

Director of Social Services Annual Report

April 2020 to March 2021

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Director's Summary of Performance

This last year has been an extremely challenging year across Social Care & Health. However, we have continued to work together, with our partners in the NHS & the Voluntary Sector to deliver the best possible outcomes for Powys Residents whilst also responding to the direct and in direct impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Despite the challenges, we have continued to develop quality sustainable services across the County to meet the needs of our residents. We have further to go on delivering on our aspirations, but I want to recognise the progress and the journey so far for Powys. In October 2020, after inspections of both our Children and Adult services, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) held an improvement conference for both services. This conference included partners and provided CIW with a 360-degree view of the progress we have made. As an outcome CIW reported that they were sufficiently assured of significant improvement across both Children & Adult services. They assessed that there was no longer a need for enhanced monitoring activity within Powys. They commented on the visionary but realistic leadership and the learning culture developing within the Organisation. This outcome is a real tribute to the hard work and commitment of the staff across Social Services in Powys in which ever role you fill.

For the whole of this performance year Social Services staff have been working under our business continuity plan. This is a plan, which highlights those critical activities that we 'must' do and enables us to be clear about what we can stop doing to ensure we have the capacity and resource to do the 'must' do. In Social Services we invoked the Business Continuity Plan on the 16th of March 2020. At the point of writing this we are still very much working under these arrangements. Our teams have worked tirelessly to deliver these critical services to our residents. This has included often working in other teams, other parts of the organisation and even at times working within privately owned care homes (with high numbers of infection rates) to support the continued services to people who live there. We recognise the commitment and work of care staff and social care practitioners and in our wish to ensure that this work is valued, the Council committed additional money to support Adult Social Care in the budget for 2021/2022 and this has enabled us to deliver on the Powys Pledge which has greatly contributed to the sustainability of the care market in Powys and improve care staff's terms and conditions of work.

I want to dedicate this Directors report to our workforce, internally and the external workforce that we commission services from. I also want to thank the Cabinet, Council and portfolio holders, Cllr Rachel Powell and Cllr Myfanwy Alexander for the political leadership and support which has been unwavering through such a difficult year.

Alison Bulman



Director of Social Services

Introduction

This is the Director of Social Services' report for 2020/21 for Powys County Council. It provides an overview of how well the services achieved the intended outcomes as set out in 2019/20 report, as well as identifying new developments and aspirations for 202021/2022 and beyond.

Powys County Council's Social Services Department includes Children's Services and Adults' Services, both are supported by an internal Commissioning team, as well as corporate finance, Human Resources, and other support services. The Adults' Social Care service works to agreed principles:

Keeping people safe and well – we want people supported to feel safe, well and listened to. Our relationship-based care approach considers community awareness and engagement with friends, families, and local communities to promote the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of those they support

Providing relationship-based care and support – we want to build a relationship with the person we support and to respond to what is important to the person being supported

Working together – we want all those involved in the person's care to work together as a team and to work more closely with the independent / third sector care providers

Building a stronger workforce – we want our staff to feel valued, motivated and supported. To know where they fit in the organisation, know their job role, and feel confident in their job role, and feel that they have a voice in developing the service.

Smarter use of resources – we want to remove manual tasks, and make these more automated. We want the team to feel confident in using digital technologies and the team to suggest ideas for improvement

Children's Services set out its principles within the Plan on a Page:

Children's Services at a glance

- 
1. **Promote a range of Early Help services** which families can access, preventing the need for statutory intervention.
 2. **Focus on early intervention and prevention** ensuring access to the right support at the right time to keep families together, where possible and children safe; intervening at the earliest opportunity to ensure that children and young people do not suffer harm.
 3. **'Work with' children, young people and their families** rather than 'do to', to co-produce plans which will bring about the changes children need as quickly as possible.
 4. **Provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high-quality placements** for children who are looked after to meet the diverse range of their needs and circumstances, keeping children as close to home as possible.
 5. **Achieve the best possible outcomes** for those children in our care by providing good parenting, specialist support and clearly planned journeys through care into adulthood.
 6. **Ensure that the service has a skilled, supported workforce**, equipped to provide a high-quality service to children, young people and their families, which is compliant with the legislative framework and in line with best practice.
- Listening and responding to the voice of the child



A strengths-based approach for professionals and families to build meaningful safety for vulnerable and at-risk children



Adult Services vision is to treat each person as 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. The Adult Services Plan on a Page (below) explains how we will achieve that vision:

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.

3. How Are People Shaping Our Services?

Citizen Forums

The citizen forums were put on hold at the beginning of the pandemic but later reconvened virtually using Zoom. On reflection, accessibility to these forums has improved as a result enabling participation from people who would otherwise have barriers to attend. This has prompted us to consider a blended approach going forward consisting of face-to-face meetings (when this is feasible) as well as on-line.

Credu

We have been in contact with 5,090 Carers and Young Carers, giving direct individual and peer group support to 1,918 families.

People across Powys have been saying: 'there are lots of organisations that do slightly different things – it would be so helpful if you could join up better'. This was such good advice, with funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, we joined up with Age Cymru Powys, Accessibility Powys, RVS and Citizens Advice.

Credu is here for Young & Adult Carers and their families to enjoy a good quality of life as they define it.

Getting a good quality of life can be hugely challenging when serious ill health or disability impacts on one's family. We work with Carers in a variety of different ways, depending on what is most important to each person and we have three main missions:

LISTEN TO AND SUPPORT YOUNG / ADULT CARERS AND FAMILIES:
We know Carers are experts in their own lives and although we might have lots of information at our finger tips, we find that Carers value being listened to and having the space to work through challenges.

BUILD CARER SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES:
With Carers, we build Carer awareness and support in communities, schools, services and build peer connections between Carers.

SUPPORT STRONG CARER VOICE AND INFLUENCE:
This can be having a voice as an individual family wanting support, or it can be a collective voice, making changes on a community, county or national level.

This big review is in three parts, based on these three missions and includes a snippet of some of the work that has taken place across Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Powys and Wrexham.

Get in touch for a warm welcome
Phone: 01597 823800
Email: carers@credu.cymru
Website: www.credu.cymru

Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter icons.

The Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) in Powys programme

Funded by Macmillan Cancer Support and in partnership with the council and Powys Teaching Health Board, the ICJ programme is being shaped by engaging and listening to the views of people living with cancer. The aim is to improve their lives and ensure they get the support that matters to them whether this is emotional, practical, physical, spiritual, or social.

Pilot projects will be launched in late Spring 2021 and offer people living with cancer a holistic needs assessment. This assessment allows the person to set out their key concerns and then discuss them with a trained worker so that a tailored package of support is put in place.

The 30+ personal stories captured from people living with cancer identified ten key themes. From these some specific details have been shared confidentially with the relevant professionals and led to discussions to aid and improve the well-being of people living with cancer in the county, including:

- Insights have been fed back to GPs via a regular newsletter asking them to help reduce “unnecessary travel” for people living with cancer who need to have a blood test ahead of their treatment which can be offered at their local surgery.
- Feedback around removal of drains by district nurses has been fed back to help the service consider again how they can help to reduce unnecessary travel for some patient's post-surgery.
- a focus group held with council employees with a cancer diagnosis led to a conversation with HR about flagging up employees with cancer so they can access welfare rights and benefits advice for the team already in situ and funded by Macmillan.

The whole programme is based on a partnership co-production ethos and involves supporting people living with cancer so that their physical and mental health and well-being is improved because of being offered a holistic needs assessment followed by a tailored support package.

North Powys Wellbeing Programme

The North Powys Wellbeing Programme is a chance to create a Multi-agency Wellbeing Campus in the heart of Newtown. Led by Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board under the umbrella of the Powys Regional Partnership Board, this project will promote address the biggest causes of ill health and poor wellbeing through professionals and communities working together, offering early help and health technology to ensure residents have a more seamless service when they need it.

The programme commenced in 2019 but was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with staff resource being largely redirected elsewhere. Despite this, the overarching Programme Business Case for the Multi-agency Wellbeing Campus has been submitted to Welsh Government.

The campus will enable delivery of the Integrated Model of Care which was created following a programme of engagement with the public in 2019. The ambition is that the campus will provide:

- hospital and other health and care facilities, including the potential to carry out some diagnostic and outpatients’ services, and day-surgery
- a health and care academy
- library provision
- shared community space
- community garden space
- short and long term supported living accommodation.

As well as the longer-term aspirations of the programme, short term projects have also been funded to help improve the way services are delivered.

Since early 2021 work is now gathering a head of steam again and we look forward to re-engaging with communities and professionals with a view to submitting the next stage business case (Strategic Outline Case) for the multi-agency wellbeing campus.

Children's Services take participation extremely seriously and are fully committed to children, young people and their families having a meaningful voice in service design and delivery. During the pandemic it has been more important than ever to be engaging and communicating with children and young people, therefore we developed a range of platforms and methods to ensure that engagement and participation continued. For children aged 8 -13 years, an age-appropriate blog was developed. The blog included child friendly information on COVID-19 as well as educational links and support lines. For parents and carers there was a link to different resources for children aged 0-7 years who cannot independently use the site and it included an ALN resource. An Instagram page was developed specifically for care experienced young people. The page contained important information on COVID-19 and challenges and information to help young people have a focus during their time in lockdown.

Children's Services have developed a Participation Team within the structure which consists of a Participation Officer and Participation Apprentice. This team's complete focus is on developing ways of increasing participation and supporting the operational teams to ensure children and young people's voices are heard. During the pandemic, the children and young people's forums had to move on-line. We were grateful that they were able to help us make improvements to our Children's Guide and handbook for 16+ care experienced young people.

The Junior Safeguarding Board is well attended by young people, and they have worked with other junior safeguarding boards in Wales to develop training on safeguarding. A representative from the board also attends the Powys Local Operating Group to give updates on the work being undertaken.

A Junior Start Well Board was set up to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard by members of the Start Well Board. The Junior Board is made up of representatives from existing groups such as the Children's Services forums, voluntary sector youth organisations and the Young Carers Forums. The members of the board have so far worked on the NO wrong door project and a play sufficiency survey. We continue to work to extend the representation of young people on the Start Well Board.

In May 2020, the service launched the Mind of My Own app, which has been designed to help children and young people express themselves and communicate with their worker about what is important to them. The app was co-produced with children and young people to ensure that it is easily understood. The app can be used by young people to prepare for meetings, share good news or worries and concerns, they can say if they feel unsafe or scared and their worker is notified immediately. Young people create their own account, which can be used on any device at any time. Virtual training sessions have been held throughout the year for staff and the app has also been promoted with our Foster Carers.

As part of the Quality Assurance Learning Framework that the service implemented, all audits, including case and thematic audits, have a focus on the voice of the child being evidenced in the child's plan. In 2020-21 the service target to achieve this was 75%, however at year end this had been exceeded with 82.5% of audits demonstrating that the child's voice was evidenced in their plan.

The Intervention and Prevention Service have developed and implemented a 'distance travelled' tool. Young people complete a series of questions before they start their intervention and then complete

them again at the end. Using the tool, feedback from 83% of young people demonstrated satisfaction with the intervention and prevention service in 2020-21.

The service continues to have a strong commitment to involving young people in the recruitment and appointment of our staff and this continued during 2020-21 with care experienced young people involved in interview panels and decisions on appointments.

Providing Services during the Covid-19 Pandemic

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic Children's Services operational management team came together to agree a business continuity plan for the uncertain times that we were facing and to ensure that we were well equipped to continue to run business critical services and keep children safe. Staff were trained across the service to be able to undertake different roles through a series of webinars. Staff surveys were produced to identify staff skills for redeployment if staff needed childcare to enable them to continue working and if they were willing to work additional hours. This allowed us to quickly identify who could be redeployed across areas of the service when required. The Children's Service Leadership Team commenced daily sit reps to review staffing capacity across the service to ensure services continued to children, young people, and families in Powys.

We were active participants in the weekly regional meetings that took place and led on several developments which have been key to supporting front line staff. A Powys Children's Services emergency procedure was developed in respect of child protection conferences, which was quickly adapted to be utilised at a regional level. This procedure ensured the continuity of child protection conferences and covered timescales, participation of families, quoracy and recording. This supported the smooth transition to virtual conferences. Another local emergency procedure led to the development of a regional policy document for child protection visits and section 47 planning considerations. This covered planning for sections 47's and included making use of outdoor spaces to speak to children alone.

We very quickly put into place arrangements to be able to run aspects of the service virtually, in order to keep children, families, and our workforce safe. Within 1 week of going into lockdown the first virtual child looked after review was held and 2 days later the first virtual child protection conference held. Our workforce adapted quickly and supported families, children, and young people through the complete change in way of working.

Our face-to-face work and visits were continued from the very start of the pandemic and at no point stopped, even when schools closed, and other agencies had stood down and were not seeing children and families in person. Between the start of lockdown on 23rd March and 13th May 2020 over 1000 face to face visits had already taken place with children and young people. Performance data was analysed in the daily sit reps to monitor demand on the service. Approaches to the service initially dropped at the start of lockdown which was a big concern to us, in response we increased contact and face to face visits and a domestic abuse project was developed due to the national reports of increases in domestic abuse and a social media and flyer campaign was undertaken across the County. The service saw a large increase in demand for services following this and this has continued throughout the year as we see and deal with the impact that lockdowns and the COVID-19 pandemic has had on children, young people, families, and communities.

Throughout this time our workforce has been totally dedicated and worked tirelessly to ensure they could continue to visit children safely by adapting practice for example, utilising PPE and outdoor visits. In 2020-21, 93% of statutory visits carried out for children who are looked after, and child protection statutory visits were within timescales. When the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales PPE guidance was issued, within 24 hours the service had produced and circulated task specific documents for the workforce alongside a risk assessment and decision-making tree. Members of staff volunteered to operate PPE stations from their own homes which could be collected by the workforce 24/7 to keep them safe and ensured visits could continue. Guidance was also produced for our Foster Carers and the Fostering teams increased their contact to provide additional support to them during the pandemic and when schools were closed.

Our workforce, at a time that the country was in fear and trepidation, showed commitment, dedication and bravery and found new and innovative ways to visit and work with children and families and ensure that our statutory duties were met. Some of those examples are:

- *During lockdown when schools were closed social workers visited homes and undertook a range of activities with children including helping with schoolwork, learning new BMX bike tricks, and making paper games.*
- *A personal advisor provided support to a care experienced young person who made the very brave decision to stay in university accommodation alone during lockdown. They kept in regular contact*
- *A young person whose placement broke down was visited face to face daily by their social worker while they settled into their new placement.*
- *Workers supported foster carer families who were shielding by collecting medication and groceries from the supermarket.*
- *Workers attended foster carers homes to help them set up technology so that children in their care could undertake video contact with families.*
- *Where a family was self-isolating a social worker played 'hide and seek' with a child through the downstairs windows of their home to help engage and communicate with them in such a difficult situation.*
- *Worker helped to encourage physical activity when the schools were shut, they undertook virtual walks with young people and video chatted whilst they were walking, and they set step challenges and made weekly targets.*
- *Social workers ensured that children who became looked after during lockdown or had a placement move, had their belongings taken with them or by observing social distancing guidelines and using PPE they assisted by collecting them and taking them to their placement.*

Communication was a priority for the service throughout lockdown and the pandemic. When the offices closed, the service overcame logistical issues to ensure that letters were still being sent to families and that information provided was up to date and current. We also ensured that partner

agencies were kept up to date of our business-critical services and to continue to refer in through the Front Door Service.

The service undertook our own welfare calls to children that had received a shielding letter from the Health Board. The Integrated Disability Team arranged food parcels where needed and kept in regular contact to support families.

Funding was secured to set up all our Foster Carers with Office 365 accounts. Working in partnership with Corporate ICT we ensured the rapid setting up of Powys emails for Foster Carers and this was invaluable for keeping in contact and providing support and information during the pandemic. It also enabled children looked after to have virtual video contact with their families during lockdown.

Also, during the pandemic, the Community Support Emergency Team (C-Sert) was created to join up PTHB, PCC, third sector partners, the Regional Partnership Board, and community volunteers. The C-Sert Team helped provide mental health support, shopping assistance, pharmaceuticals pickups and more.

Care Home and Dom Care Provision During Covid-19

There are several areas in which intensive support activity was needed during the pandemic. The Council's work with care homes and domiciliary care has been subject to continuous change and some significant highlights are detailed below:

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council increased contact with care home and domiciliary care providers, at one point including daily calls to offer support, advice, and guidance.
2. An email address for the Council's Commissioning team was set up and monitored 7 days a week. This provided care homes with an out of hours contact for information, advice, and/or support.
3. The Council's contract monitoring officers initiated a process to reduce the number of calls being received by care homes from partners such as Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) and Public Health Wales and collaborated with PTHB nursing staff to streamline this process once it was in place.
4. The Council's contract monitoring officers, together with the Business Intelligence team developed a Care Home Dashboard which holds up to date care home information and as such, eliminates the need for multiple requests for information from the care homes themselves.
5. Homes were supplied with PPE packs comprising 200 disposable aprons, 200 pairs of disposable gloves, 200 fluid resistant face masks and 50 pair of reusable eye goggles. As PPE availability improved, the Council worked with homes to establish their PPE consumption needs and provide ongoing supplies.
6. The Community Equipment Service were proactive in providing equipment such as profiling beds, static mattresses, alternating mattresses, static cushions, and alternating cushions. 26 care homes (without appropriate alternative equipment) were provided with an iPad to ensure they had the capability to undertake activities such as calls to residents' relatives, virtual GP bedside visits and remote inspection visits.
7. The Council held Business Continuity Plan workshops with homes.
8. There were several instances during the 'second wave' where the Council had to provide direct support to homes. Support included actions to maintain safe staffing levels

(including temporary Council staff redeployment). In one instance the Council helped to source alternative temporary arrangements for resident catering.

9. The Council provided support to homes in response to requests concerning problems with securing COVID testing kits; correct self-testing procedures; and establishing operable staff testing arrangements, etc.
10. The Council worked with PTHB to arrange and deliver on-line infection prevention and control training sessions with care homes.
11. The Council promoted the availability of the Welsh Government hardship fund and assisted homes to make claims related to increased staffing costs and food prices, the provision of COVID secure visitor pods and testing areas, and additional costs incurred due to the requirement for staff testing. As of March 2021, the monies paid to homes via the Council from the hardship fund totalled £3,859,115.

Feedback from the Public

To help shape our service, we collect Compliments, Comments and Complaints and we discuss this feedback on a regular basis. We categorise them into Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints. Stage 1 complaints are dealt with by the team or senior manager of the department. If we are unable to resolve a complaint at Stage 1, then it escalates to Stage 2 where the investigation is undertaken by an external independent investigator. If the matter is still unresolved, the complaint escalates to the Ombudsman.

Compliments	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Children's	14	14	61
Adults	126	130	93
Total	140	144	154



For 2020/21 there was an overall increase of 11 complaints and enquiries compared to 2019/20, however, 30% of all contacts into the complaints team are now being dealt with as enquiries and resolved before progressing to becoming a complaint. This is a result of focusing on dealing with issues as soon as possible and resolving them before they progress into bigger concerns.

There has been a slight increase in compliments received during 2020/21 from 144 to 154. There was a substantial increase in Children's compliments up 400%, demonstrating the improvements in practise compared to previous years. The full Social Services Annual Complaint report is available on our website at <https://en.powys.gov.uk/socialservicescomplaints>

Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Powys Residents

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

Understanding "what matters" in our conversations with people is paramount to successfully placing the individual at the centre of what we do. "What matters" is the golden thread that runs throughout our services and is an important guiding principle of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

What did we plan to do last year?

In last year's Annual Report, we set out several priority actions to enhance how we work with people to help them achieve their outcomes, namely that we would:

- A1: Provide care and support for carers which will enable them to be supported to continue their caring role.
- A2: Further develop our strengths-based approach through promoting individual's own assets and community network support when determining how eligible needs can be best met.
- A3: Strengthen the Quality Assurance Framework and workforce development arrangements to ensure that assessments include the voices of children, young people and their families and plans are co-produced.
- A4: Develop the Early Help Strategy to promote Early Help as the multi-agency approach in Powys
- A5: Launch the rebranded Children's Services Front Door and Early Help Service
- A6: Review with partners the planned approach to multi-agency Early Help Hubs in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

A1: Credu, our commissioned service for Carers, have released a new Carer's Rights Booklet. This helpful guide for unpaid carers is easy to follow and will help carers get the right support in their caring role.

A1: Adult Services fully acknowledge the vital role which unpaid carers undertake across our communities in Powys; our respite policy for unpaid carers, which was co-produced alongside carers, has been published - <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10190/Council-publishes-respite-policy-for-unpaid-carers>

A2: We continued to rollout our Collaborative Communication / Strengths Based training although it has been curtailed due to Covid-19 challenges. Adult services has started a screening meeting with

our front door service, ASSIST to help deal with front door workflow and finding ways to better utilise our community services, family, and friends prior to statutory services.

The Community Connector service was instrumental in Powys's response to the pandemic at a community level. 2020-21 saw a 145% increase in referrals from the previous year. The three main reasons for referral were COVID 19 shielding/welfare support, COVID 19 support and prescription/medication delivery requests. In order to manage demand the service increased its operating hours so it was available 7 days a week, 13 locality networks were established to aid partnership working. The average time taken from when a referral was received to when support started was 3 days and 100% of clients who wanted to receive the service through the medium of Welsh were able to. Community Connector awarded grants to community groups/informal volunteering groups totalled £47,710 and grants were used to support with the cost of PPE, volunteer expenses and meal provision. 93% of health and social care professionals said that the information provided by the service improved their ability to support their client/patient.

Our *Disabilities Forum* continued throughout covid.

A member of staff who was originally deployed from her substantive post in the council to work within domiciliary care service has successfully gained permanent employment in care provision – see her tell her story at <https://youtu.be/25EOuqbV2zg>

To support, protect and keep our staff safe, a new Unacceptable Customer Conduct Policy has been implemented. <https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/18584746.powys-council-plans-clampdown-bullying-behaviour/>

A new suite of webinar training resources has been made available for staff in the absence of being able to deliver face to face training during COVID-19.

A staff survey has been designed to enable staff to give their views on how to improve the WCCIS (people management system) interface and make it easier for staff to record information on WCCIS.

Adult Services undertook an active part in the virtual jobs fair which was hosted by the Job Centre and targeted those on furlough, unemployed or at risk of redundancy because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have continued to support our external Providers in their campaigns to recruit new members of staff through signposting on our council's job vacancy page and promoting via social media

A3: The Children's Services Quality Assurance and Learning Framework was reviewed and revised in 2020/21. Staff are committed to ensuring that quality assurance activity is embedded, evaluated, and acted upon. The Quality Assurance and Learning Framework is underpinned by the key aims of the overarching Children's Services Integrated Business Plan. The framework sets out the principles that underpin quality assurance and learning which are informed by the Signs of Safety (SofS) strengths-based approach to practice that is being implemented across Powys Children's Services. The overall aim of the framework is to support colleagues across Children's Social Care to achieve better outcomes for children and to understand 'what good looks like.' The purpose of the framework is to improve our understanding of whether we are supporting the right children, in the right way, at the right time, and whether we are making a positive difference to their lives. It is designed to help us on our path of continuous self-assessment, improvement, and learning.

Effective audits provide insight into the quality of work with children and families, the quality of management oversight and support for the social worker and, importantly, the views, experiences, and outcomes for the child.

In 2020/21 82% of audits of children’s plans evidenced the child’s voice. The voice of a child is always at the forefront of the work that Children’s Services undertake and the active offer for advocacy is made to all children and young people.

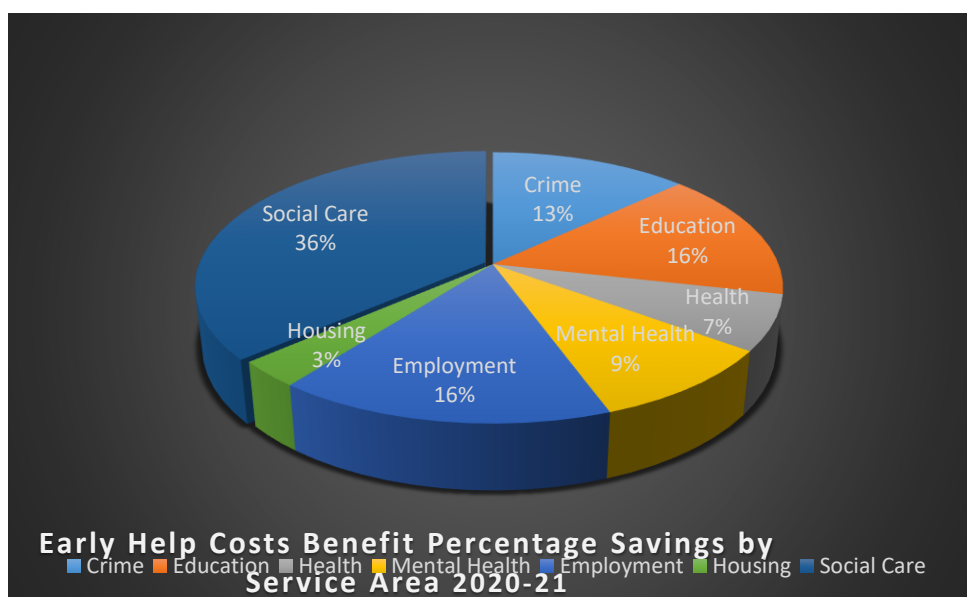
Following audits being undertaken the service reports on themes and shares learning through webinar events for all practitioners.

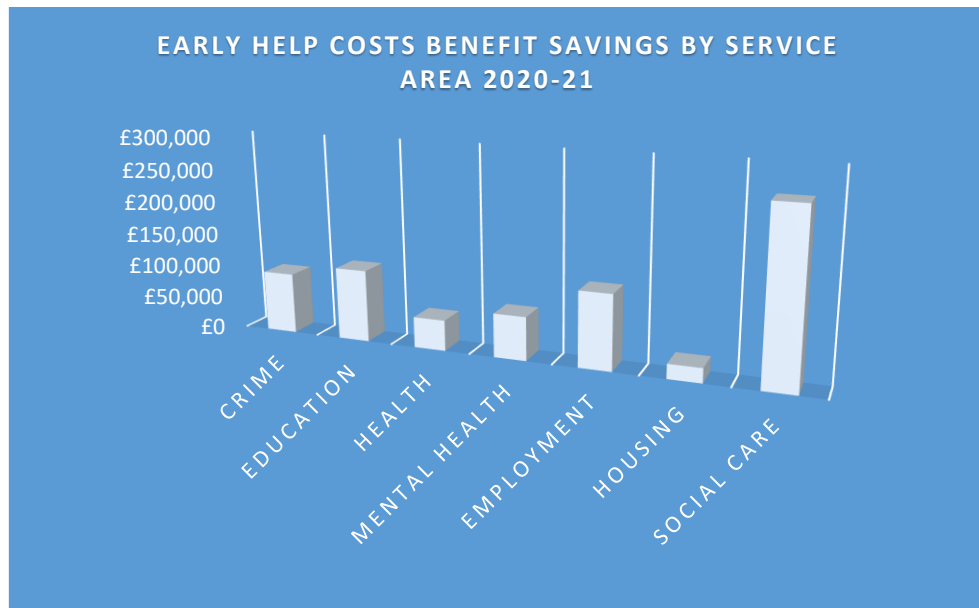
A4: Due to the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic the development of the Early Help strategy was delayed initially. However, despite being in business continuity planning mode, the draft Early Help Strategy was developed in the later part of the year and went through the Council’s corporate governance process and was agreed by Cabinet. The formal launch is planned for Summer 2021. Throughout 2020-21 we have continued to provide face to face and virtual Early Help and parenting support.

During the year:

- 94% of individuals reported stabilisation or positive change following support from Early Help across all of 2020-21.
- 93% of individuals reported stabilisation or positive change in health and wellbeing following support from Early Help over 2020-21.
- 93% of individuals reported stabilisation or positive change in achieving potential over 2020-21.
- 94% of individuals reported stabilisation or positive change in confidence and resilience over 2020-21.
- 97% of individuals reported stabilisation or positive change in economic wellbeing over 2020-21.

A cost benefit analysis, using the ‘Families First Cost Savings Toolkit’ which was commissioned by Welsh Government and developed by Wavehill Social and Economic Research Group, has been undertaken and it has identified that in 2020-21 the Early Help Service provided a cost avoidance total of £703,888.03. The details are as follows:





A5: The launches of the rebranded Front Door and Early Help Services were delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the service moving into business continuity plans. The work was restarted, and this is now planned for Summer 2021 alongside the launch of the Early Help strategy.

A6: Review with partners the planned approach to multi-agency Early Help Hubs in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The development of the Early Help hub was initially delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It remained as a priority in the Start Well workstream leading on Building Resilient Communities and developing Integrated Access to Services. In September 2020, the Start Well Board took the decision to temporarily stand down a number of the five workstreams due to the demand on partners responding to the Covid 19 pandemic. It was agreed that the Building Resilient Communities and Integrated Access to Services workstream and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing workstream would continue to meet regularly to progress work related to the Covid 19 response but the remaining workstreams were to be stood down. The Start Well Board agreed to review these arrangements in Spring 2021. Work continues with the development of an early help hub in the North of the County. All stakeholders have been engaged and the facility is due to open to the public April 2022.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

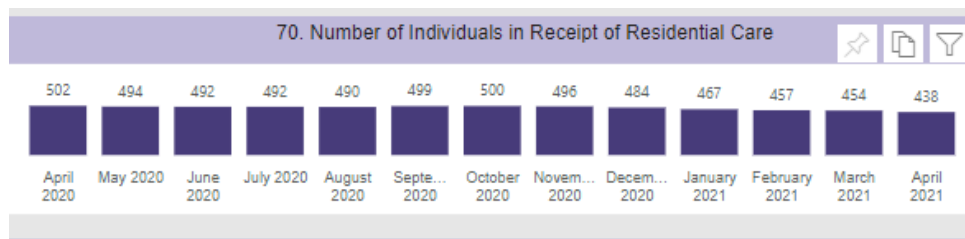
- A1 Goal: Develop a Personal Assistant finder tool to help service users who receive direct payments to find the help they need.
- A3 Goal: Launch the rebranded Front Door and Early Help Services.
- A4 Goal: Develop the Early Help Hub in the North of the County in preparation for opening in April 2022.
- A5 Goal: Strengthening the resilience of the workforce through achieving our Grow Our Own objectives.
- A6 Goal: Continue to provide mission critical services during these changing times to children, young people and families in Powys.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

In the 2020/21 Directorate Plan we said that we would:

- B1 Improve our system of tracking what services people are needing in Powys to support future commissioning decisions.
- B2 Enable more people to remain in their own homes and reducing admissions into residential care, aided by effective partnership working in community mental health teams, and working alongside health partners to ensure that those with a primary health need have needs met through timely continuing healthcare funded support.
- B3 To develop regular conference calls with providers and to communicate effectively with providers via the conference call and by writing to them regularly with updates on national and local developments.
- B4 Improve and revamp the Adult Social Care website to ensure that people can easily find what they want and designed to match the Social Services and Well Being Act. Including promoting greater awareness of AskSara.
- B5 Work with our partners to review the Start Well Board priorities to refocus how the partnership works together to support children’s emotional wellbeing and mental health at the earliest opportunity.
- B6 Appoint an inhouse Psychologist in partnership with PTHB
- B7 Establish a trauma informed approach across Children’s Services.
- B8 Increase the number of care leavers that report good wellbeing.
- B9 Further develop the range of short breaks provision available.
- B10 To improve our partnership working with the Powys Teaching Health Board’s Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.



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

B1 Improve our data tracking to support good decision-making around commissioned services.

- It was announced in August that day centres for older people and day services for individuals with a learning disability will remain closed for a further 6 months; it is not feasible for us to re-open these facilities and comply with social distancing requirements. “What matters to you” conversations are being held with all those affected and where required alternative support arrangements are being put in place including making best use of community provision across the county. It has been agreed that long-term review of daytime

opportunities will be undertaken and presented to the Council's Cabinet. The day centres and day service bases originally closed in March 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Microenterprises (small community businesses that support and care for local people) are operating in Brecon, Hay on Wye, Presteigne, Knighton and Crickhowell; it is reported that microenterprises are covering each other during periods of absence. The 12 Microenterprises in operation currently support 47 individuals known to the council and 56 private clients, totalling 663 hours/week; Our Commissioning Team are working with the Community Catalyst to identify whether the microenterprise approach can be expanded to other areas outside of the original project area.
- Information has been developed for care management teams to enhance understanding of the role of Community Catalysts.
- The personal assistant (PA) tool finder is now live and promoted amongst Community Micro Enterprises and Personal Assistants; this will enable those individuals seeking the support of a Personal Assistant or Community Micro Enterprise to search for availability in their area – demonstrations of software have taken place.
- Virtual wallet – fortnightly project meetings are being held with the commissioned provider. The virtual wallet is akin to an on-line bank account and will be available to individuals to enable them to keep track of their direct payments; this will be made available to new service users initially but there is the potential to roll out to existing service users to transfer to the virtual wallet from a managed account.
- To reduce the number of review conversations with individuals receiving a social care service, moving, and handling reviews, which are undertaken by our Occupational Therapists, are now being undertaken at the same time as community reviews wherever possible
- Opportunities are being considered as to how we can support domiciliary carers who are available but non-drivers in relation to taxi or electric bike provision especially in areas where we are finding it difficult to source care packages; this will support our work in reducing waiting times for a service
- Ask Sara – as previously reported, the Council has invested in its information and advice services in order to enable people to make informed decisions as to their needs and how to meet them. In Quarter 2, we saw a considerable increase in visits to the site which may be as a direct result of the Comms campaign which was undertaken due to the numbers accessing Ask Sara not being as high as originally anticipated; new visits have gone up to the highest level, even surpassing the first month of the site going live.

B2 Enable more people to remain in their own homes - one way that Powys Council supports people to live independently is through our Shared Lives scheme. Shared Lives provides care and support to adults with a learning disability, but also to others such as older people, people with mental health problems and young people in transition and helps them choose who they live with, where they live and how they spend their time.

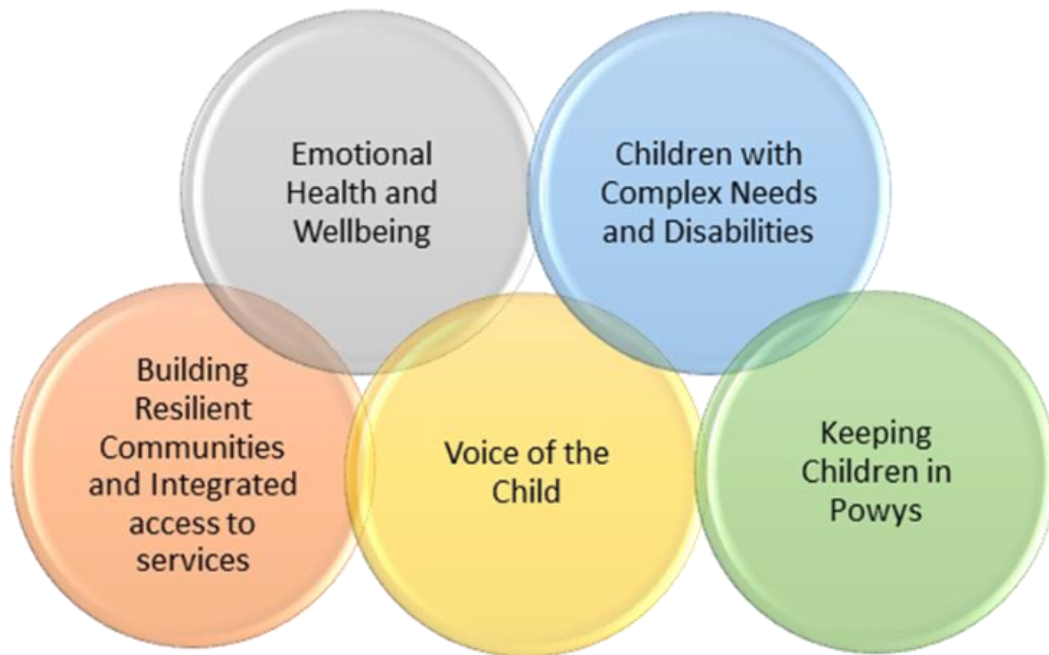
Case Study: Shared Lives – Ryan

This video tells the story of how Ryan, who lives with a Shared Lives caring family, has found a place where he 'truly belongs.' A video of Ryan's experience can be found at <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/1901/Supporting-adults-Shared-Lives>

B3 To develop regular conference calls with providers and to communicate effectively with providers – on hold due to Covid.

B4 Improve and revamp the Adult Social Care website to ensure that people can easily find what they want and designed to match the Social Services and Well Being Act – on hold due to Covid.

B5 The Start Well Board considered and reviewed its priorities in the Summer of 2020 and as a result revised the structure of the Board’s workstreams so they would be better aligned to support the shared partnership priorities. The Start Well Board agreed to reform the work and the workstreams in the following way to most effectively support the workplan of Start Well:



- The Start Well Board agreed to develop a Junior Start Well Board which will have representation from a wide range of children and young people across Powys. This will ensure their involvement, influence, and engagement in the work of the Start Well
- Work continues with the development of an early help hub in the North of the County. All stakeholders have been engaged and the facility is due to open to the public April 2022.
- Working to support the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people at the earliest opportunity continues to be a priority for the Start Well Board and the Start Well Board have developed a project specifically to focus on emotional Health and Wellbeing and Covid recovery which has been allocated funding for 2021/2022.

B6 In early 2020 we successfully appointed an in-house Psychologist in partnership with Powys Teaching Health Board. The in-house Psychologist supports staff across Children’s Services in thinking about their work with children and families and to help staff recognise and value their existing skills, expertise and strengths, and to develop new learning and understanding. This is being achieved through having discussions:

- To help staff to understand needs, difficulties, and strengths
- To work with children and families who have not responded to offers of support, who may be a risk to themselves or others
- To develop approaches to assist families

- To consider how different practitioners and services are working together to support a child and their family
- To work with complexity and plan future interventions
- To think about the need for and appropriateness of specialist interventions, assessments, or therapeutic input

Childrens Services are also facilitating group supervisions, reflective sessions and providing training for staff to ensure they feel confident and supported in their roles. The psychologist also provides advice and guidance in several professional meetings such as resource panel, children of concern meetings, youth justice service team meetings, Youth Justice Management Board meetings and meetings with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) practitioners at various levels. We also represent Powys on the All-Wales Traumatic Stress Workstream for Children and Young People and the Gwent Tier 3 Forensic MDT service meetings.

B7: This has been delayed as the service has been in business continuity arrangements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans are in place to undertake a self-assessment in relation to being a trauma informed service and from this we will develop and action plan for implementation.

B8: *Increase the number of care leavers that report good wellbeing.* During the year, the service undertook a piece of work to develop and revise the Pathway Plan for care experienced young people. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this was delayed slightly but the plan went live in early 2020/21/2022 and the service will be able to report data on outcomes for young people from the new comprehensive plan.

The COVID-19 pandemic for care experienced young people with limited support networks and resources has been a very worrying and anxious time. Many care-experienced young people were at an increased risk of deterioration in their physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. At the start of the pandemic supporting our care experienced young people was a clear priority for the service. All young people were contacted to assess and support their well-being and physical needs. A register of current locations was set up to easily identify where support may be needed. The young people were candid about the anxieties they feel about self-isolation and the risk of infection in the lockdown period and accepted support and guidance to address their needs. Contact was maintained with care leavers by face-to-face visits, telephone and email contact and via a variety of social media platforms according to the preference of the young person. The social worker and personal assistant workforce was strengthened in the first lockdown with additional support worker capacity by re-deployed staff to ensure that there was a flexible and responsive service in place. Emergency packs containing a basic food supply, toiletries, sanitary protection, and cleaning products were prepared and distributed. Arrangements were put into place to offer care leavers financial support either in cash or into bank accounts, allocation of food vouchers and e-vouchers and Smart meter cards to pay for utilities are available. Financial allowance was increased in line with the change to universal credit. Care experienced young people were supported with their accommodation choices whether that was to come back into care, stay in university accommodation or through providing additional support to them in semi-independent accommodation.

B9: Further develop the range of short breaks provision available. Covid-19 has presented many challenges in providing residential short break provision, practice and provision had to change quickly to meet the changing demand. Our in-house children's residential provision was re-focussed to provide safe, long-term placements for a small group of young people. For most families, the closure of schools and the lockdown restrictions placed significant pressures and the need for short breaks

has increased. By providing Short Breaks, Powys County Council aims to also support parents and carers, including young carers. The aim is to enable them to maintain their caring role and give them time to have a break from what is recognised as a lifelong responsibility. Carers have the right to an assessment of their needs.

A children's residential short break provider was identified in the north of the County and a provider outside of Powys, who had the relevant staffing teams, accommodation, and registrations (where appropriate), to provide residential short breaks for children. The relevant PPE has been provided. Relevant training and guidance and Covid-19 testing schedules were also implemented to support this. The short breaks are scheduled in two-week periods to reduce the number of contacts with staff and family members.

The number of Direct Payment packages has increased significantly during Covid-19. The Children's Commissioning Team developed a bespoke recruitment campaign to specifically recruit and match Personal Assistants to provide support to meet families' needs. We successfully advertised and recruited ten additional Personal Assistants who have been matched to families to provide short break support.

The number of hours has also been increased to some children and young people provided by our commissioned provider, Action for Children, who provide 1:1 support as part of Tier 2 short break provision.

The Short Break Project Team have met regularly throughout the pandemic to review progress against provision for each child and young person. Where direct payments have not been appropriate the Commissioning Team have worked with the Fostering Team to identify in-house, short break foster carers to provide short breaks. This has been challenging due to the implications and considerations of Covid-19; however, some children have been able to match to foster carers where this can be safely achieved.

The closure of schools allowed for the widening of the availability for children and young people to access short breaks during the week as well as weekends. For most families, the closure of schools and the lockdown restrictions have placed significant pressures and the need for short breaks has increased. The Children's Services teams worked closely with families to communicate the changes and to explore all options for short break provision.

B10 To improve our partnership working with the Powys Teaching Health Board's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. During 2020/21 Children's Services increased activity to improve continuing care arrangements for children and young people and support for children whose mental and emotional wellbeing has been affected by the trauma they have experienced but who do not meet the criteria for CAMHS. The services are moving together to develop a response for example, the Safe Accommodation for Children and Young People with Complex Needs project, but we have not made the progress we would have liked to, and we continue to work to improve our partnership working with the Powys Teaching Health Board's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

In 202021/2022, we intend to address the following priorities around protecting and promoting the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of our residents.

- B1 Goal - Update our Market Position Statement for Commissioning including residential, domiciliary care and children's placements.

- B2 Goal - North Powys Wellbeing Programme will continue to expand its following successful delivery of the project in north Powys. Children's First initiative has been expanded further across north Powys to include Machynlleth and Llanidloes. Children Looked After will continue to be supported in local placements in Powys where possible. Further projects have also been funded to support digital and more local Ophthalmology and Respiratory services in north Powys.
- B3 Goal - Extra Care – Adult Social Care is committed to adding new projects to support people in need of residential care in Welshpool, Ystradgynlais, Machynlleth, and Brecon.
- B4 Goal - Support adults who require care and support through timely and strengths-based assessments and care and support planning and working to ensure that the right level of care and support is available to adults who require this support.
- B5 Goal - Provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high-quality support services for adults who require care and support and their carers to meet the diverse range of their individual needs and circumstances. With a focus on outcomes.
- B6 Goal - To increase the availability of volunteers to work in health and social care during the pandemic (and beyond), and to work with care and support providers to increase use of volunteers to increase service capacity.
- B7 Goal – Increase the number of care experienced young people that report good wellbeing.
- B8 Goal – Maximise the role of Clinical Psychologist to support across the service and establish a trauma informed approach.
- B9 - Complete an options appraisal regarding provision of short breaks in Powys or implement changes to the provision of short breaks.

Service User Story – Canary Monitoring System

My father is 89 years old and has long term health issues, including dementia. The Canary Care monitor system has allowed us to know that he is safe and that his doors have not been left open. It also enables us to know when his Careline alarm goes off - allowing us to see whether it was an accident or if there is a problem. His movements are detected by the sensors when he moves from room to room, and there is also a record of when his entry doors are opened and closed. The movement data also helps us know how well he slept and how frequent were his night-time visits to the bathroom. We also have a card system that allows carers to easily come and go, yet any unexpected visitors will be flagged up by the system providing a useful security feature. We have found the entire system easy to use and very reassuring. It is one of the key devices my father has in his package of care which helps him stay at home and to be safe in his own home.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

During 2020/21 we said we would:

- C1: The Regional Safeguarding Board will publish the regional safeguarding response to Safeguarding which is a single document outlining the Safeguarding response to children and adults safeguarding. The purpose of this document is to provide a designated reference point for the specific processes to be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to show the significant work undertaken by all our Board and partners in the development of these

policies. The Senior manager has engaged with the board to produce this document and provide clarity during this time.

- C2: To develop a joint care home escalation matrix with the Powys Teaching Health Board to enable full awareness by the Care Home Steering Group (Section 33) of contract monitoring and concerns.
- C3: To convene a regular interagency, multidisciplinary team meeting to consider the needs and sustainability of care homes in Powys.
- C4: Work closely with partner agencies to improve our response to child exploitation and lead on the review of the regional arrangements for multi-agency working.
- C5: Complete phase two of the Children's Services restructure to strengthen the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service.
- C6: Develop the Powys Child Exploitation Strategy and Implementation Plan
- C7: Establish our Specialist Child Exploitation Intervention team.
- C8: Undertake a review of EDT and implement an out of hours response to child protection and adult safeguarding and mental health which meets demand.

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

- C1: The Regional Safeguarding Board will publish the regional safeguarding response to Safeguarding which is a single document outlining the Safeguarding response to children and adults safeguarding. The purpose of this document is to provide a designated reference point for the specific processes to be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to show the significant work undertaken by all our Board and partners in the development of these policies. The Senior Manager has engaged with the board to produce this document and provide clarity during this time.
- C2: The Council continues to prepare for the transition from the statutory obligation to complete Deprivation of Liberty assessments (DoLs) to the new Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS), which comes into force sometime in 2022. The Council continues to undertake DoLs through the pandemic.
- C2: Powys Social Care is now working to the new Regional Threshold guidance and has delivered online training to support staff with a clear process to inform safeguarding referrals.
- C3: A regular interagency, multidisciplinary care home team has been meeting regularly since April 2020, initially daily now weekly. Members are recruited from ASC Commissioning, operational, safeguarding and Environmental Health. PTHB co-chairs with commissioning in PCC. This group oversaw the development of the care home dashboard. In addition, daily system flow meetings have been held in Adult Services to monitor flow of demand through the adult services system, to identify issues that require escalation corporate management team, and to monitor our ability to respond to safeguarding alerts in a timely manner.
- C4: In 2019 Powys Children's Services created a new operational team led by a Child Exploitation Manager dedicated to preventing, protect and support children from all forms of child exploitation. Since then, team has transformed the work of Child Exploitation and has led the region in many initiatives and developments. Children's Services have taken the lead in developing the strategic MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meetings). Working with our partners and agencies we been developing a Child Exploitation profile which is co-ordinated within our strategic MACE. Early indications suggest a greatly improving picture in terms of effective responses to child exploitation in Powys, the safeguarding process is fluid in such that children are no longer entering and getting 'stuck' in a process which was

previously happening as there was no joined up working to enable effective disruption and trauma informed responses to recovery. Powys Children's Services CE team has taken the lead on change in line with research and policy across the region.

Our implemented MACE strategic child exploitation profile which centralises around key data analysis to support a collaborative understanding of trends and themes within our area and what we can collectively to enable safe change has been recognised by the Regional Independent child trafficking Guardianship service as innovative, and subsequently it has been shared to other Local Authorities as an example of best practice. In July 2020 we implemented quarterly multi-agency 'community of practice events. The aim being to support multi-agency best practice through accessing regular expert guest speakers from across Wales and the UK who promote understanding of research, policy, thresholds, and best practice approaches. We have routinely gained excellent attendance across a broad range of professionals including multi-agency partners, third sector and children's residential provisions in Powys. We have reached a maximum of 131 professionals per session, and feedback forms have reflected only the benefits of the sessions. We have also welcomed other LA's who are considering change within their approaches to child exploitation to join us which has been received by 4 Local Authorities within Wales. This has supported raising awareness and greater quality of referrals to Children's Services and a more child centred approach with greater recognition of complexities within this form of abuse, such as the impact of grooming on conditions of consent and the devastating impact it can have on the child and their family.

- C5: Complete phase two of the Children's Services restructure to strengthen the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service. Phase two of the Children's Services restructure to strengthen the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service was completed in 2021/2022. The restructure has meant the creation and appointment of a Practice Development Manager. The post leads on workforce development, practice guidance and quality assurance for the service. This has ensured that the service is supported to create and provide learning and development opportunities and that our workforce is skilled and equipped to provide a high-quality service to children. The Practice Development Manager role has developed and implemented the Quality Assurance Framework and thematic audits of plans and assessments. Feedback and learning sessions have been held following the audits to promote the services' learning culture.
- C6: Develop the Powys Child Exploitation Strategy and Implementation Plan. We have developed a Child Exploitation Strategy in consultation with key partners to support our aim in working together to set out our aspirations, intent, and vision of working together with children and families, social work teams, partner agencies and support services to create communities that are harsher for perpetrators and provide non blaming and safe environments for children. The strategy supports our vision to create a centre of excellence within Powys by ensuring strong leadership and multi-agency collaboration. These include early intervention and prevention, protection and trauma informed responses that will place the child at the heart of their care and support needs whilst providing a targeted response to disruption and the prosecution of offenders. The Strategy also utilises existing provision and maximises effective partnership working to achieve its aim. The strategy is overseen by MACE meetings which are an effective mechanism for reviewing the implementation of the plan. The Strategy is multi-agency which dilutes the burden on one single agency. It harnesses third sector and statutory bodies to ensure aims are agreed and monitored. The Local Authority has invested in the development of materials for awareness raising and the agreed workforce development budget recognises the need to invest in this area of skills development. The

meaningful measures within the action plan reflect the value and impact of the Strategy within its core elements to prevent, protect and support children at heightened risk, have or are being exploited.

- C7: Establish our Specialist Child Exploitation Intervention team. The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance restructure saw the Child Exploitation Workers move from the Intervention and Prevention Service over to Safeguarding and Quality Assurance under the leadership of the Child Exploitation Manager. The team have been extremely successful in driving forward the work in Powys around Child Exploitation. During safeguarding week last year, we successfully undertook the following activities collaboratively with other agencies across Powys:
 - We worked with the Powys Open Access Youth Services to create a video which young people helped to film. The video was shared on the Powys County Council Facebook Page. It gained 2.4K views and 19 shares.
 - The video was also shared on the Powys Open Access Youth Service Facebook Page. It gained 1.3k views and 19 shares.
 - We worked with the Powys Youth Intervention Service to create two videos in the North and South of the County. The video was shared on the Powys Family Information Service Facebook Page. It gained 289 views and 10 shares.
 - The video was also shared on the Powys Youth Intervention Facebook Page. It gained 290 views and 1 share.
 - We worked with Powys Licencing and community PCSO's to raise awareness at local off licence premises and pubs. Together we visited 3 off licences and 7 pubs within the mid of the County.
 - We communicated with employees that safeguarding is every one's responsibility and how they can support in making communities safer for children. We provided 10 information packs that included additional information and visual flyers for their premises.
 - The licencing team communicated with registered Powys Taxi Drivers. They provided an information awareness raising video promoting safeguarding as everyone's responsibility, and how they can support to make communities safer for children.
 - Each evening in the North and South of the County we met with local youth workers providing outreach to children.
 - We communicated with 71 children across the County.
 - We provided 40 Child Exploitation Wristbands to children.
 - The Youth Service provided bicycle lights to promote children's safety in the evenings.

From speaking to young people an action plan was developed to continue to strengthen the work that the team undertake in Powys. We are also providing public facing events for parents, carers, families, and communities to raise awareness, our initial session gained over 30 attendees and a further event is due to run in June.

The Child Exploitation Hub recognises and value the importance of child participation, and we are developing a child exploitation ambassador programme within every comprehensive school in Powys to promote awareness and initiate conversations within peer groups. We hope to develop this within colleges and other forms of training across Powys too.

Child Exploitation intervention workers have created opportunity to support children with trauma informed responses which are at the child's pace. The team utilise non victimising approaches and are also at the forefront of challenging people's language to support the child never being at blame for

their abuse. For example, children do not place themselves at risk which is a phrase which has previously been common across agencies when thinking about children abused through exploitation.

We have developed a comprehensive performance data set which will help us to drive and develop the service further to meet the needs of children and young people.

C8: Undertake a review of EDT and implement an out of hours response to child protection and adult safeguarding and mental health which meets demand. A full review of the Emergency Duty Team and the current out of hours response was undertaken in 2020/2021. Although this was delayed slightly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the work was undertaken, and a comprehensive options appraisal developed. The agreed outcome from the options appraisal is planned to be implemented in 2021/2022.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2020/2021 we will be focussed on delivering a range of outcomes, including:

- C1 Goal: We will work with the whole Council to mitigate adverse impact on community wellbeing in Powys from the Covid pandemic.
- C2 Goal: We will work with the third sector to develop a regular wellbeing call system to reach individuals who have been assessed as needing care, but where there is no care available.
- C3 Goal: In light of the economic impact of the pandemic, we will redefine our in-house domiciliary care service to better support outside care agencies who face resource challenges.
- C4 Goal: We will work with care homeowners, managers, and other stakeholders to ensure that care home residents are safeguarded during potential sustainability challenges.
- C5 Goal: Implement Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board Multi-Agency High -Risk Behaviour Policy (including self-neglect/hoarding.)
- C6 Introduce a best practice response to Child Exploitation and work in partnership with the region to achieve a consistent approach.
- C7 Implement the Child Exploitation strategy in line with the implementation plan.
- C8 Implement the EDT options appraisal agreed outcome.
- C9 Further implement the Quality Assurance Framework with a focus on closing the circle on learning from audits and Child Practice Reviews.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

During 2020/21 we said we would:

- D1 Goal: To enable more adults with a disability to gain training and paid employment as our current commissioned service expires in October of 2020, we will be retendering by reviewing current employment needs and using a locality approach.

D2 Goal: To review daytime opportunities for adults and to support people to achieve what matters to them.

D3 Goal: To increase uptake of technology amongst the people that we support to increase social connection and reduce loneliness and isolation.

D4 Open a Spring-Board house in mid Powys.

D5 Complete an options appraisal of how a full range of supported accommodation for Care Leavers and Young People aged 16 to 17 who are homeless, can be best delivered.

D6 Increase the number of young people in care who achieve their educational goals.

D7 Increase the number of care leavers who are living in permanent accommodation at the age of 25.

D8 Increase the number of care leavers who are in full time employment, education, or training.

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

D1 - Our Commissioning Service continues to explore employment support options using feedback from individuals who use the Service currently and those that may in the future via "what matters conversations". Strengths based conversations have been undertaken with all individuals who are currently in supported employment. Following the contract end date, Adult Services have supported individuals to maintain their employment through a variety of support options.

Due to COVID-19 and ongoing business continuity, we have not been able to fully the work to develop the options available in respect of supported employment has been extended. Work will continue to develop more supported employment options; timescales will depend on the ongoing pandemic; action completion date is dependent on business continuity and consideration of Winter pressures.

D2 - Powys we took the difficult decision, due to COVID-19 restrictions and the infection rates across Powys, to extend the temporary closure of day centre facilities until February 2022. Councillor Alexander, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adult Social Care commented "I fully appreciate that this will be disappointing news for service users and their families, but the priority must be safety at this critical time." We will continue to discuss with citizens how to best support their needs and the review the future options for day opportunities.

D3- Technology Enabled Care – Adult Services provide a range of different pieces of technology to help make living at home easier for older people as well as individuals who just need help with certain tasks (e.g., home monitoring systems, pendant alarms, and door sensors). The Service promotes what is available through a series of animations which can be found via the following link. While recent referral levels have reduced during the first and second wave of Covid, the numbers are now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Our Contact Officers in ASSIST and Community Connectors are now trained in being able to prescribe low level equipment allowing us to support individuals at the earliest opportunity without them having to await a formal assessment.

We are working alongside a partner agency to better provide various therapeutic support to individuals in remote parts of the county and those that live on border towns. We have purchased some interactive robotic companion pets which will be trialled under this project; the evidence is that these can provide therapeutic support and have the potential to reduce medication. We will also look to trial with individuals who have dementia. The "pets" which have been purchased are robotic cats which are designed to look, feel, and sound like a real cat and come in a range of colours. They have

synthetic, brush-able fur and built-in sensors which respond to motion and touch, including petting and hugging. They also make cat-like movements and sounds.

D4 Open a Spring-Board house in mid Powys. Despite the service being in Business Continuity Plans and dealing with a global pandemic, we successfully opened a Spring-Board house in mid Powys. This is our third Spring-Board house to be opened so far across the County. The project helps our care experienced young people to be supported and learn essential life skills to enable them to become tenant ready. The young people are supported by the Through Care 14+ team to assist in making their journey into adulthood a positive one that provides them with the tools to become independent adults.

D5 Complete an options appraisal of how a full range of supported accommodation for Care Leavers and Young People aged 16 to 17 who are homeless, can be best delivered. An options appraisal was undertaken in 2020/2021 and included an analysis of the current costs and predicted future demand for 16+ accommodation, which emphasised the importance of taking a more strategic approach in commissioning accommodation and support for young people aged 16+. The options appraisal considered a range of options for delivery of services and the strengths and challenges for each option. The appraisal was considered by the multi-agency 16+ Accommodation Project Team and Children's Leadership Team and a recommendation for the preferred option made. The options appraisal went through the Council Governance process to Cabinet.

D6 Increase the number of young people in care who achieve their educational goals – Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the work we planned to undertake on developing our reporting of this measure, in partnership with Education was delayed. We revised our Pathway plan document as part of the Signs of Safety Implementation Group, and it has been embedded into practice. All children who are looked after had their PEP's reviewed and mechanisms are in place to ensure all children who are looked after of school age have an up-to-date PEP.

D7 Increase the number of care leavers who are living in permanent accommodation at the age of 25. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the work we planned to undertake on developing our reporting of this measure was delayed. We revised our Pathway plan document as part of the Signs of Safety Implementation Group, and it has been embedded into practice.

D8 Increase the number of care leavers who are in full time employment, education, or training. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the work we planned to undertake on developing our reporting of this measure was delayed. We revised our Pathway plan document as part of the Signs of Safety Implementation Group, and it has been embedded into practice.

Throughout the pandemic supporting our care experienced young people has been a clear priority for the service. Contact was maintained with care leavers by face-to-face visits, telephone and email contact and via a variety of social media platforms according to the preference of the young person. Emergency packs containing a basic food supply, toiletries, sanitary protection, and cleaning products were prepared and distributed. Arrangements were put into place to offer care leavers financial support either in cash or into bank accounts, allocation of food vouchers and e-vouchers and Smart meter cards to pay for utilities are available.

Care experienced young people were encouraged and supported to apply for the Powys County Council contact tracing advisor positions when they were created and advertising during the pandemic. We organised and ran webinars to provide advice and support to completing the application form and then a session on interview techniques and prep. Five of our care experienced young people were successful to the interview stage and two were offered positions.

Technology Enabled Care

Technology Enabled Care (TEC) has continued to develop with new services being trialled. The number of unique individuals supported and the number of pieces of equipment prescribed continue to grow with 1,176 pieces of equipment going to 575 new clients in 2020/21. TEC is helping unpaid carers to look after their loved ones with dementia in their homes for longer, some avoiding care home admission altogether or delaying the need for this. Using an average of £670 per person in annual savings, the projected costs which have been avoided because of the use of technology enabled care was £385,183 for the 20/21 fiscal year.

Projected Cost Avoidance to Powys Social Care 2020/21

	No Clients ¹	Estimated Annual Saving per Client ²	Estimated Saving 2020/21 ³
Total	575	£670	£385,183

(1) Actual number of unique clients supported with Technology Enabled Care in Powys

(2) Estimated annual net savings per client based on research but at 30% only and assumes 70% of clients retain their TEC for 12 months

(3) Savings per client reduce each month to reflect diminishing time remaining in the financial year

Especially popular is the *Canary Home Monitoring System* which allow non-invasive monitoring of vulnerable person to know their movements, see video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJ350uHTC2k>.

"I have gotten fantastic feedback from clients/family using the equipment. The potential cost savings from families being able to maintain their loved one at home without the need for a care package is huge." - Health Board Occupational Therapist talking about the Canary Home Monitoring System

"My gran remained at home without a care package right up until she was hospitalised over a 5-month period, and, unfortunately then required 24-hour care in a nursing home. As a family we strongly feel that the Canary was the main reason we kept her at home for so long." – Granddaughter

Overall, the number of unique individuals supported has continued to grow in line with Vision 2025.

What We Will Do Next Year:

During 2020/21/2022 we will be focussed on delivering a range of outcomes, including:

- D1 Goal: Recruit an Employment Access Officer to work with internal and external organisations including local business to look at future employment opportunities and barriers.
- D2 Goal: Supported employment - Initiate a Work, Leisure and Learning Panel to drive strategic planning to find out the role of Day Services, education, and private sector partners.
- D3 Implement the options appraisal for supported accommodation for Care Leavers and Young People aged 16 to 17

D4 Increase the number of young people in care who achieve their educational goals.

D5 Increase the number of care leavers who are living in permanent accommodation at the age of 25.

D6 Increase the number of care leavers who are in full time employment, education, or training

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

What did we plan to do last year?

During 2020/21 we said we would

- E1 The pandemic has meant that all day services have been closed. It is likely that risk assessments will result in an inability to re-open day centres in the near future due to the requirement to physically distance, especially among vulnerable groups. Therefore, the Council will need to work with day service users to ascertain the best alternative methods of achieving what matters to them. This may mean support to access technology and use technology to maintain relationships in a different manner, or to access physically distanced befriending groups, or other types of support. In addition, we will be working alongside service users to identify suitable volunteering, work experience and employment opportunities. The service will prioritise this work during the year.
- E2 Develop Supported Living Services which are outcome focused and support individuals in their own wellbeing within society
- E3 Identify those in our teams who should complete the level two and three Violence Against Women, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence (VASDAWS) training and provide the relevant training opportunities.

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

E1: Day Services continue to remain closed; staff are conducting outreach activities to service users to find one-to-one activities to support them in the meantime.

E2: Supported Living Framework – As part of our 5-Year Live Well Accommodation and Support Delivery Plan, the framework has now been in place for 12 months with all handovers of recommissioned services being smooth and feedback from providers and adult services being positive. The initial review of the contract has identified that the services are performing flexibly and meeting their aims and objectives. We have also increased the number of individuals and types of support provided during this period. Our commissioning team have facilitated during COVID-19 over 50 virtual visits by video calls to undertake monitoring activity and provide support to tenants. On a further positive note, the services have suffered a relatively low number of COVID-19 infections in tenants and support staff.

Powys commissions Domestic Abuse Support from two main providers, one North one South. Providers provide services which include:

- Access to safe and appropriate accommodation
- Crisis Support
- Recovery Support
- Preventative Services

- Services specifically for children and young people effected by domestic Abuse
- General awareness raising services

E3: We continue to promote staff training, ensure relevant training is available and support staff to attend; this is reviewed with staff in their monthly 1:1s and Annual Reviews/appraisals.

Other Projects

Social Care has other project that are supporting people to develop healthy domestic, family, and personal relationships, as follows:

Technology Enabled Care

Adult Services are able to provide a range of different pieces of technology to help make living at home easier for older people as well as individuals who just need help with certain tasks which includes e.g., home monitoring systems, pendant alarms, and door sensors. The Service has continued to promote what is available through a series of animations which can be found via the following link - <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/10016/Help-to-live-at-home-through-the-use-of-technology> Whilst referrals are relatively low currently, our Contact Officers in ASSIST and Community Connectors are also trained in being able to prescribe low level equipment which means we are able to support individuals at the earliest opportunity without them having to await a formal assessment.

We are working alongside a provider who is providing support to individuals in a remote part of the county on different therapeutic solutions. We have purchased some interactive robotic companion pets which will be trialled under this project; the evidence is that these can provide therapeutic support and have the potential to reduce medication. We will also look to trial with individuals who have dementia. The “pets” which have been purchased are robotic cats which are designed to look, feel, and sound like a real cat and come in a range of colours. They have synthetic, brush-able fur and built-in sensors which respond to motion and touch, including petting and hugging. They also make cat-live movements and sounds.

Full quarter statistics for Technology Enabled Care are not available for Quarter 4 and will be reported retrospectively. However, between 1st April 2020 and 28th February 2021, 518 unique individuals have been supported with technology enabled care. The 518 individuals received between them a total of 653 prescriptions (deliveries) equating to 1051 items of technology enabled care.

We took the difficult decision, due to COVID-19 restrictions and the infection rates across Powys, to extend the temporary closure of day centre facilities until August 2021. However, Adult Social Care have continued to discuss with citizens how best to support their needs in different ways, including living with the support of carers or through family support. Our staff teams who normally work in day services have been supporting other business critical areas such as domiciliary care and outreach work.

Domiciliary Care and Microenterprises

Adult Services continue to seek alternatives to the traditional domiciliary care model. One method is called microenterprises, where individuals are assisted in navigating the complexities of forming a small care business and taking on a few clients. The aim being to support 47 individuals known to the council and 56 private clients. Overall, they deliver 663 hours of care and support per week. to stay at home for longer and in the communities of their choice. Microenterprises also allow people with skills and willingness to serve members of their community, whilst not willing to work full time for a

domiciliary care agency. Our Commissioning Team are working with the Community Catalysts to identify whether the microenterprise approach can be expanded to other areas outside of the original project.

Powys has 23 microenterprises listed among our directory of larger providers that our social care staff provide to service users for them to contact directly. Our disabilities team has also seen an increase in individuals wishing to have their support provided via the microenterprise approach and individuals have embraced the flexibility that this provides.

Community Connectors

Our social work teams have continued to work collaboratively with Community Connectors with the number of referrals to them increasing. The Community Connector lead is now an integral member of the Community Resource Panels providing additional overview of services which are available within communities to support residents.

15 Community Connectors who work across the locality areas of Powys.

2 Homeless Community Connectors who work closely with PCC Housing to support clients who are facing homelessness, are homeless or in need of temporary accommodation.

1 Duty Officer who receives referrals, enquiries and responds to emails on behalf of the team, 9am – 4pm Monday – Friday.

1 Senior Officer supporting the team. The team sits with PAVO Health and Wellbeing Team.

We also have 13 Locality Networks across Powys to bring together community groups, 3rd sector organisations, individuals, and statutory professionals to share best practises and ways to collaborate.

Achievements 2020/21

- 7,340 people supported to find ways for them to take responsibility for their own health and well-being
- 3,577 new clients; 2,537 self-referrals
- 4,901 people were guided to third sector services that met their need within their own community
- 3,937 people supported with Covid-19 related support (shopping, prescription delivery, etc)
- 278 clients supported in temporary accommodation as part of Phase 2 Homelessness Project
- 617 Multi-disciplinary, Virtual Wards or Patient flow meetings attended

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2021/2022 we will be focussed on delivering a range of outcomes, including:

- E1 Goal: To develop our early intervention and prevention services including self-service options for the public, home-based support options and provision of technology enabled care.
- E2 Goal: In the absence of normal day services, to find ways to support individuals to maintain and develop social connections.
- E3 Goal: To develop welfare/wellbeing calls for people at home awaiting care provision.
- E4 Goal: To review respite and home-based respite options with Credu to support unpaid carers to maintain their relationships both with the cared for and with their wider networks and communities.

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

What did we plan to do last year?

In the 2020/21 fiscal year, we stated that we would:

F-1 Goal: Further embed discharge to recover and assess pathways in partnership with health and third sector to promote as far as possible the recovery and rehabilitation of patients following their transfer from hospital.

F-2 Goal: Conduct a review of our reablement service. Our joint partnership board has agreed to work together to commission a review of our reablement service to formalise the model we are working under; one that supports both the managing of demand from hospitals and in service users in our communities.

F-3 Goal: To develop wellbeing calls to proactively contact vulnerable individuals in the community to support their independent living.

F-4 Goal: To continue to develop the extra care schemes across Powys.

F-5 Goal: To review the older persons' care home market to consider appropriate provision and evaluate provision is appropriate to meet need.

F-6: We will continue the recruitment drive for foster carers and supported lodgings hosts.

F-7: We will improve the support provided to our foster carers.

F-8: We will increase the number of supported lodgings hosts.

F-9: We will open the first of our new Powys Residential Children's Homes.

F-10: Undertake an analysis of range and cost of accommodation for care leavers age 18+

F11: Following the review, we will commission or develop provision to improve the range of accommodation options for young people leaving care and homeless young people aged 16 to 17 years and deliver value for money.

F-12: Design the model of care and therapeutic model for a Powys Children's Therapeutic Residential Home.

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

F1: The Discharge to Recover and Assess pathway was implemented and is now embedded into health and social care in Powys. More work is being undertaken, via the North Powys Programme to develop the pathway further and to integrated with other rehabilitative services which aim to support people to transfer home.

F2: A review of our reablement service has commenced as part of a wider review of intermediate care across Powys. This work has been enabled through the North Powys Wellbeing Programme.

F3: Wellbeing calls were undertaken with those residents that were classified as extremely or clinically extremely vulnerable in 2020/21. We worked alongside colleagues in digital services to create a script for our customer services staff who we were undertaking wellbeing calls to shielded individuals. Whenever any potential social care needs were identified, the individual was contacted by our Adult Services Front Door to have a what matters conversation and provide any information/advice further referrals, as necessary.

Between 3 April and 14 August, a total of 23,791 welfare calls were made by Powys County Council staff to individuals in Powys who had been told to shield, resulting in:

- 649 Welsh Government food parcels being ordered
- 438 requests for a call back from the resident's local county councillor
- 459 requests for help with basic care needs which were passed on to ASSIST
- 1,654 referrals to PAVO's Community Connector Service (of these 1,076 wanted help with food, 373 needed help with their prescriptions and 205 wished to talk to a volunteer)
- 150 referrals over safeguarding.

In addition, we worked proactively to contact individuals that were known to us in Adult Services to ensure that their welfare was maintained and that their needs were currently being met. In quarter 1, we contacted 2,275 individuals. Of those 1,210 were signposted to third sector organisations for support and 87 were flagged to Welsh Government as in need of a food parcel.

F4: Work has continued in developing older persons' accommodation options across the county, with planning and funding agreed for both Ystradgynlais and Welshpool extra developments. It is anticipated that work will commence on site in both Welshpool and Ystradgynlais during the summer of 2021. We are also working with housing associations to consider options at Brecon, Builth/Llandrindod and Machynlleth.

F5: The review of care home accommodation in Powys has been undertaken in light of the pandemic, considering resilience, staffing capacity, and financial challenges. A further review of older persons' accommodation in general is being developed and incorporates the wider plan for extra care and care home availability.

F6: *We will continue the recruitment drive for foster carers and supported lodgings hosts* Despite the COVID-19 pandemic the service continued their recruitment drive for foster carers and supported lodgings hosts. During the lockdown we came up with new and innovative ways to run campaigns using social media and other means. These included:

- Produced and printed new information leaflets to promote supported lodgings.
- Produced new supported lodgings merchandise, including various items of clothing, table, tablecloth, pens, notepads, trolley tokens, banners, insulated cups, shopping bags, book bags.
- Newspaper articles.
- Regular social media posts including promotion of foster care fortnight, regional campaign in June and July 2020, campaign for emergency carers, short break carers and carers for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.
- Leaflet drops and posters displayed in all towns.
- Attended local markets.
- Emails to all staff and Councillors in the Council and to Powys Teaching Health Board.
- Posts on the Powys County Council Intranet.

During the year we received 81 fostering enquiries from members of the public and 57 viability assessment enquiries from family members and friends to become carers. In total there were 11 new foster carer families approved and in addition there were 13 connected persons (family and friends) approved. There were also 9 new supporting lodgings hosts approved, taking the number of hosts in Powys to 15.

F7: We will improve the support provided to our foster carers. At the start of the year and the pandemic all foster carers were provided with Office 365 and Powys emails to ensure we could keep them up to date quickly with changes in guidance and provide support. Foster Carer support groups were increased to 2 every month, these moved to virtual meetings at the start of the month. Foster Carers receive regular supervision from the Fostering Teams, which in 2020-21 were held virtually using Teams that Foster Carers have access to with Office 365. A range of training courses have also

been developed online during the pandemic and these are held virtually through Teams and the Adoption mentoring scheme was set up in the year. Foster Carers received face to face support and visits from the Fostering Team alongside all the virtual support provided.

F8: We will increase the number of supported lodgings hosts. In 2020-21 there were 9 new supporting lodgings hosts approved, taking the number of hosts in Powys to 15. The Supported Lodgings Coordinators, alongside recruitment have worked on retaining the hosts, they have supplied information packs and fire blankets, hosted regular social and training events, and provided regular supervision to support hosts.

F9: We will open the first of our new Powys Residential Children's Homes. We secured a suitable property with capacity for two children to be accommodated in the South of the County at the start of the year. All the renovations and adjustments to accommodate the regulations, were completed, however the work was delayed initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lock downs. Staffing rotas have been developed and recruitment has taken place for the home. We are now able to register the home with the aim to welcome our first children as residents in 2020/2021/2022.

F10: Undertake an analysis of range and cost of accommodation for care leavers age 18+ In Powys, demand is greater than supply for quality placements for our Children Looked After aged 16 plus. Analysis of the current costs and predicted future demand for 16+ accommodation emphasises the importance of taking a more strategic approach in commissioning accommodation and support for young people aged 16+. An options appraisal was undertaken and has been informed by the Multi-Agency 16+ Accommodation and Support Project Team as part of a much wider range of commissioning activity. A cost and needs analysis were produced to examine the picture of Powys' 16+ children who are looked after population and to understand how the budget was being used to support young people. The options appraisal considered a range of options for delivery of services. It informed of the current position, evaluated the strengths and challenges with each option including any associated costs and any hidden costs.

F11: Following the review, we will commission or develop provision to improve the range of accommodation options for young people leaving care and homeless young people aged 16 to 17 years and deliver value for money. The options appraisal was presented to the Children's Services Leadership team and a scoring matrix undertaken to make a recommendation on the best option. A report was prepared, and this went through the Council Cabinet Governance process. The preferred option has gone out to a tender process and will be implemented in 2021/2022.

F12: Design the model of care and therapeutic model for a Powys Children's Therapeutic Residential Home

The model of care to develop safer accommodation for children and young people with complex needs was developed via the safe accommodation project group. A suitable property was identified and is in the process of being purchased and the necessary planning permission have been sought, with a plan to opening in 2021/2022.

The model of care we have developed will promote the wellbeing of a child or young person with extremely complex needs. We are in discussion with Welsh Government and Powys Teaching Health Board on how the project will be financed.

What are our priorities for next year and why?

During 2020/2021/2022 we will be focussed on delivering a range of outcomes, including:

- F1 Goal: Continue to progress with our closer to home programme, which will see more people with disabilities moving out of County and back into Powys, to help them live the lives they want. The programme is not only a significant investment but also a fantastic example of partnership working with builders, housing associations, support providers and of course people who draw on care and support. The work aligns with our vision in Powys of supporting people to live the best life they can, and by focussing on what matters, working alongside people to help them find the right solutions for themselves.
- F2 Goal: Continue to work alongside Health and Third Sector colleagues to embed Powys hospital to home pathways, through the embedding of a hospital assessment and D2RA team which will be part of a wider integrated discharge planning process.
- F3 Goal: To develop, in conjunction with the third sector, wellbeing calls for individuals who have no support and are waiting for care provision.
- F4 Goal: To continue to develop the older persons' accommodation options.
- F5: We will continue the recruitment drive for foster carers and supported lodgings hosts.
- F6: We will improve the support provided to our foster carers.
- F7: We will increase the number of supported lodgings hosts.
- F8: We will open further Powys Residential Children's Homes.
- F9: Continue to work with health colleagues to develop safer accommodation for children and young people with the most complex needs.

How We Do What We Do

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

During 2020-21 Children's Services workforce have worked tirelessly and gone over and above to support and safeguard children, young people and their families. It has been more important than ever as service to support and look after the wellbeing of our workforce due to the many challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the start of the year, it was vital that we ensured that staff were issued with the correct PPE and guidance so that business critical and face to face activities could continue. We very quickly moved all training to a virtual online basis and between the first lockdown and the end of August 53 webinars were held, they were also recorded so that staff could view them anytime. The social care workforce training programme also moved to online, and practitioners have had many opportunities to attend a comprehensive range of courses for their own professional and career development.

Wellbeing has been a priority and the service introduced weekly wellbeing sessions which all staff were encouraged to attend, these were mindfulness and singing and were very well attended. Staff roadshows were held virtually instead of in person, and they also contained an interactive session on wellbeing. The service developed weekly wellbeing bulletins that went on email, the leadership team ran a campaign encouraging staff to take their leave.

The Corporate Centre sent out a wellbeing questionnaire to all the council, and Children's Services had the highest response rate, and the results were extremely positive and are as follows:

Questions about home working:

- 91% receive the right amount of communication from their manager
- 90% have a manager/supervisor who is regularly checking that they are ok (e.g., once a week)
- 94% say that the communication about COVID-19 has been clear and timely

Questions to Front Line Workers:

- 98% feel that they have good colleagues who are supportive
- 92% have a manager/supervisor who is regularly checking that they are ok (e.g., once a week)
- 94% are feeling good about being a frontline employee providing support to more vulnerable residents or delivering key services like recycling, support in the hubs, care to those in need
- 90% receive the right amount of communication from their manager
- 93% say that the communication about COVID-19 has been clear and timely

During the year, the service received a Care Inspectorate Wales performance evaluation inspection. The findings of the inspection were positive with areas of strength being seen in leadership and management. Some of the key findings were:

The local authority's investment in the professional development of its workforce, particularly in introducing a systemic model of practice in children's services, shared with partners, is delivering positive results for children and families, and delivering shared understanding of practice between agencies and families.

The restructure of children's services to include early help, intervention, and preventative services along with a Signs of Safety approach is enabling social workers and support staff to maintain a strength-based focus when engaging with young people and families.

Senior officers have a high level of skills and professional knowledge with a robust understanding of relevant legislation, social care professional practice and workflow management. By developing shared responsibility, oversight of service delivery and a clear sense of direction, it has created an environment in which social work can flourish.

The local authority recognises supporting its workforce is business critical and it has a clear focus on recruitment, retention, and workforce development. All staff benefit from the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills, and careers. The local authority is ambitious to ensure people living in Powys benefit from longer-term and trusting relationships with skilled and supportive social workers who understand their needs and how best to work with them to reduce risk and improve their personal outcomes.

Senior managers provide operational practitioners with internal guidance and management support to make informed choices about maintaining their own health and well-being and the health of those they visit. Management support and supervision is highly regarded and practitioners welcome opportunities to be autonomous and creative.

Support for practitioners during the pandemic has included a range of information, quizzes, virtual singing, and virtual lunches. Practitioners told us about the difference this support makes to their well-being.

The service was extremely proud to have been deemed to have made significant progress since the last inspection in October 2018 and we continue to strive to provide the best services to children, young people and their families in Powys.

Strength-Based Approach

In Adult Services strengths-based working is ‘what we do.’ It means that we take the time to understand what matters to those who approach us for support, to identify what they can do for themselves and what support they can draw upon from friends, family, and their wider communities. We have made our Strengths-based outcome focus training a mandatory requirement for all staff in adult operational teams.

We maintain strong links with Social Care Wales (SCW) to utilise their on-line training videos and other resources. We continue to attend all-Wales mentoring Group facilitated by SCW which enables us to network with other organisations and share their experiences of embedding the approach into practise. We have also attended workshops on outcome focussed case recording facilitated by SCW and researchers from Swansea University.

We have a pool of 36 Strengths-based outcome focussed mentors and have been running monthly support groups to increase their skills and confidence. Mentoring is undertaken formally through supervision, group reflective sessions and informally on day-to-day basis. We have also created an online library of guidance and good practice.

Powys is fortunate to have dedicated and hard-working social care staff who routinely demonstrate commitment and care for the individuals they serve. Despite that, Powys faces a significant long-term challenge because demographic change is leading to an increase in older people (75+) and a decline in the number of people of working age (see table below).

	2018	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Total	132,447	132,421	132,710	132,905	133,211	133,602
18-29	15,127	14,301	13,082	12,935	13,468	13,313
30-44	18,419	18,554	19,258	19,277	18,283	17,940
45-54	18,911	17,805	15,213	14,297	15,187	15,612
55-67	26,124	27,013	28,529	27,995	25,190	23,688
Working Age	78,581	77,672	76,082	74,504	72,128	70,552

Table 1 Population projections

Source: 2018 Welsh Government Population Projections © Crown Copyright

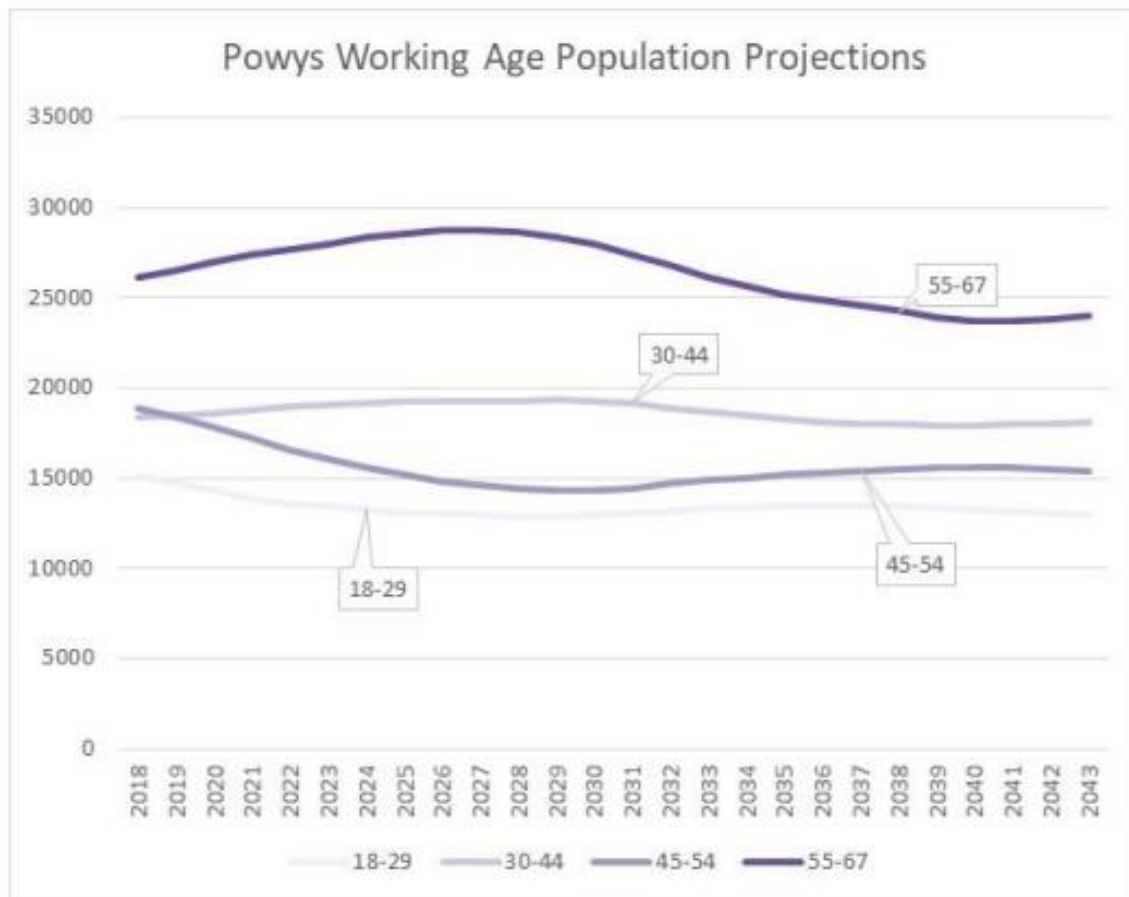


Chart 4 Powys working age population projections

Source: 2018 Welsh Government Population Projections © Crown Copyright

This is causing recruitment and retention problems for the council. The longer-term challenges are shown in the table and graph below, which identifies the age categories of the Council’s workforce:

	Annual population survey	Powys County Council workforce						
		Powys Dec 2020	Education	Economy & Environment	Children & Adults	Resources and Transformati	Legal & Democratic Services	(above L3)
aged 16-64	59,560	2,971	1,383	923	409	48	10	5,744
aged 16-19	2,500	42	7	4	1	0	0	54
aged 20-24	4,800	118	55	25	25	1	0	224
aged 25-34	10,800	496	175	189	80	4	1	945
aged 35-49	18,660	1,127	423	290	153	6	2	2,001
aged 50-64	22,820	1,046	640	378	141	25	7	2,237
Other		142	83	37	9	12	0	283

Table 2

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS © Crown Copyright and Powys Headcount August 2021

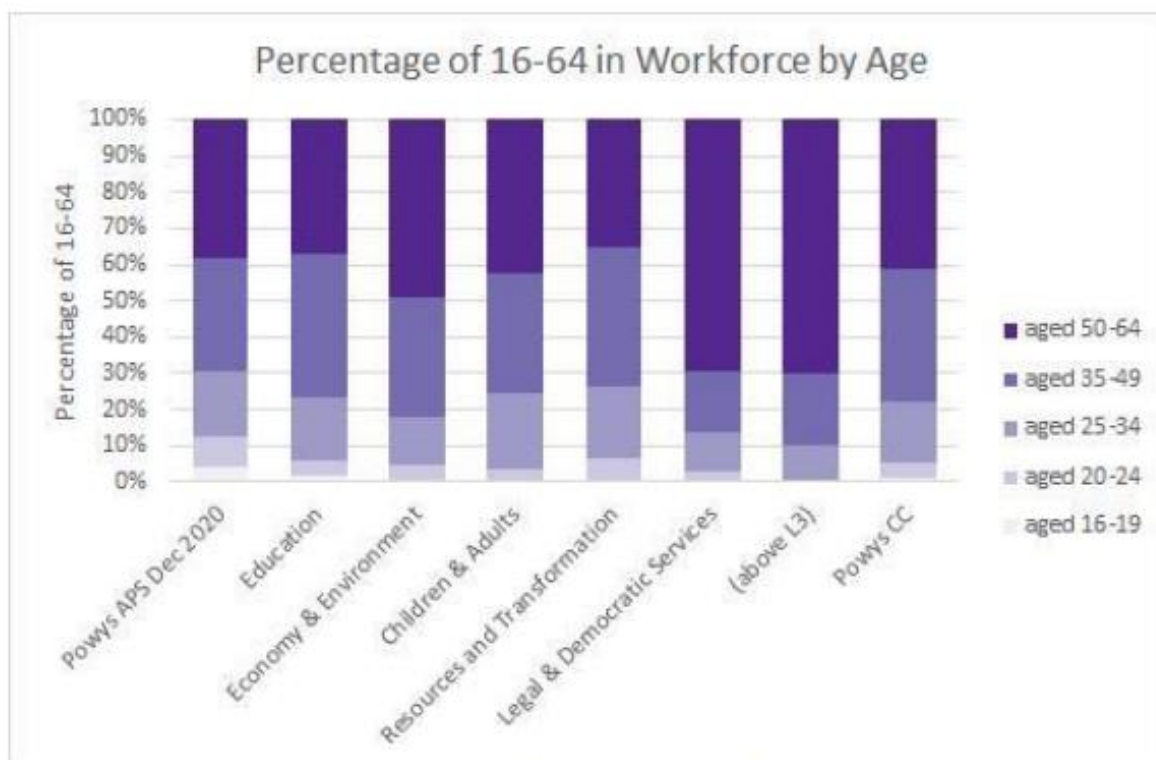


Chart 7 Percentage of 16-64 in the workforce by age

Source: Annual Population Survey (APS), ONS © Crown Copyright and Powys Headcount August 2021

As part of a “One Council” approach, we acknowledge the need to have the right numbers of people in the right roles with the required capabilities to deliver improvement. To achieve that goal, we are investing in the following:

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

The workforce in Powys is highly skilled and demonstrates an eagerness to improve services. The Council was developing agile working systems and policies throughout 2019/20, but this changed rapidly towards the end of March 2020 when the Council invoked business continuity and social services staff were supported to work from home or to be based at home where possible. The previous developments enabled this to be implemented effectively and efficiently and enabled swift transition to a new mode of working.

What we Achieved

To increase our staff engagement, we established an employee representative forum, which provides an opportunity for staff to be briefed on current issues within the Service and to have the

opportunity to raise issues and ideas for discussion or escalation. The group is working collaboratively to support the wider engagement and build a stronger culture of continuous feedback and learning across Social Services.

Grow our own – Adults services have 5 and Children’s Services have 1 student on the Open University Degree in Social Work, all of whom are on Level 2 of their degree and have commenced their practice learning opportunity. There are also 4 members of staff in Adult Services undertaking their practice assessor qualification.

Securing a Stable Workforce

The Children’s Services workforce needs to be stable and sustainable to deliver high quality timely responses to protect and support vulnerable families. It is essential that we plan for the future continuity of services to deliver our statutory duties and reliable and cost-effective interventions. There has been success in recruiting a permanently employed senior and team management cohort. However, there continue to be difficulties in recruiting and retaining experienced social workers across the county. Powys has some characteristics which pose additional challenges in the recruitment and retention of permanent social workers. Powys has a unique and spectacular geography which supports an attractive rural lifestyle. However, this rural factor also adds complexity to the recruitment of social workers. There is a need to visit families in their homes across all areas of the community, which adds mileage and time to the working day. Despite various innovative recruitment campaigns, social services continue to invest a significant amount of financial resource into recruiting agency workers to cover qualified social work positions. In response to this Children’s Services have developed a Grow Our Own Social Worker project.

The Grow Our Own Social Worker project has been in its early stages of development over the last two years. Grow Our Own Social Worker (GOOSW) aims to promote professional growth and development of employees of Powys Local Authority by supporting the development of social care skills as well as financially supporting staff to undertake a social work qualification. The GOOSW project aims to support the sponsorship of a further 57 qualified social workers between 2021-2026 for both Children’s and Adults Services. In 2020, GOOSW commenced its implementation stage. This consisted of a significant increase in the numbers of staff applying to undertake the 1st year of practice modules (K102 and KZW113) and an increase in sponsorship for the Open University social work degree (Wales) compared to previous years. There were 20 Children’s Services staff commencing onto K102, 16 commencing onto KZW113 and 6 commencing the degree sponsorship. In addition to the scale up plans for OU degree sponsorships, Children’s Services are funding 2 sponsorships for the Master’s in social work commencing in 2021. The successful applicants will have their course fees fully funded and will be paid a salary for the duration of the two-year programme. Interviews occurred and 2 candidates were selected and offered places at Cardiff University. The students will be required to remain within the service area for a 3-year period post qualifying. The costs of this initiative are being met by Children’s Services.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic putting many of plans on hold, including attending national recruitment events and promotion in universities, we adapted quickly and implemented various social media campaigns to advertise our vacancies. We also advertised in a Welsh national newspaper, on the radio and developed new promotional videos with our social workers talking about why they like working in Powys and in Children’s Services.

As part of the work to recruit and retain more permanent social workers, Children’s Services implement a new pilot project in 2020-21, which provided additional support to frontline social workers in the form of Team Co-Ordinator’s. The aim of the project was to ‘reclaim social work’ and enable social workers to spend more time building relationships and working directly with children, young people and their families. The pilot has been a great success and social workers have fed back that they could not manage without this role now. The project has therefore been extended into 202021/2022 to continue this support to our frontline social work teams.

While we had to curtail our attendance at usual recruiting events dur to the pandemic, we found other ways to ensure a stable workforce by promoting our Grow Our Own Social Worker pathway, where staff can undertake a degree in Social Work via a distance learning route with our partner university (Open University). Twelve staff across adult and children's services children's are due to commence their degrees and we have successfully appointed several staff into permanent social worker posts via the "grow your own" approach.

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

Many local authorities are experiencing budget challenges and Powys is no exception, with significant financial savings having to be made over the past ten years. The large variation in our expenditure makes resource management especially challenging. Decisions which affect the type and cost of services to be provided are often outside of the council's control and thus are uncontrolled and unpredictable (e.g., decisions taken by the court in children’s cases).

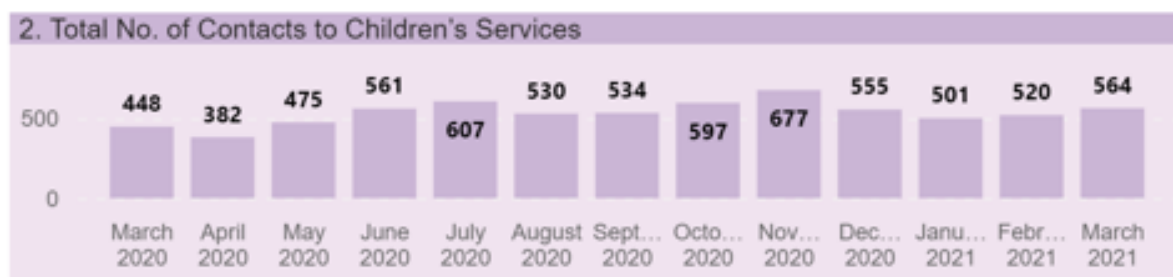
As part of the budget setting process Adult Social Care had identified significant service pressures of £9.534 million. To counter the pressures, efficiencies were identified and achieved in full of £5.052 million. The gap was bridged with cost mitigation due to early intervention and prevention through strengths-based practice and Technology Enabled Care (TEC) and the decision not to give an uplift to providers during the year. This has left the care market, which was supported financially through the Welsh Government’s Hardship Fund paying for a proportion of vacant beds in care homes, in a fragile position and may need to be addressed in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created huge pressures on the availability of suitable placements for children and young people. There has been a national shortage of placements which has been exasperated by the pandemic with complications arising due to government guidance around Children’s homes and issues with isolating and positive cases. In particular there is a lack of provision of therapeutic residential placements for children and young people with severe emotional and behavioral needs in Powys and Wales. This has made it extremely difficult to balance the competing priorities of managing service demand, meeting the needs of children and young people and reducing expenditure with the need to achieve budget savings.

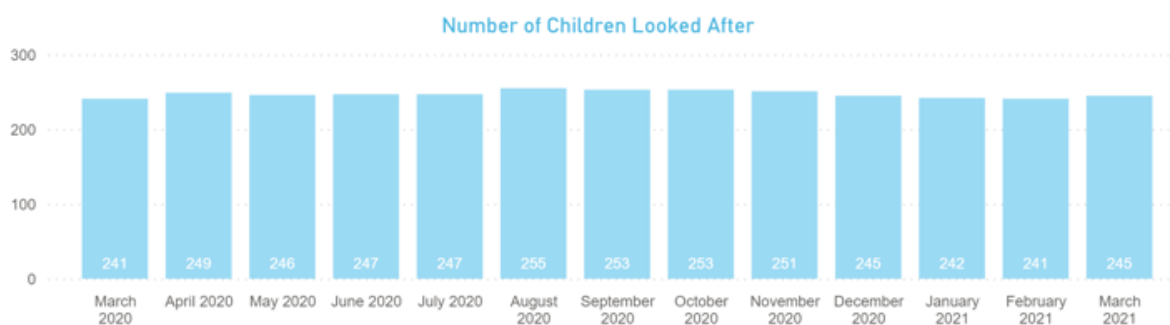
From June 2020, as we were coming out of lockdown, we saw an increase in demand for services into the Front Door, this followed through to statutory services and the increase has sustained ever since. Our children looked after population increased alongside the number of children on the child protection register.

	September 2019	September 2020	September 2021
Contacts to Front Door	387	534	884

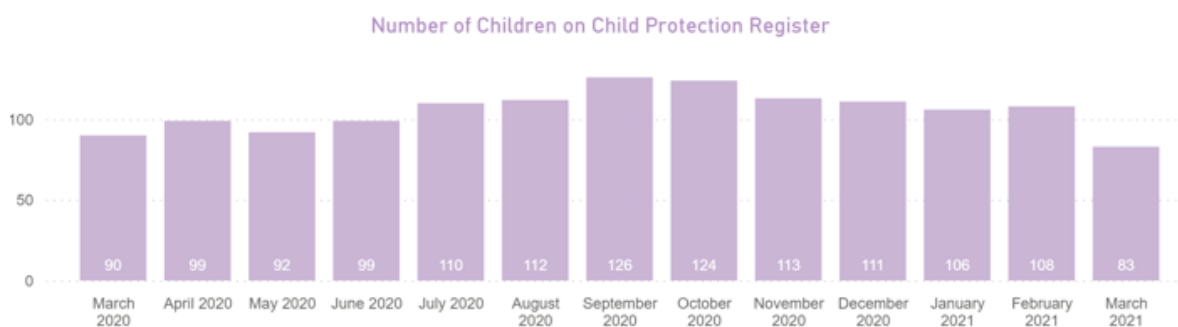
Contacts to Children's Services for the year



Number of Children Looked After



Number of Children on the Child Protection Register



The increase in demand for services meant we needed to increase staffing resources in the Front Door, Assessment teams and Early Help. Initially these costs were going to be funded by the core budget but at the end of the year they were covered by Welsh Government grants for Covid relief.

The Children's Services 2020/21 baseline budget included an investment of £5.15 million which in part was for new service development, to offset the 2019/20 existing pressures and the 2020/21 salary inflation, including employers pension contributions. Within the Financial Resources Model (FRM) pressures of £7.646 million were identified (and materialised) and savings of £2.221 million were agreed, of which £1.753 million were delivered. Additionally, £275,000 of the unachieved 2019/20 savings were rolled forward into 2020/21 and achieved. The £468,000 of 2020/21 unachieved savings were written off as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process. The outturn was an underspend of £944,000.

It is recognised that the impact of the global pandemic, COVID-19 will be felt within the service for the year 2020/21. Towards the end of 2020/21 the service had started to increase its spending in

preparation for a potential surge in infection rates and demand for support. This spending was eventually funded by the Welsh Government.

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

Powys Children's Service has engaged with all aspects of the regional safeguarding boards activities throughout the pandemic and have shown leadership on several developments which have been key to supporting frontline staff. Children's Services are committed to continuing this level of engagement and regard the relationship with the regional board as positive and productive. The regional safeguarding board have been pivotal in supporting multiagency efforts to ensure people are protected during this period and we have fully engaged with this work. Children's services continue to attend all the regional sub-groups and CPR action plans have been updated and all LOG reports have been submitted within timescales. The Powys audit subgroup has continued its activities and has recently analysed a multi-agency audit which led to a CPR referral being discussed at PLOG prior to the CPR subgroup, as it is felt that learning can occur from the case. The policy development officer attends the policies and procedures subgroup and has recently led on the regional development of a pre-birth pathway. The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance overseeing workforce development, chairs the training subgroup. They also attend the Childrens safeguarding lead meetings which began during the pandemic. Children's Services are active in preparations for Safeguarding Week and regional developments on standardising webinar training for the Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

We developed an emergency procedure in respect of child protection conferences, which was quickly adapted to be utilised at a regional level. This procedure ensured the continuity of Child Protection Conferences and covered timescales, participation of families, quoracy and recording. This supported the smooth transition to virtual conferences. Another local emergency procedure led to the development of a regional policy document for child protection visits and s47 planning considerations. This covered planning for s47's and included making use of outdoor spaces to speak to children alone. Ensuring child protection visits remained in timescale was included and the importance of updating child protection plans to consider the impact of lockdown on family functioning. Both documents supported practitioners with clear guidance in the early stages of the crisis and drew attention to the potential impact on children's welfare and wellbeing.

A Senior Manager in Children's Services led a task and finish group to revise the regional terms of reference for multi-Agency Child exploitation meetings. This involved drafting a document which explains the rationale for the meetings to consider wider forms of exploitation and to strengthen strategic elements of meetings. This includes the improvement of a regional data set to promote an understanding of the effectiveness of tackling child exploitation in the region. There is a plan to expand on this work as the regional board is interested in the Child Exploitation Strategy currently being developed by Powys Children's Services.

A Senior Manager in Children's worked with the regional business manager and a police colleague to develop and deliver a regional Joint Investigation Training. This project aimed to design a regionally owned course content to be delivered at a local level. Powys will be piloting this course in 2021. The course involves input from police, health, in-house psychologist, a researcher from Cardiff university and social services staff. This is an identified gap as joint training ceased several years ago when the police college introduced the SCAIDIP course which ended highly valuable joint training.

Children's Services, working closely with the Education Service, understand the importance of working closely with our multi agency partners and this was recognised in Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection report. Key findings were:

Partnership arrangements at both local and regional level continue to develop and mature. Senior officers are increasingly able to demonstrate how the links between their different directorate responsibilities including health, housing and finance are supporting the social services agenda across the local authority. Joint working with third sector organisations in the development and delivery of care and support and preventative services during these unprecedented times is seen as a strength the authority wishes to build on and embed in its practice.

Partnership working during COVID-19 has highlighted positive examples of improvements partners can realise through closer working. For example, practitioners told us there was an opportunity to replace the present pupil inclusion panel (PIP) with an integrated access to services panel which places greater emphasis on joint working and decision-making. Panel members ensure the purpose of panel is to promote access, prevent children reaching crisis, and placing unnecessary demand on services. Arrangements for "virtual" meetings has improved communication with partner agencies.

There is positive, improving, working relationships with the health board. We were told about clear escalation processes in relation to professional challenges. Newly developed partnership working, stability of workforce and creative relationships driving service improvements at pace with a shared vision.

The local authority is 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 Mid and West Wales Regional Partnership Board and the work of the Regional Safeguarding Board

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

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

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

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

The Health and Care Strategy priority areas are:

- Wellbeing
- Early help and Support
- Tackling the Big Four (cancer, circulatory disease, respiratory disease, mental health)
- Joined up Care

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

1. Workforce
2. Innovative environments
3. Digital First
4. Transforming in Partnership

Our renewed focus on our corporate leadership and governance through our vision 2025 plan sets out many challenges for us:

- a. The Council will ensure that its vision for the future is promoted and understood by the officers, partners, and residents.
- b. The Council, members and officers will be open about what the most important issues are and focus on addressing them.
- c. The Council will create a mutually supportive leadership culture, with clear roles between members and officers.
- d. By strengthening the corporate center, the Council can support a more delegated leadership structure.
- e. Integrated Disability Service – We established the Integrated Disability Service (IDS) to include co-located multi-agency teams and a single management structure. An Integrated Disability Service triage process has been started. What were monthly physical meetings are now weekly meetings using Skype where needed. This gives quicker and more informed advice and action for children with disabilities or complex health needs.

Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

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

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

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

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

1. Powys County Council Corporate Leadership & Governance Plan 2017- 2020
2. Healthy Caring Powys – Delivering the Vision (Area Plan)
3. The Adult Services Improvement Plan 2018-2023
4. The Powys Population Needs Assessment
5. Children's Services Integrated Business Plan 2020-2023
6. Vision 2025 Corporate Improvement Plan

7. Council's Annual Performance Report