation led projects to meet specific population needs.

We have continued to work in partnership with the now renamed Health, Care and Social Care Academy under the workforce futures programme of work. The Academy was previously known as the Health and Care Academy but was renamed, following feedback, to make it more reflective of the health and care sector as a whole. Feedback from the Joint Health and Social Care Induction pilot has been positive with the workbook content now further developed and approved.

Under the workforce futures programme other work which is taking place on a partnership approach is the Academy Careers Education Enterprise Scheme which has been developed in partnership with 10 secondary schools. It is anticipated that we will reach in excess of 3700 secondary age learners in the academic year, showcasing the range of health and social care opportunities available to them. We are pleased that a number of school sites and a further education provider have confirmed interest in a more intensive experience for learners undertaking a level 3 health and social care qualification or science ‘A’ levels. Early feedback from 6 simulation sessions in schools is telling us that students have found these helpful in understanding the multi-disciplinary team and roles of different professionals with one student telling the team that having had insight into social work it has confirmed her interest in this as a future career.

Successful careers festival events were held in February which was attended by learners. Learners had the opportunity to engage with a range of professionals and to learn about a variety of careers available in Powys, gain knowledge about educational career pathway opportunities and recruitment processes. Early indications suggest that a high percentage of students gained all the information they expected from the events. A bi-lingual Academy newsletter has been developed and will be shared with learners in April 2024.

The North Powys Well-being Project has a long-term aim of transforming Health and Well-being services through a new integrated model of Care and Well-being along with progressing the development of a Rural Regional Centre and Community Well-being Hub. Work has continued in partnership with funding approved by the Regional Partnership Board Executive Committee. The outline business cases for the project have been revised and learning has identified a need to strengthen the governance arrangements for the programme of work in readiness for the next business case stage and recommendations made to review the Memorandum of Understanding and re-establish arrangements to ensure delivery of agreed priorities. The Masterplan Feasibility report has been finalised; the report considers the constraints of the site, the scale and nature of the build environment along with building and road access to ensure the projects ‘fits’ the proposed site. Work has progressed during the year to implement a revised programme structure which will continue into 2024/2025. There is a known high risk which is the challenge of securing funding to continue with the outline business case, failure to do so would be a risk to a large part of the programme and cause delays in the project.

To support us in becoming net zero for carbon emissions by 2030, one of our projects from last year was the use of electric vehicles for carers to reduce the carbon footprint for travel; unfortunately, we have not been able to progress this project. However, to support us in becoming net zero for carbon emissions by 2030, commissioners in the service applied for a won a Welsh Government Health and Social Care Climate Emergency grant. This was used to develop a new web app created by the council’s ICT Development Team, is helping social care providers in Powys cut their carbon emissions, currently estimated to total 12,000

metric tonnes of CO2e (carbon dioxide equivalent) a year. The app was designed and built in collaboration with our Commercial Services and Adult Social Care Commissioning Teams and is a social services-initiated project that will help the whole Council to meet our commitment to becoming net zero for carbon emissions by 2030. Whilst the app has initially been developed for social care providers, it could be expanded, so it can be used by all businesses looking to sell to, or currently supplying, the council. It is estimated that our suppliers, in total, are responsible for 56,700 metric tonnes of CO2e of our carbon footprint each year. Visitors to the portal will be asked to complete a questionnaire which will then generate a suggested plan of action based on their answers.

Partnerships and Integration: What we plan to do in 2024-2025
Implement a Trusted Assessor Model within the community to support earlier patient flow from hospital
Develop an integrated brokerage service
Develop older people's accommodation in Powys
Develop and implement a new model for daytime opportunities
Review and re-design the operating model for mental health teams
Review and re-design the operating model for reablement

Well-being

<p>People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect and any other types of harm</p> <p>People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible</p>
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Children's Services

Develop a strategy for supporting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children

We have developed and collated data sets on our unaccompanied asylum seeking children, which includes their age, ethnicity, current placement type and location which has been used to inform the drafting of our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children strategy. The strategy is currently in progress and is due to be completed by the end of the year.

Work continues to be underway in improving our offer to these young people within Powys. We have more opportunities within our college settings and those in our High Schools are achieving positive outcomes with good attendance.

We have more options to support those UASC over the age of 16 years in Powys with our housing options; Supported Lodgings, 16+ supported accommodation and Spring Board properties. We are working on broadening the number of foster carers to support UASC in Powys who may be under the age of 16 years.

We are targeting those UASC who may be outside of Powys and offering the option to return to Powys if appropriate. Our aim is to house and support newly referred children in Powys as part of our closer to home strategy.

Review the way children and families access information and support (Front Door)

In May 2023 we appointed a new Team Manager for our Front Door Team. During the year an external audit of the Front Door has been completed and we received the findings of this audit in July 2023.

The key findings determined that there are Policy and Procedures documents in place for managers, user guides for WCCIS and business process maps which display the actions which are to be following once a referral is received. The officers are qualified to undertake their roles for front door services. Front door services receive a high volume of advice calls which would not be taken forward and assigned to Children's Services teams. The workforce within the front door service has the skills to undertake their roles, although increased guidance to parents, teachers and other youth workers may help to reduce reports where they are not required.

The front door services are following their procedures when recording the reports. There are a few issues with the quality of information received by the service. It was recommended by the report that increasing the detail received at the beginning would help officers to make a quick judgement on which actions need to be followed. Additional training and improved awareness within other teams could lead to more detailed information being provided to the service during the initial point of contact to help to reduce the number of unnecessary investigations. Compulsory boxes within forms may help prevent information being missed.

There is a dashboard that clearly displays the outcomes of the service to senior management and allows managers to breakdown figures and look into any areas of interest. There is sufficient visibility and oversight of the service.

Make sure more child protection (core group) discussions take place within the required timescale and improve the quality of planning and recording

We undertook an audit of Care and Support Protection Plans in April 2023. The audit identified the following

What's working well?

- Recognising family's strengths.
- Identifying risks.
- Using clear accessible language.
- Developing multi-agency plans with clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- The amount father is involved has increased.
- Use of advocacy has also increased.

What are we worried about?

- Lack of ecomaps and genograms.
- Lack of timescales within plans.
- Plans needed to be more individualised.
- Plans need to include both child and parents' views.
- We need to improve on articulating what matters to the child.
- Drawing on family support and undertaking family network meetings.

The outcomes from the audit have been put into a thorough report for staff, into an action plan and were presented in a webinar available to all staff on the 19th May 2023.

Early in the financial year, our Care and Support South Team developed a working group to look at the quality of core groups and child protection plans. This group then fed into the development of the forms used to record the core group and the child protection plan. These 2 new forms are now in place and being utilised by practitioners. These forms will support the improved recording of Core Groups and Child Protection Plans and will support practitioners to make sure there are SMART actions within the plan.

Develop additional in-house residential homes in Powys

Develop and implement a quality assurance framework for our in-house residential provision

We have continued to develop additional in-house residential homes in Powys, and have secured Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration for numerous homes throughout the year. In July 2023 we gained registration for our residential home "Henrhyd" in South Powys which provided 2 additional inhouse placements. In October 2023 we gained registration for Pum Copa our residential home in North Powys which will provide an additional 2 placements. Then in March 2024 we achieved registration for our Safe Accommodation home "Ty'r Orsaf" which will provide 3 additional placements for Children with complex needs.

A provider forum was set up at the start of the financial year with Powys providers to strengthen relationships and help to support Powys placements for Powys children closer to home.

Throughout the year we have drafted a quality assurance framework for our inhouse residential provisions and the aim is for this to be implemented by March. We have also started the process of collating data sets to monitor and track performance. During the process of drafting the framework we learnt and understood that the quality assurance framework needs to help staff understand "why" we are undertaking this work, and this is being added into the document. Whilst this is undergoing approval, the Responsible Individual Visits have been undertaken, and has gained young people's views and feedback to input into the quality of care report.

We have had to rely on agency staff within our in house residential homes which has had an impact on the ability of the inhouse residential to be financially viable. We have tried to address these issues with recruitment drives and have used leaflet drop campaigns for our inhouse therapeutic home, which resulted in an increase in attendance at our recruitment roadshows.

Increase 16+ accommodation within county

Throughout the year we have continued to build on our 16+ accommodation within County, in Quarter 1 we gained a further 3 placements, in quarter 2 we identified a further 4 properties to refurbish and in quarter 3, the purchase of the bungalows in Brecon was complete. Work will now commence to refurbish to make available for additional 16+ placements in county.

In quarter 2 we identified the need to work with Housing Services to improve the prioritisation categories of children looked after and care leavers who are ready to move into independent living so that we can release 16+ placements for children with that required level of need. 4 houses have also been made available through the Housing Service to make available additional placements for UASC who are 16+.

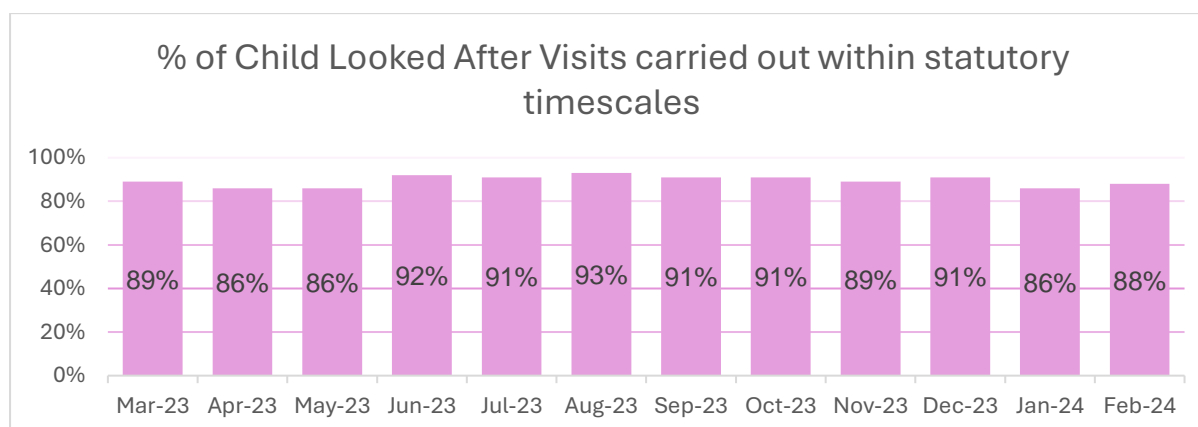
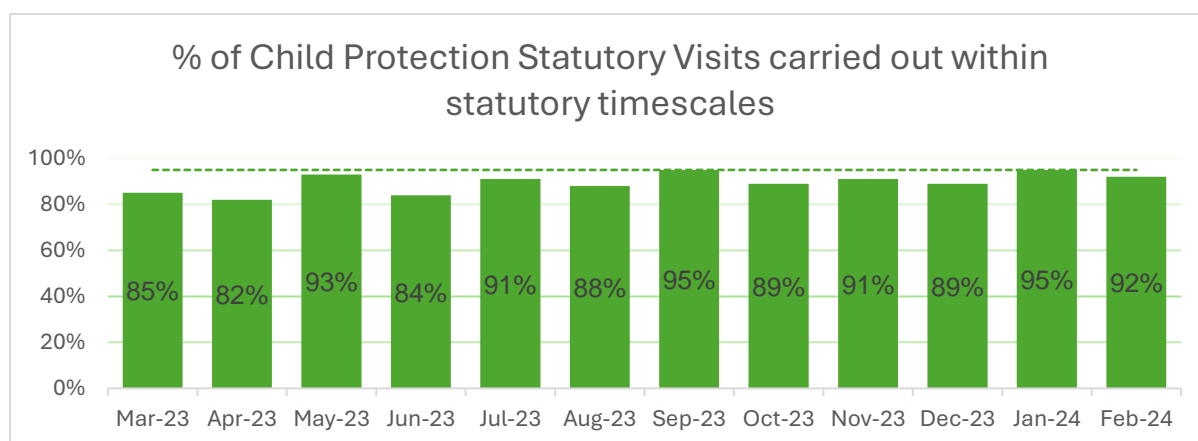
Further develop our supported lodgings service

We have continued throughout the past year to use targeted recruitment for Supported Lodgings Hosts, specifically for the South of Powys where our 16+ accommodation offer is in development.

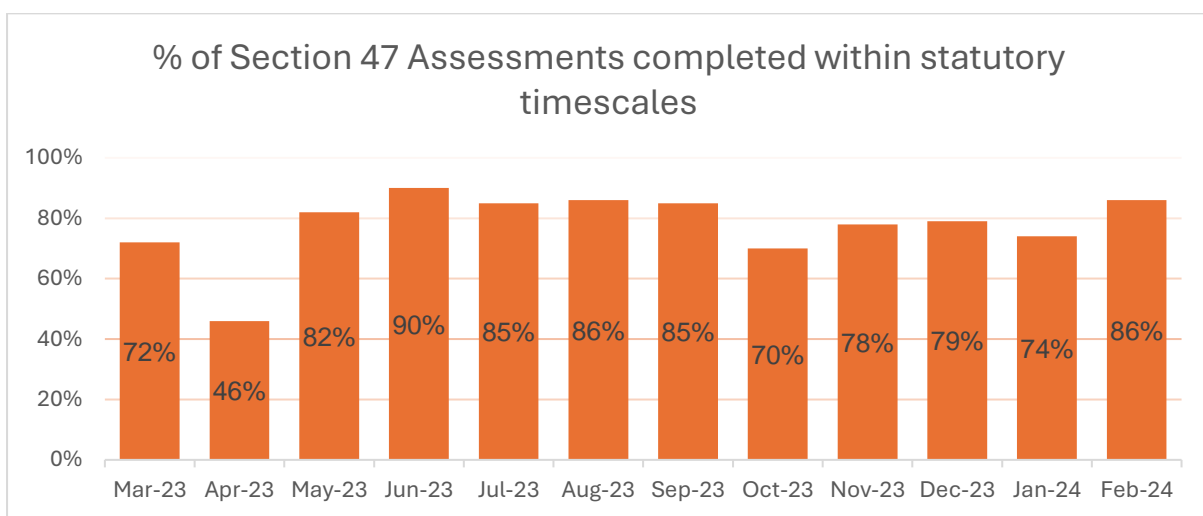
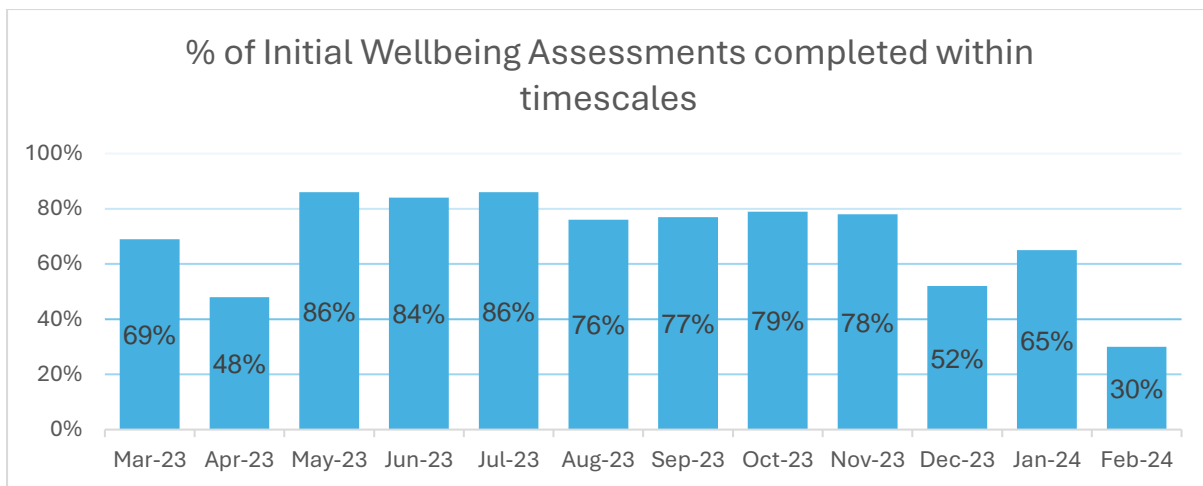
We worked with the Strategic Programme Manager for the Ukrainian Resettlement Project who has contacted and provided details of Ukrainian hosts with vacancies and have undertaken visits to these hosts with the hope that they will become Supported Lodgings Hosts. This resulted in a further 2 supported lodgings hosts being approved.

Throughout the year we have attended numerous recruitment events across the county for foster carers and supported lodgings hosts and there is a local and regional calendar in place for covering these events. In Quarter 3 we held 6 recruitment events for supported lodgings hosts.

Further Information



We monitor our performance in completing child protection and child looked after statutory visits within timescale, during fortnightly performance meetings, monthly performance and as part of the Children's Services Leadership Team. Our performance in completing these visits within timescale has been consistently high throughout the last year.



We also monitor the completion of our initial wellbeing assessments and section 47 enquiries within timescale. Throughout the year we completed 545 section 47 enquiries and 298 initial wellbeing assessments. Our completing assessments within timescale has significantly improved from the previous year. Overall, in 22-23 we completed 41% of initial wellbeing assessments and 53% of our section 47 enquiries. This year we completed 71% of our initial wellbeing assessments in timescale, and 78% of our section 47 enquiries in timescale. We have identified learning points throughout this monitoring and put in place steps for improvement as these have been identified.

As well as the monitoring of completing assessments within timescale. We also undertook Audits on Wellbeing Assessments and Section 47 enquiries during Quarter 2 to measure the quality of the assessments. For the Wellbeing Assessment 73% of audits were graded Good with an additional 7% of audits being graded as Outstanding. For the Section 47 Enquiries, 56% of the audits came back as good, and 3% s outstanding and 4 of the reports audited were identified as “best practice” examples. A report for both audits was collated and contained both qualitative and quantitative data. The areas for improvement for the audits have been put into an action plan, and also were delivered within a webinar available to the whole service.

We have set up and continue to hold fortnightly permanency panel which tracks the placements of children in care. This groups includes senior managers from across the

service, to work as one team to provide support for children to return home or to ensure they are in the right placement if they are to remain in care.

This year we reviewed our core offer to foster carers and the resulting business case is currently going through the approval stages. The aim of this business case is to increase our recruitment and retention of foster carers. We have identified a number of foster carers are due to resign due to numerous reasons for example, retirement, personal reasons, and due to them adopting the children in their care which will have an impact on our placement capacity. Regionally we have identified that there has been a decline in enquiries, and enquiries then progressing to assessment which is potentially linked to the cost of living crisis.

We have appointed a second recruitment and retention officer for foster carers. We have increased our online presence and have expanded use of different social media platforms to increase awareness of our fostering service.

We have successfully recruited into the Senior Social Worker and Support Worker posts for the Special Guardianship Order project. The Senior Social Worker started in post in November 2023. This project has started collating data and undertaken reviews for those children on Special Guardianships. We need to work with the communications team to advertise the Special Guardianship Order service to those that might be entitled to support but not aware. The senior social worker is collating the data and updating assessments. A number of these families will be transitioning to their respective local authorities, after the 3 year period where Powys are responsible for them. We have learnt that the reviews and transitions of Special Guardianship Orders into the lived authority were previously not being undertaken in a timely manner. However, this work has now been picked up by the Special Guardianship Order Project Team. The Special Guardianship Order team will provide support for families going through and considering Special Guardianship Order route.

The Corporate Parenting Services are actively reviewing through the Child Looked After review process to see what support parents need for consideration of reunification, and this includes consideration of Reflect, Intervention and Prevention, Integrated Family Support Team and Adult Services.

We undertook a review of our Integrated Disability Service Threshold Document and this is currently going through the approval process.

Well-being: What we plan to do in 2024-2025
Improvement of Core Groups held in timescale, quality of plan and recording
Recruit in house foster carers
Increase 16+ accommodation within county
Recruit supported lodgings hosts
Evaluate Special Guardianship Order Project
Implementation of action plan from Child Protection Register Rapid Review recommendations

Adult Services

Safeguarding in Rural Communities was the regional theme for a programme of events across Mid and West Wales during national safeguarding week. The programme, co-ordinated by the Regional Safeguarding Board was designed to respond to some of the challenges that emerge in rural areas. Throughout the week both in-person and online events were held, in the form of conferences and webinars that sought to raise awareness and highlight issues that currently affect children and adults at risk. A highlight of the week included a launch conference for multi-agency practitioners hosted by Powys at the Royal Welsh Showground in Builth Wells; the focus was on mental health within rural communities and included presentations and workshops on this theme.



We have seen an increase in section 21A (Mental Capacity Act 2005) legal challenges in the last year. These challenges involve a complex legal process and are brought about by an individual (or their representative) who feels they are deprived of their liberty under a Deprivation of Liberty (DoLS) authorisation when in a care home or hospital. Everyone has the right to have their arrangements reviewed by a court or tribunal to ensure that their Human Rights are not breached. It is thought that the reason for the higher number of challenges could, in part, be due to our increased use of temporary care homes placements which enables individuals to be discharged from hospital at the earliest opportunity. This, along with a sustained increase in demand for care and support and a lack of available statutory provision within the community has unfortunately resulted in delays in enabling individuals to go home from an interim placement as quickly as we would have liked them to.

Our 'closer to home' project continues to be successful. Our aim, alongside Powys Teaching Health Board, is to provide support for younger adults within their own community as opposed to having to move large distances to have their care and support needs met. One such example is a new supported tenancy which we opened in the Newtown, where we focused our financial resource, ended up with a reduce spend and better outcomes for the individuals involved. We worked alongside the new tenants, who wanted to continue with college and maintain friendships, at every stage of the process focusing on their preferred options and needs and keeping them at the centre of everything we did. We also took learning from the new provider with their specialism being in the field of extra care provision / support. We were outcome focused in our approach in supporting tenants to achieve their personal goals. We have worked with a registered social landlord (RSL) to develop new supported accommodation house in the Welshpool area. We have confirmed who the new tenants will be and have avoided them having to move away from their communities to accommodation out of county. We are continuing our conversations with the care and support provider to enable a smooth transition with the tenants move into their new homes which is planned for later in 2024/25.

Feedback from tenants in Newtown which shows positive outcomes, the impact of which cannot be underestimated:

'I was nervous on moving in but now enjoying learning to live independently'

'I felt included and involved from the outset and most importantly 'heard''

'Having you tube, Disney and Netflix. Going to the Halloween party and having a Christmas party'

'The 'letting go' is an ongoing process and, whereas before I had worries about losing control of x's well-being, I now feel that I am part of a team working together to enable her to have the best possible opportunities for a fulfilled and joyous life'

We have progressed the work on a residential scheme in Brecon which saw four individuals move into their new accommodation; we are currently assessing two other individuals who are hoping to become new tenants also. We held an open day so that perspective residents, professionals and community neighbours could ask any questions and view the accommodation available. This has supported people to move back home to Powys to live within their own community.

We have worked with a registered social landlord (RSL) to develop new supported accommodation in Ystradgynlais for three residents. Before the residents can move into their new homes by the end of 2024/25 there are some adaptations which will be required.

Last year, we reported increased levels of demand on Older People's services with unprecedented waiting lists for assessments and reviews. The level of 'new' demand has continued to remain constant this year placing additional demands on the workforce to meet the volume of work. With the aim of trying to reduce our waiting lists and following positive feedback from staff, we have continued to work on a locality basis and will further review this in 2024/2025 to understand if we can widen its potential. We have trialled different ways of working within the locality model to ensure the citizen's voice is heard at the earliest opportunity and their needs met as quickly as possible. We have again utilised agency workforce during the year to support the reduction in our waiting lists in older people services, from 332 to 208 and will continue to work to reduce this further by developing our locality model whilst responding to an ever-increasing demand. As noted elsewhere within my report, we continue to trial different methods of completing reviews through the Trusted Assessor model and through promoting early help and prevention. Our disability team successfully applied for and received grant funding to employ a dedicated reviewing team which has led to a significant reduction in reviews outstanding. Our occupational therapy team have also continued to see a high number of referrals for assessment throughout the year but have recently introduced a triaging system to help support a reduction in the waiting

list. At the end of March 2023 there were 324 people on the waiting list which has reduced to 239 in March 2024.

During Covid our day service bases were all closed and individuals in attendance were supported to look at different activities. One gentleman was asked if he would like to travel to Llandrindod Wells to play bowls and he has quite literally “bowled everyone over”. At the end of last year, he was invited to qualification trials in Cardiff for the weekend and was chuffed and very excited to let everyone know that he did qualify and would not only be playing bowls but representing Wales too. Following coaching lessons with a Welsh champion in Llandrindod Wells, he was pleased to let us know that he has now got through to the final in Scotland and will be presenting Wales. I am sure readers of my report will be as proud of this achievement as we are.

In South Powys, our domestic abuse prevention services are working with one of our Registered Social Landlord partners to develop dispersed refuge accommodation options, which will be of particular benefit to people who are not suitable to be placed in communal refuge provision due to a range of issues that may include substance misuse or mental health problems.

We have continued to see an increase in the need for individuals to be supported by our Mental Health Team and the requirement for our Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) to undertake a higher number of Mental Health Act assessments. We have a statutory duty to undertake such assessments when individuals are in crisis and to determine if the individual needs a hospital stay to support them back to good mental health. Mental Health Assessments are complex and time consuming which has an impact on day-to-day workload. We have undertaken a pilot during the year whereby two workers were solely responsible for completing Mental Health Act Assessments with the rest of the team only undertaking an assessment if the named workers were already out on a visit completing an assessment. Evaluation showed that through working differently, the rest of the mental health team have been able to concentrate on supporting individuals at an earlier stage to prevent escalation of their mental health needs; we will continue with working in this way in 2024/2025.

Our Day Services Gardening Group hit the mark with their amazing produce when they decided to try and attempt to grow something that has never been grown by them before. They put in an order of a wide variety of seeds and every single crop was successful. For the watermelons, the group selected a polytunnel for its warmth and humidity as they thought it would be ideal for the watermelons to thrive in. The group maintained it by weeding and watering on a tri-weekly basis. Everyone was surprised by how well and how many watermelons grew and how healthy they were too. The first successful watermelon was picked, sliced and distributed amongst the group and the staff. A member of staff told us; *“It was delicious, everyone enjoyed it. It was an experiment, and we know in the future we can grow them again”*. Members of the group said, *“they were delicious and totally worth growing”*; *“it was very nice and tasty”*; *“the watermelon was lovely”*; *“oh this is gorgeous, I love it”*.



Well-being: What we plan to do in 2024-2025

Further develop supported accommodation options across the county

Review and re-design the operating model for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards team in order to create capacity to meet demand

Develop our locality model alongside communities to support early intervention and prevention

Areas for Improvement

- Pre-Birth Support
- Multi-Agency Family Centres
- Support for Parents who have children in care
- Child Exploitation
- Child Protection Core Groups
- Quality and up to date information and advice
- Therapeutic Attachment
- Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
- Child and Family Participation
- Edge of Care Crisis Model
- Resilient Communities
- Flying Start
- Outreach Support



- Inhouse Foster Carers
- 16+ Accommodation
- Supported Lodgings Hosts
- Inhouse Residential Provision
- Special Guardianship Order Project
- Returning Children Home
- Childcare and Play sufficiency



- Grow Our Own Workforce
- Residential Home Recruitment
- Workforce Strategy
- Return to Offices
- Market Supplement Payment
- Wellbeing Schwartz Rounds
- Reflective Practice
- Childcare Training and support



Closer to Home

**Right Help,
Right Time**

**High-quality service
delivered with a
skilled, supported
and sustainable
workforce**

Signs of Safety

NYTH NEST

Signs of Safety

NYTH NEST



The Child's Voice

Children's Services Plan on a Page



In Adult Services our plan on the page is:

Adult Services

2020-2024

Service Delivery Plan *at a glance*

What's our vision?

We believe that everyone is unique, with strengths and hopes as well as needs. We will support people to live the best life they can, and by focussing on what matters, we will work alongside people to help them find the right solutions for themselves.

Our vision is aligned to our Corporate and Strategic Equality Plan and the Powys Health and Care Strategy which seeks to promote independence and self-care wherever possible through a strengths-based approach

What are our key areas of activity?

We have **7 key objectives** in Adult Services that help us to manage demand for our services, whilst looking to deliver the best possible outcomes for our residents.



Our 7 key objectives

- 1. Front Door**

We operate an effective front door which provides information, advice and signposting which enables residents to make informed choices in relation to their care and wellbeing. The service focuses on resolution at the earliest opportunity for the resident.
- 2. Hospital**

We work with NHS Partners to have in place a set of arrangements that allow for the speedy transfer of people from hospital, to achieve the best possible outcomes for those people.
- 3. Partnership**



We work with Powys Teaching Health Board to adopt and reinvigorate a recovery approach to all health and social care services.
- 4. Community**

We work to ensure that there is timely, targeted and effective use of reablement, rehabilitation and support that has a focus on enabling independence and self-management and avoiding the over-prescription of care.
- 5. Long term care**

We work alongside people with long-term care needs to have a care and support plan with a focus on achieving the maximum possible independence (as is realistic and possible for their individual circumstances) and delivers the desired outcome. We review these plans regularly based on outcomes achieved.
- 6. Workforce**

We have in place a workforce that is fully trained and supported to work with people needing social care which fits with the ethos and principles of the Council.
- 7. Management**

We collate and analyse data to help us understand whether there has been an impact on the delivery of outcomes and the management of demand on our services.



Other Information

We are currently working with our corporate colleagues and alongside a national team to purchase and develop a new social services database. Our current system, WCCIS, has proved problematic to our teams over a number of years and the national Welsh Government contract is due to reach an end with the system being unsupported from 2025.

Options were presented to the council's Cabinet for decision to determine the most effective way for us to ensure continuity and security of data. We are seeking assurance that our new database will be an improved and fit for purpose solution which will result in better system performance, usability and provide staff with confidence. The work in moving to a new system cannot be underestimated and much of our data cleansing and preparation is underway to support a smooth transition of data to the new database.

Inspections and reviews

Children's Services

JICPA

Between 16 and 20 October 2023, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales (Estyn) carried out a joint inspection of the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect of children in Powys.

The summary of the report concluded that safeguarding organisations in Powys have systems and arrangements in place for effective joint working when children are considered at risk of abuse or neglect. Senior leaders in the local authority, police and health boards demonstrate a joint approach to regional safeguarding arrangements. Leaders and managers have established a highly positive culture of joint multi-agency working.

In relation to Children's Services there were strengths and areas of improvement identified;

Strengths;

- Skilled practitioners assess situations effectively, balancing what is working well for children with any risks and concerns, and closely tracking change and progress.
- Inspectors saw consistent evidence of direct work with families including well-run family network meetings to support people.
- Newly created innovative posts such as well-being officers to help support the delivery of care and support plans.
- Children's assessments are comprehensive and include historical and situational context.
- Practitioners use case summaries and chronologies to develop an understanding of the child's lived experiences.
- When plans do not sufficiently reduce the risk of harm for children, appropriate decisions are taken to escalate.
- Parents receive clear letters helping them understand what needs to change for children to remain safely in their care prior to public law outline proceedings.
- Corporate support for Children's Services has been prioritised amongst competing Council demands.
- There are effective governance arrangements across Children's Services.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the quality of practice as data is used in sufficient depth to scrutinise performance.
- Senior leaders accurately evaluate the performance of Children's Services with an effective quality assurance framework.
- Senior managers in Children's Services are visible and supportive. Practitioners spoke positively about the support offered to each other and the ethos of a team approach.

- Inspectors heard about excellent peer support, informal and formal supervision and approachable and available managers.
- There is a clear investment in newly qualified social workers, with identified management posts in the structure to target support for these workers.
- Practitioners have access to a clinical psychologist within the local authority. Complex situations can be discussed as a team with psychology input and oversight to help support and upskill staff to achieve positive outcomes for people.
- Supervision occurs frequently and promotes staff induction, development and wellbeing.
- There is a welcome focus on the participation agenda.
- Opportunities to work in partnership are positively led and taken up by Children's Services.
- Inspectors saw good working relationships between families and professionals. Parents told us they valued the support of Children's Services.
- Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) have a critical role in overseeing the quality of practice and provide a valuable contribution in challenging delays where necessary.
- IRO's prioritise visits to children prior to children looked after (CLA) reviews, building meaningful and consistent relationships with them. They consult parents in all cases prior to initial and review conferences.
- Effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver good quality support to children and families in Powys despite the geographical challenges.
- Children's Services do not have waiting lists across teams and despite the context of increasing volume and complexity of referrals, staff express positively about improvements made by the authority over the last couple of years.
- Despite the demands on the service, performance indicators in relation to statutory duties are generally good.

Areas for Improvement

- Children's Services practitioners use the Signs of Safety approach to child protection. Improvements could be made to support the model.
- Children whose names are on the CPR are not always seen alone.
- Child protection visits were mainly announced; it is important some visits are unannounced to provide a balance perspective of the child's quality of life.
- Inspectors found limited evidence to confirm that the Welsh active offer is consistently being made, other than at the first point of contact.
- Inspectors found a variable practice in relation to recording and considering a child's ethnicity and religion, in addition to recording who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Challenges in recruitment and retention have affected child protection arrangements.
- Proportionately only a small number of children and young people are attending their child protection meetings.
- At a strategic level, the participation agenda does need to be developed further to provide children with opportunities for meaningful input into the design of services.
- Records of child protection meetings, such as conferences and core group minutes are not consistently shared with parents and key partners.
- Core groups provide regular updates to evaluate progress against children's plans, but there is inconsistency in this area.

- Signs of Safety is recognised and well used by practitioners and partner agencies, however, with the appointment of newly qualified social workers this could be an opportunity to ensure a model is embedded in practice.
- Senior Managers should keep under review the resources within the front door/IAA service to ensure the team has sufficient capacity to consistently and effectively respond in a timely manner and to meet the levels of demand.

The areas of improvement have been put into a multi-agency action plan and this will be monitored as a multi-agency group on a quarterly basis. This action plan has also been submitted to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and feedback on progress will be provided on a regular basis.

The link to the full report is below;

<https://www.careinspectorate.wales/joint-inspectorate-review-child-protection-arrangements-jicpa-powys-2023>

Complaints and Representations

With the aim of improving the customer experience, the Social Services Feedback Team continue to monitor complaint feedback so that it can be used to make service changes. The adoption and embedding of a new complaint and compliment management system has assisted the team in processing complaints quicker and its associated action log assists us in keeping track of actions proposed and taken. The team has also embarked on making improvements to how they handle complaints relating to the care provided by our commissioned services such as care homes. The team has continued to work with Llais (Citizen Voice Body) to resolve resident complaints and respond to issues raised by them following their Summer engagement sessions across the county.

Due to a high number of complaints regarding workers not returning customer calls, work began with both Children's and Adult's Services to understand the problem(s) and agree remedies. Regarding Adult's Services, the Operational Management Team was used to raise awareness and to reiterate the provisions of the Customer Care Charter regarding customer call-backs and all-Service e-mails were used to reiterate the problem more widely. Work is also being done with Children's Admin teams to understand the issues with returning customer calls. Subsequently, complaints of this nature reduced across both Services.

Leading on from the returning customer calls complaints involving both Adult and Children's Services, another associated complaint issue was customers not knowing who they can speak to about their concerns, following initial interaction with social services staff. Working with managers and staff and being raised in the Operational Management Team, it was agreed that at the first meeting with a customer, they should be provided with the bilingual complaint information leaflet so that they are aware of whom to contact if they have any concerns. Follow-up work will be necessary to remind employees about supplying the leaflet and to ensure it is being supplied and including a change to the Assessing and Meeting Individual Needs Policy, which is scheduled for authorisation in May 2024. Some further work is being done on the leaflets to make them more accessible.

Referencing other sources of information

Director of Social Services Annual report 2022/23 [Annual Report of Director of Social Services - Powys County Council](#)

Stronger, Fairer, Greener – corporate and strategic equality plan [Stronger, Fairer, Greener - Our Corporate Plan - Powys County Council](#)

Powys Population Needs Assessment [Wellbeing Information Bank: Demographics - Powys County Council](#)

Social Services Annual Complaints Report 2023/24 – *will need to include once signed off*

Information on the Regional Partnership Board: [Health And Wellbeing | Powys Regional Partnership Board | Wales \(powysrpb.org\)](#) www.powysrpb.org

Information about the North Powys Wellbeing Project: www.powyswellbeing.wales

Powys Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2023 to March 24 - [Health And Wellbeing | Powys Regional Partnership Board | Wales \(powysrpb.org\)](#)

Mid & west Wales Safeguarding Children & Adults Boards Annual Report 2023/24 [Cysur | Our Annual Reports](#)

Impact – Improving Adult Care Together [Mission, Vision and Work - IMPACT \(bham.ac.uk\)](#)
Health, Care and Social Care Academy [Health And Care Academy | Powys Regional Partnership Board | Wales \(powysrpb.org\)](#)

Any other information

[Minister visits Powys projects that support children's mental health - Powys County Council](#)

[Health And Wellbeing | Powys Regional Partnership Board | Wales \(powysrpb.org\)](#)