

Carmarthenshire County Council

Annual Report on the Effectiveness of Social Care Services 2010/11



July 2011

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1. Director of Social Services' overview

As the person holding the statutory post of Director of Social Services, this is my second report to the people of Carmarthenshire on the effectiveness of our social care services in the county. As this report forms part of an evaluation framework, it is also written with our regulators and partners in mind, so you may find some of the terms used are more technical than we would like. However, we have tried to explain some of these terms and you will find a glossary at the back of the report.



In last year's report, I gave a brief description of what social services are about and the challenges faced by the staff. I have repeated it this year as I think it is helpful to be reminded of this. Social care services provide support to people of all ages, in times of distress, vulnerability or illness to help them to maintain their independence and lead full lives. We protect people from harm, abuse or neglect and help people to recognise and cope with their own vulnerability. Social workers often confront difficult behaviour and manage danger and uncertainty. They have to strike a careful balance between control and empowerment in delivering the appropriate care. Too often, we see negative stories regarding social services reported in the press and it is therefore appropriate that I can report on stories which highlight how social work can make a real difference to people's lives, as this Carmarthenshire resident's story illustrates.

"I wish to give you my thanks for your care and help through what has been a traumatic experience to me and my children. For the first time in 18 months, I can say that I feel more confident about myself and looking after my children. I know I am going to lean on you for a little while yet but I must be completely honest and say that you show what social services are at their best instead of what we watch on the news at their worst. Many, many thanks, you have made a difference."

– Service User

As a Council, we spent over £77 million last year on social care services but, like all other councils, we are facing an unprecedented growth in demand for social care. The funding pressures come from a range of factors, including increasing numbers of older people, growth in the number of children looked after by the authority, greater numbers of people with long standing and complex disabilities with longer life expectancy and increasing numbers of people with a learning disability assisted by local authorities. Two key documents have been published this year highlighting the need to develop service models which are sustainable against this background of reducing resources and increasing demand.

The first was the Report of the Independent Commission on Social Services in Wales, "From Vision to Action", which stated that we need to concentrate on a limited number of strategic drivers which involves social services stopping doing some things and prioritising new things, making sure that resources are used in a joined up way and achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness through greater collaboration and integration.

The second report was the Welsh Assembly's policy document [Sustainable Social Services – A Framework for Action](#) which stressed that sustainability depends on picking up the

pace of integration and prioritises three areas of work which are; families with complex needs; transition to adulthood for disabled children; and frail older people. The report also gives recognition to the fact that social services has had to tighten eligibility criteria in terms of those who need to receive these services but that it is for the whole local authority to lead on community services and promoting community well-being, galvanising community responses to providing low level services and thus allowing social services and the NHS to focus on what they do best. In Carmarthenshire, we have started down this road and are radically changing the way we do things and working with neighbouring local authorities, the NHS, the third (voluntary) sector and other organisations to make our limited resources go further. You will find many examples described in this report including the work with families with complex needs, transition services, further integration between health and local government in meeting the needs of frail, elderly citizens and enabling people to re-gain their independence after an illness or injury.

Children's Services has continued to consolidate its strong performance with most key performance indicators in the top quartile in Wales. Qualitative inspections of services have also been positive with the outcomes for looked after children found to be good in our most recent inspection of adoption and permanency services. Inspections of regulated services have also been very good. This is a particularly notable achievement as the number of looked after children has continued to rise.

"The Council's children's services are one of the better led, performing and better value in Wales" – Auditor General for Wales' Annual Improvement Report (January 2010)

We are very successful at recruiting children's social workers and applications for posts exceed vacancies. Retention in front line social work teams is still proving to be a challenge. The introduction of a retention allowance and additional staff in these areas to reduce caseloads will help to make these areas of practice more attractive long term career options. Stability in managerial posts remains consistent and we are optimistic of our ability to maintain stable teams. Our First Year in Practice Programme for newly qualified social workers, Care Council for Wales Social Care Accolades 2011 finalist, reflects the importance we place on recruiting, supporting and retaining a quality workforce.

Performance in the timeliness of assessment is in the top quartile in Wales. The broad structure of two short term assessment and four long term social work teams has been retained whilst the amount of senior management time allocated to them has been increased through a redistribution of responsibilities. New electronic templates will help to improve the quality of assessments as well as reducing the bureaucracy for social workers. The number of looked after children has grown by 7% compared to last year. Existing preventative services have been re-focussed and new preventative services have been developed in order to limit this growth to the absolute minimum necessary. A new initiative has been targeting families who have had previous children involved in care proceedings to reduce further care interventions.

We have had a successful bid to be a pilot area for Family First and aim to use this to boost our Team Around the Child Initiative with social care staff in every secondary school.

Last year, I reported that a new transition team had been set up to improve the service for young people who have disabilities as they become adults. The number of children

diagnosed with a disability continues to grow and our transition team for 16 to 25 year olds has been a significant boost to this service group.

I also reported last year that a new multi-agency substance misuse resource had been established to reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol and help people to resolve their own problems. The demand for this service has been such that the number of people accessing residential rehabilitation and other specialist services has almost doubled.

Our Hidden Harm project, a joint initiative between the council and Barnardo's Carmarthenshire Young Carers Service, was a finalist for the Care Council for Wales' Social Care Accolades 2011.

We have strengthened our adult safeguarding arrangements during 2010. A coordinating safeguarding service has been established, with a single point of access for referrals. The multi-agency adult safeguarding board provides strategic direction and has overseen the implementation of the improvements to the service.

In learning disabilities services, we continue to make good progress against the objectives set out by our modernisation and improvement programme "The Big Plan". This report provides the evidence on how this shift is starting to make an impact and provide more appropriate opportunities for people with a learning disability in the County.

The Adult Placement/Shared Lives service is one of the leading services in Wales, with over 20% of all adult placements in Wales being within the west Wales region.

We have developed a social care commissioning plan for mental health and well-being with an implementation plan to support it. We are aware that accessing mental health services needs to be improved and are looking at ways this can be achieved.

With Hywel Dda Health Board, we have developed a single integrated point of access called Careline+, which receives enquiries and referrals and provides advice and support.

Carmarthenshire continues to be a leader in developing direct payments across all client groups, especially younger physically disabled service users.

One area which has been a challenge for both health and social care in Carmarthenshire has been the delays elderly patients experience in being discharged from hospital. It is pleasing to report that we have made excellent progress in reducing the number of "delayed transfers of care". We have worked hard with the NHS to halve these delayed transfers from one of the highest in Wales to around the Welsh average. The challenge now will be to maintain this level of performance.

Our services for older people have been transformed, in line with our vision of supporting people to live independent lives and to help them to recover from illness and injury. Our comprehensive range of services is now offering the support people need to stay in their own home, which people have told us they would prefer. The success of these changes is demonstrated by over 60 fewer people requiring residential care. We are now developing and implementing new services to care for people with dementia in their own homes.

Responsive social care services are provided by a range of private and independent care providers in a mixed social care market in Carmarthenshire, working to standards set by both the regulators and the department, through its commissioning and procurement arrangements.

The changes required for our joint commissioning strategy, [Developing Modern Services for Older People](#), a key element of which is to provide a greater diversity of accommodation and promoting independence and choice. Our proposals outline the aspiration to deliver a modernisation programme for local authority care homes, rationalising the existing in-house care homes, whilst developing extra care and specialised services. We are now implementing the approved plans for the extra care schemes in Ammanford and Carmarthen, replacing existing care homes. Our plans for Llanelli will need to be revisited following the decision by County Council to keep St Paul's and Caemaen open for the foreseeable future.

Our arrangements are supported by a formal Section 33 Agreement with Hywel Dda Health Board which provides the framework for integrating community based health and social care services and aligning management and service delivery to improve service user access and outcomes.

"New leadership in Adult Services is beginning to demonstrate improvement in some aspects of performance" – **Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, December 2010**

We know that there is still much to do to be satisfied that the people of Carmarthenshire are receiving the best available social care services but I hope this report provides you with the assurances that we are moving in the right direction with evidence of the progress being made. We have strengthened our assessment and care management arrangements in adult social care to ensure assessments and reviews are carried out in a timely manner, we are continuing to develop a wider range of community based services which promote independence and critically we will build on our arrangements for engaging with service users and their carers to get their views on the services provided and how they can continue to be improved.

I would encourage you to read more about the services we offer and our plans to improve them, in this report. I hope you feel that this report is a fair reflection of your experiences and I would encourage you to let me know what you think. Your feedback is important and will help us to understand how we can improve services for you, your family and your community.

An on-line [Survey Form](#) is available on the council's website.

Alternatively you can write to me at the following address:

**Director of Social Services, Carmarthenshire County Council, County Hall,
Carmarthen, SA31 1JP.**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff, partners and independent sector providers for their hard work. Without their dedication we wouldn't be able to meet the needs of people who require our social care services and who are entitled to receive the very best.



Bruce McLernon, Director of Social Services

2. Children's Services

Safeguarding and Assessment

Getting Help

Responsive, outcome focussed services depend on the provision of accessible information and effective communication. We continue to provide information in a variety of formats to help people access the services they require. Our corporate website is being redeveloped, with more professional and service user information available online. The [Local Safeguarding Children Board](#) has established a website, to share information with agencies and to provide guidance for the public as to what steps they should take if they have concerns about a child's well-being. We operate an out-of-hours service with on-call social workers to deal with emergencies relating to children.

Services Provided

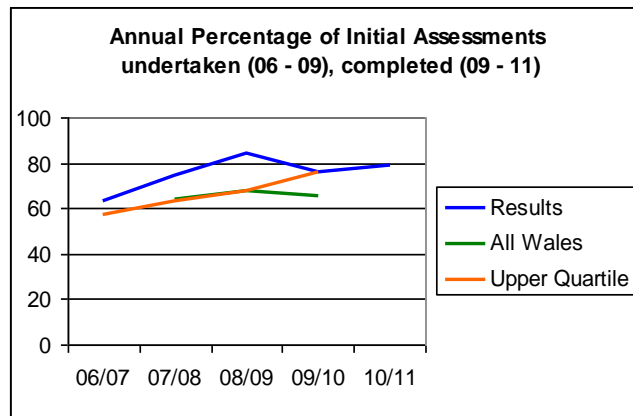
Safeguarding children has the highest priority for Carmarthenshire County Council. Over the last year we have seen a continued increase in the level of referrals to our two assessment teams and in the number of children looked after by the authority who then require support through our four long-term teams. Compared with the whole of Wales, we continue to have an average proportion of children who are looked after. Whilst our analysis and inspections confirm that this has been unavoidable to protect children, it continues to put pressure on social work teams and budgets. With a relatively low funding base per head of population, which remains firmly in the bottom quartile, additional funding has been critical in maintaining current high standards and safe practice.



The Local Safeguarding Children Board continues to develop with strong partnerships, as evidenced by the inspection of these arrangements in 2009. An annual, externally-facilitated self-assessment showed excellent progress, improving on the previous year's result by 29%. A key priority for the board will be to actively consult with children, young people, parents and carers in the development and review of its work. We continue to engage schools effectively through this partnership, rolling out new training, guidance and working with a small group of head teachers to create a common understanding of the threshold for making a referral. We have completed all actions required from our part in the serious case review following the death of a Swansea looked after child living in Carmarthenshire. We have used the learning from this case to generate a new and innovative interagency model to ensure coordination of work with young people at high risk. We have a high quality child protection reviewing service. In the 2009 review of Children's Safeguarding Arrangements, CSSIW reported "*Performance information from the conference chairperson, independent reviewing officers and risk assessment team who comprise the quality and reviewing team is increasingly*

influential in monitoring and raising standards". This service has received further investment over the last year to meet the requirements of the 2008 Children Act and to maintain their quality assurance role throughout the authority.

The assessment service is provided by two assessment teams. The timeliness of initial and core assessments remains among the best in Wales at 79.3% and 87.5% respectively. The Annual Improvement report by the Auditor General for Wales (Jan 2010) commented that *"The service offers a good range of appropriate information and there is a consistent, timely response to referrals. Initial and core assessments are timely and planning and review, in relation to looked after children, are both effective.*



We continue to reduce the bureaucracy for social workers by replacing the national assessment framework with formats and guidance developed by social work teams themselves. These were implemented at the end of the year and are designed to promote narrative and analysis, rather than a "tick box" approach, as well as reducing duplication of tasks and paperwork for social workers dealing with assessments, child protection conferencing and care proceedings.



We continue to progress a third of referrals to full assessment. Although this is below the Welsh average, we have spent considerable time analysing this further. Through involvement in the ["Narrowing the Gap"](#) initiative involving several councils, analysis has shown that comparisons of the percentage of referrals that are progressed to full assessment between authorities are not meaningful, because they measure different information.

Despite this, we have conducted a detailed audit of cases where no further action was required and found that whilst practice appears safe we have a high level of domestic violence referrals which would benefit from a family support approach. We have therefore located a domestic violence post within our assessment teams to ensure this support is delivered at the earliest possible opportunity. With national research highlighting that one in 25 children witness severe violence between their parents, developing protective services in this area remains a priority. The authority has commissioned the "Perpetrator's Programme", run by the Carmarthenshire Domestic Abuse Forum, which addresses the underlying causes of domestic abuse by working with the perpetrators to change their behaviour.

Extensive training has been delivered to all social workers to improve the quality of assessment using Carmarthenshire's own training model. This model is being commissioned for use by all social services departments in Wales as a national training programme. This work to improve quality and consistency will remain a priority for the foreseeable future. To assist in the oversight of this priority, we have

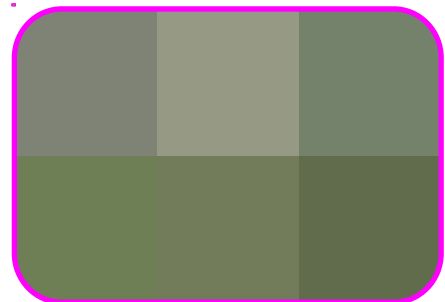
re-distributed our senior management responsibilities to give greater emphasis to monitoring the quality of social work practice.

The timeliness of core groups meeting within 10 days of a conference has now increased to 85.0% and is now at a level where we consider no further improvement is required if we are to be certain of making these meetings meaningful.

The number of care proceedings remains steady and detailed qualitative analysis of each of these cases has confirmed they were all necessary. Based on the results of this, we have commissioned a new service from Action for Children which aims to support women who are at risk of having subsequent children taken into care and to provide them with advice on contraception.

Effects on People's Lives

The number of children on the child protection register has increased by 39.6% in the last year and whilst we know this is partly due to a number of very large sibling groups, this will require further exploration in the coming year. An initial investigation into this sharp rise highlighted that some other agencies have become more cautious. However, numbers have begun to reduce again in the first quarter of 2011/12. The audit and evaluation group of the Local Safeguarding Children Board monitored the very small number of children who were on the child protection register for two years or more and reported quarterly to the Head of Children's Services. At the most recent review, it was found that all were being appropriately and actively managed.



Judgement



The Local Safeguarding Children Board in Carmarthenshire is becoming increasingly embedded in the work protecting children across the county. The inspection in 2009 found that *"The arrangements for multi-agency working through strategy discussions, case conferences and reviews are given high priority. The standards and requirements are known and applied effectively by the key agencies"*. Our self evaluation against national standards clearly shows a development of the influence of the LSCB with

standards being increasingly met. As with all authorities, work remains to be done to meet all of our ambitions and we urgently require a joint funding formula for statutory agencies to be developed and implemented nationally.

Our internal audits continue to show that child protection practice is safe and thresholds are robust. The CSSIW concurred with our self evaluation in 2009 that *"The Authority's own assessment of strengths and weaknesses is comprehensive and focused on the key issues for safeguarding. The inspection team largely endorses the conclusion it reached which is that the authority is effective in fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities"*.

The service user questionnaire for the out-of-hours service for this year produced results that were 100% positive. We intend to continue the current model of delivery which is providing a safe and effective service.

Despite their effective performance, teams are under pressure to meet the level of demand and a range of measures will be required to retain the current workforce given the increase in workloads last year. The inspection of adoption and permanency services in 2010 noted that whilst outcomes for children were good, *'capacity issues are impacting on the quality of record keeping'* The investment in additional social workers by the authority will be vital to maintain this level of good outcomes and to continue to improve record keeping.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; * = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ Re-organise senior management team to improve the oversight and support of front-line social work teams;
- ✓ Implement our workforce plan to improve the retention and recruitment of social workers;
- ✓ Monitor case loads carefully and report through the Corporate Parenting Board;
- ✓ Establish an additional long term team to improve the level of supervision of social workers;
- ✓ Establish a practitioner panel/project group to reduce bureaucracy in the social work task and so create capacity and deliver efficiencies;
- ✓ Establish a network of link posts addressing parenting issues including domestic violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Continue to implement our workforce plan to improve the retention and recruitment of social workers and embed additional social work posts provided through new corporate funding;
- Continue to monitor case loads carefully to ensure they remain manageable;
- Report outcomes for looked after children to the corporate parenting board and implement the corporate parenting strategy;
- Maintain the practitioner panel/project group to reduce bureaucracy in the social work task and so create capacity and deliver efficiencies;
- Reduce the hidden harm by further expanding a network of link posts addressing parenting issues including domestic violence, mental health, drugs and alcohol;
- Develop an Integrated Family Support Team model and service that meets the needs of Carmarthenshire;
- Establish a service to promote the use of contraception for those women who have had children previously removed;
- Develop a community parenting assessment model as an alternative to residential parent and baby assessments.

Children in Need and Prevention Services

Getting Help

To ensure children who do not require a social work assessment have good access to our preventative services, we now route many of our referrals direct to the [Carmarthenshire Family Information Service](#) for a proactive follow up which ensures that professionals and the public have one point of contact to access a broad range of information relevant to families. Procedures are now in place, which link this service with our social work assessment teams.

Services Provided

We have a range of highly regarded preventative services that include:

- Two family support teams supporting families and older children;
- Flying Start Programme;
- County-wide Homestart project;
- Twelve independent family centres;
- Three Integrated Children's Centres;
- Parenting programmes;
- Mobile family centre.



Good use is made of the Cymorth, Flying Start and Genesis grants in supporting families early and preventing the need for statutory involvement. A multi-agency [Family Support strategy](#) is being implemented, bringing together both statutory and non-statutory services that support families and ensuring integrated planning between preventative services and assessment and safeguarding services.

A key element that has contributed to the success of Flying Start has been closer working between health visitors, social workers and wider family support services. There is broad agreement that community health services and children and family social services should be integrated to deliver joint interventions for families who need support. A proposal is to be developed in 2011/12 to take this initiative forward.

The [Play Strategy](#) working group raises the profile of the importance of good play opportunities for children.

We have refocused our Community Outreach Team, which has been re-named the Family Intervention Team, to work intensively with families at risk of becoming looked after. To assist in this we have a new model of clinical supervision for the staff, through our specialist psychologist for looked after children.

The Family Centre network has continued to support all the family centres within the county to deliver a consistent quality service. Sustainability and long term viability issues are an ongoing challenge.

The Family and Community Team offers support to families who require complex and intensive solutions to meet their needs. The support is initially aimed at preventing

care proceedings by offering a range of services that focus on improving parenting skills. Services are delivered in groups or in the home on a one-to-one basis.

After care proceedings have commenced, there is still support with supervised contact and ongoing work with families to improve outcomes for children. We are working with the Substance Misuse team on the [Strengthening Families](#) project. Two members of staff have been employed to create a new Children's Rights unit working with our Corporate Parenting team. A multi-agency working group is seeking to improve the outcomes for children living with parents who have learning disabilities and a new protocol and action plan are now in place.



The planning and delivery of parenting education across the county is undertaken jointly between the Parenting Team, Sure Start Mentoring and the Flying Start Team. A range of evaluated courses are delivered in partnership in targeted areas to respond to need.

A range of commissioned services from Women's Aid, Home-start and Plant Dewi aims to meet lower level needs of some families. We remain committed to preventative services to meet need at the earliest opportunity, and in line with this we have opened two Integrated Children's centres in our most deprived communities.

To maximise the opportunity and efficiency in working across education, social care and health, we have implemented a 'team around the child' model to support those children and families who do not always qualify for key workers in social care. This enables us to effectively implement the common assessment framework and more than £150,000 has been secured as a Family First pilot area to invest in this initiative.

We have successfully secured grant funding to maintain services and continually reviewed and re-developed services to meet the growing needs of the county.

Effects on Peoples' Lives

We support and develop childcare for children in the early years throughout the county by working in partnership with the voluntary and private childcare sector. Early evidence shows that the Flying Start initiative in our most deprived communities is having an impact on improving outcomes for children. Evaluation through the 'Schedule of Growing Skills' assessment shows a 23% increase in children scoring at or above the expected cognitive development for their age.

Judgement

We have a wide range of effective family support services run by both the voluntary and statutory sector. The Joint Review of 2006 noted that *"there were a good and developing range of services for children and families, linked to identified need, with good use of Cymorth and other funding."* However, as family breakdown and the neglect and abuse of children grow, these services will need to become increasingly focussed on those most in need.

Our 'Hidden Harm' service, a finalist in the 2011 Care Council for Wales Social Care Accolades, consistently delivers outstanding work with children of parents who misuse substances.

The education psychology service was judged by ESTYN as offering a good quality service and now works with foster carers and families supporting children in the community as well as at school. This has been a key benefit to families resulting from the integration of Education and Children's Services.

We continue to individually evaluate all family support projects commissioned through a robust framework of outcome measures. This process informs our annual commissioning decisions. Evidence from Flying Start indicates a positive impact for most children engaged including those on the Child Protection Register.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; * = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ To re-focus the family Community Outreach Team following completion of the consultation exercise with a model used across the county to create change in the families they work with;
- ✓ Open an additional integrated Children's Centre in Morfa, Llanelli;
- ✓ Retain and support the 12 community family centres across the county;
- ✓ Develop greater skills for parents through a new parenting initiative aimed at preventing the need for care proceedings;
- ✓ Implement the Team Around the Child model and the Common Assessment Framework.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- To review, evaluate & implement the results of our new Family Intervention Team preventing children becoming looked after;
- Ensure effective transition from Cymorth preventative services to Families First compliance by assessing effectiveness;
- Implement and evaluate the results of the Family First Pilot, developing the Team around the child model;
- Ensure the needs of Children in Need are being met through effective reviewing of Care Plans;
- To develop a closer integration with Community Health Services through a section 33 agreement that better joins up services for children & families across education, social care & health;
- To pilot a referral process for assessed cases of "no further action" to receive preventative services.

Looked After Children

Getting Help

Duty systems are in place at our area offices situated in Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford where members of the public are able to access information, receive advice and guidance or have further involvement with teams. The Auditor General for Wales commented, *“The service offers a good range of appropriate information”* (January 2011).

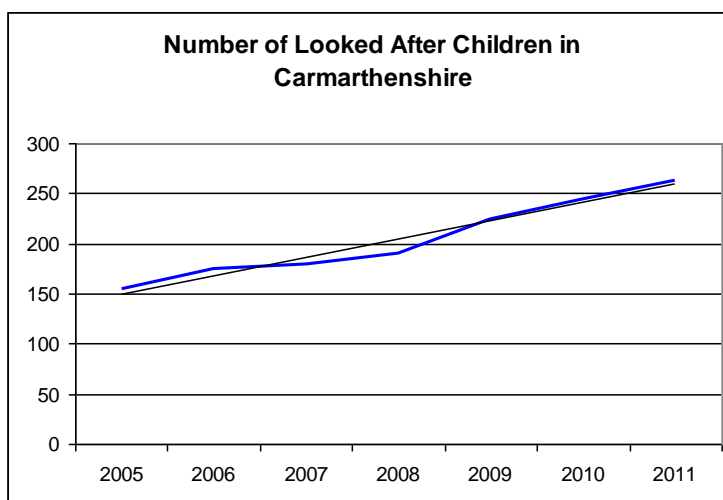
Services Provided

Services for looked after children are delivered through:

- Four long-term social work teams and two area-based assessment teams;
- Specialist leaving care posts in our long term social work teams;
- Children’s independent reviewing service;
- Corporate parenting team, incorporating nursing, social work and education professionals;
- Independent visiting and advocacy, through a voluntary sector contract;
- A fostering service;
- A West Wales adoption team.

At the end of March 2011, Carmarthenshire had 261 looked after children.

This is a 7% rise over the previous year and is mainly the result of an increase in the number of care proceedings. However, the rate of increase has dropped slightly from a peak of 10%. Looking back over the last three years, we have seen a remarkably steady growth in the number of care proceedings for looked after children and an increase in the stability of a small number of older children. When considered over the longer term, the growth represents a 70%



increase in the number of looked after children since 2005, which almost exactly mirrors the growth across Wales. Despite this, we still have an average number of children looked after when compared to the rest of Wales. Although we are an efficient and effective service, we remain the third lowest funded local authority in Wales per head of population. This puts our limited budgets under pressure. There is a risk of increasing existing social workers’ workloads, especially if we were not able to increase the number of social work posts.

Great interest has been shown in this area by the councillors in the Corporate Parenting Panel, through visiting social work teams and hearing first hand of practitioners’ experiences. This has led to additional social workers being funded in our long term teams to maintain more manageable caseloads.

The **Independent Reviewing Service** has been expanded again to meet the growth in numbers of children and new regulatory requirements. The service has maintained good compliance of the independent reviews of looked after children, with 92% taking place within timescales.

A looked after children training programme was developed and has been delivered by the Independent Reviewing Service this year, with some further sessions planned before the end of the year. The training was designed to improve the quality of care plans for looked after children. To date, 75% of front line staff has received training.



The **Fostering Service** has had considerable success over the last year with 82.7% of looked after children now placed with foster carers which has increased from 77% last year. The authority's placement strategy has been very successful at increasing the number of in-house foster carers that has enabled the growing number of looked after children to be placed locally. There has been no increase in the number of children placed out of county away from their families, communities and schools. Key additional services are now provided, including psychology advice to carers, 24-hour support and in-depth training.

The **Adoption Service** is run in partnership with Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. The service structure is difficult to manage with a centrally-based manager managing staff employed by the three counties. It had been agreed that the service would be restructured to be wholly-run by Carmarthenshire, as a provider for the other two counties. It is planned for a board, chaired by the Director of Social Services of Ceredigion, to oversee this work. At present, a final decision has not been taken regarding Pembrokeshire's involvement in this service development.

Over the last year, the service has had to interpret and implement substantial volumes of new regulation and guidance. This has been a significant challenge for a very small service. However, we have been able to implement much of this new regulation and have consistently been able to place the growing numbers of children for adoption by recruiting the adoptive parents we need.

We have transformed the emotional support for looked after children and are in the process of employing a full time life story worker who will ensure life story work is completed to a high standard for all children looked after in the medium and long term. A full time psychologist now supports them and advises social workers and foster carers in preparing programmes of family support and intervention. We have a menu of therapeutic intervention available for looked after children.

Journey Through the Mirror

Extract from a poem by a looked after child

It's coz you found me and you pulled me from the
darkness
You showed me who it is to be me
Now everyone is as happy as me
That you found me, and held me and kept me

We have more than doubled our number of personal advisers through securing European funding and are hopeful that this will have a significant impact on reducing the number of care leavers not in education, employment or training.

The **corporate parenting team** has developed significantly focussing on the education health and wellbeing of looked after children. We now have a team delivering wide reaching support for looked after children and care leavers including mentoring, traineeships, advice, consultation, participation activities and advocacy.

We have a well-established corporate parenting strategic group, including elected members and chief officers, who play an active role in meeting looked after children.

Advocacy for children has always had a low take-up from young people in Carmarthenshire and we have re-commissioned this service from Action for Children to deliver a more proactive service. This has been successful with three times as many children supported to give their views than last year.

Services for care leavers are delivered through specialist social workers in the social work teams. They are supported by a team of personal advisers in the Corporate Parenting Team.

Effect on Peoples' Lives

The signs are that educational attendance and attainment are improving, with over 94% attendance at secondary school level and an average 20% increase in educational results.

There has been a considerable growth in the number of foster carers who offer placements to children with disabilities and 'Family and Friends' carers; these are looked after children's relatives who have been approved as foster carers.

*"Thank you very much for taking us on a trip of a lifetime, it has been superb".
Looked after child on a short break holiday.*



Judgement

Planning for looked after children has improved, with consistent compliance with looked after children regulations, and evidence that planning for children by the long term social work teams is timely and effective. In the 2010 inspection of Adoption Services, CSSIW found *"that the outcomes for the children whose files were looked at were very positive. The commitment and energy of some social workers was found to be exemplary, particularly in working to achieve permanence for children"*. All children have a permanency plan in place at their second review which is then reviewed regularly in line with national requirements. Statutory visits by social workers to children are among the best in Wales at 98.5%.



The **Independent Review Service** offers a high quality service, staff are extremely experienced and take on a crucial quality assurance role for the department.

In the 2010 inspection, CSSIW reported,

“In relation to reviews of looked after children there is an ethos of quality assurance with detailed quarterly monitoring reports completed and quarterly meetings with Head of Service”. With regard to planning for children, in the same report CSSIW found that *“the independent reviewing officers played an active role in the planning for permanency, with children and young people being consulted and encouraged to attend reviews”*.



The **Fostering Service** has improved significantly over the last few years and delivers foster carers who are well supported and effective. However, there is considerable pressure on the team to maintain recruitment levels and meet the extra support demands from the growing number of carers and children. In 2009, CSSIW found that, *“The assessment of relative carers was an ongoing area of work, to enable family members to provide appropriate placements for young people. Dedicated Fostering Officers and a Senior Practitioner within the team had been assigned to monitor this area of activity”*. The Inspection Report recognised that this was an area of work that

required continued development. We have acted on this and now have a specialist support service to these carers. In the inspection 2010, foster carers *‘praised the support that was provided by the team’* and staff indicated they were *‘feeling supported and that their managers and senior practitioners were assets to the service’*.

The **Adoption Service** has had considerable success and very few children now wait for placements. In their 2010 inspection, CSSIW found *“the outcomes for the children whose files were looked at were very positive. The commitment and energy of some social workers was found to be exemplary, particularly in working to achieve permanence for children”* and that *“Carmarthenshire were providing effective leadership and there was a strong commitment to planning for permanence”*. However, there is still work to be done to fully implement the new regulations and the service could be further improved once restructured under a single local authority.

The **Corporate Parenting** agenda has been developed considerably with a number of demonstrable improvements in outcomes for children and some improvement actions being put in place. Elected members are now more engaged with frontline services and are able to be more effective corporate parents. In 2009 ESTYN found that, *“There is a good, focused strategy to support looked-after children. The authority gives good attention to monitoring and improving looked-after children’s attendance, behaviour and performance”*. Whilst plans for children’s education are generally effective, we are committed to improving the timeliness of Personal Education Plans when a child becomes looked after or moves to a new educational placement.

Despite the high level of care proceedings, the social work teams have performed impressively in relation to statutory visits, direct work with children and care planning.

We have a very good record at staying in touch with our **Care Leavers** at the age of 19. During 2010/11, we were in contact with all but 2 of the 19 year olds and we ensure that 100% of our care leavers receive suitable accommodation. Overall within Wales, Carmarthenshire is the fastest improver in reducing the number of young people Not in Education Employment and Training (NEET) and have made some improvement in this area for care leavers reducing NEET from 44% to 36%. However, there are still too many care leavers not in suitable education, employment or training. Significant extra capacity in this area has enabled us to separate the role of personal adviser and social worker successfully.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; ✗ = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ Implement Looked after Children regulations arising from Children Act 2008.
- ✓ Review the fostering service to ensure it continues to recruit and retain the carers we need.
- ✗ Continue to implement the adoption regulations in full and restructure the West Wales adoption team in line with the agreed service plan.
- ✓ Publish an annual report from the corporate parenting group highlighting activity, areas for improvement and activity planned for 2010/11.
- ✓ Develop the Next Step (leaving care) team to reduce the number of care leavers not in education, employment and training and reduce duplication of activity between social workers and personal advisers.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Implement the new Looked after Children regulations arising from the 2008 Children Act.
- Embed the new fostering structure to support Family and friends carers.
- Restructure the West Wales adoption team in line with the agreed service plan to better deliver services to children & families.
- Run a new recruitment process for carers, utilising radio.
- Develop services to support family and friends carers.
- Implement the new framework for the emotional support of looked after children.

Children with a Disability

Getting Help

The Children's Disability Team is a single county wide service, co-located with the sensory impairment service, therapy services and the continuing care team. This allows the team to provide a more integrated service to the 395 children with disabilities and their families.

We have two residential respite centres and an increasing range of services to support children and their families. However, there is increasing demand for services

and this is further complicated by the rural nature of Carmarthenshire. Parents and young people have continued to play an active role in shaping the service. They have participated in staff recruitment, training, working groups and reference groups. Parent representatives have been supported to develop a [parents' website](#) to improve access to information and support.

Services Provided

The service includes health therapists, occupational therapists, social workers and advisory teachers. In line with national trends, the number of children with autism is increasing as well as the number of children with very complex medical needs. There is greater awareness across agencies of the increased vulnerability of children with disabilities and their parents. This has resulted in growth in the numbers of disabled children's names being placed on the child protection register and legal action in five cases. We judge this to be a positive step in ensuring we adequately protect children with a disability.

There has been investment in both respite centres to provide an additional wheelchair-accessible bedroom in Llys Caradog and specially adapted play area in Blaenau. There has also been an increase in the range of short break activities including after school clubs, specialist play schemes and small groups. We have secured funding to develop a residential school facility for autistic children. This will open with 5 new places in September 2011 and will ensure that young people who would access the facility but require residential support will now remain in the county.

Effects on Peoples' Lives

Judgement

There has been effective partnership working with health and education to minimise the need for specialist placements, with only 3 children with complex needs in long term residential care outside the county. Carmarthenshire provides significantly more respite care to children than any other authority in Wales. We are confident that this investment significantly reduces the need for more expensive long term placements in residential care, with only one child in long term residential care within the county.

We have put additional investment into the disability service with a range of specialist training. We have excellent respite care units. Outstanding CSSIW inspection reports during 2010 highlighted that both Blaenau and Llys Caradog Respite Care Centres *"continued to provide a very high standard of care to children and young people using its service and contributed positively to their lives and that of their families"*.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; ✗ = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ Increase the range of short break services by developing effective working relationships with other agencies such as the Youth Service;
- ✗ Integrate the Early Support model into practice in the children's disability team;
- ✓ Work with health and education to find creative solutions to meet children's needs in county by investing in local services to continue to reduce the number of children requiring out of county placements;
- ✗ Increase the participation of children and young people.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Continue to increase the range of short break services by developing effective working relationships with other agencies such as the Youth Service;
- Continue to integrate the Early Support model into practice in the children's disability team;
- Continue to encourage the participation of children and young people with disabilities in shaping their services;
- Develop a residential school facility for autistic children to provide 5 new places to be opened during September 2011.

Overview of Complaints – Children's Services

Complaints received by Children's Services rose from 28 last year to 37 this year. This increase is not significant, given the relatively low numbers and when considering the longer term trends. It may reflect the impact of the new public information leaflet promoting the complaints procedure.



The largest category of complaints about services was for child protection where 12 complaints were received. Of those, 9 were not upheld. The next highest category of complaints was concerning looked after children, with 11 complaints of which 7 were not upheld. Both these areas often give rise to conflict with families where children are being looked after or reviewed without their parent's consent.

6 complaints about services for children with disabilities were received, followed by 4 complaints regarding children in need of which 3 were not upheld.

The Out-of-Hours service is managed by Children's Services but provides a service for both Adults and Children's Social Care. The service dealt with over 1200 calls during the year and received only 2 complaints. There were no complaints about the Adoption & Fostering service.

Children's Services - Outcome Improvement Targets

The council has entered into a three year agreement with the Welsh Government to deliver some key outcomes for the children and young people of Carmarthenshire:

Targets and actions during 2010/11:

✓ = completed or progressed; ✕ = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ Continue to work with our partners to develop more advanced skills in assessment and care management by developing training for partner agencies, **by March 2011**
- ✓ Minimise Social Worker vacancies to remain **below 10%** to ensure the division has sufficient social worker staffing levels to meet the requirements of the Public Law Outline.
- ✓ Develop an initiative to link with Adult Mental Health to provide support for parents of children in need who are at risk.
- ✓ Ensure that there is extensive and good quality respite care by providing at least **100 children** with annual short breaks which will contribute to securing the permanency of their placement.
- ✓ Open one new family centre at Morfa to provide a network of services to support children aged 0 – 14 years **by March 2011**. A further centre at Felinfoel was planned for **March 2012**, but was opened ahead of schedule during 2010/11.
- ✓ Undertake a review of the services provided by the Community Outreach Team to better target families at risk of breakdown.
- ✓ Recruit **12 new foster carers** per year to increase placement choice.
- ✓ Bring together a multi-agency team, including agencies, parents and the child or young person, to work together effectively, once the child or young person's difficulties have been identified.

Targets and actions during 2011/12:

- Continue to work with our partners to develop more advanced skills in assessment and care management by delivering training for partner agencies by March 2012
- Minimise Social Worker vacancies to remain **below 10%** to ensure the division has sufficient social worker staffing levels to meet the requirements of the Public Law Outline.
- Ensure that there is extensive and good quality respite care by providing at least **125 children** with annual short breaks which will contribute to securing the permanency of their placement.
- Recruit **12 new foster carers** per year to increase placement choice.
- Bring together a multi-agency team, including agencies, parents and the child or young person in particular, to work together effectively, once the child or young person's difficulties have been identified.

3. Services for Young People

Transition from Children's to Adult Services

Getting Help

In 2008, we listened to parents and young people's experiences of the transition from children's to adult services. They told us that there was a lack of co-ordination and planning during transition which sometimes meant that young adults didn't get as good a service as they were entitled to.

On average, 20 young people come through transition into Adult Services every year with increasing numbers who have complex and profound needs.

Services Provided

This is the first full year that this multi disciplinary team has functioned as a service. We have worked towards and actively encouraged families and young people to access college placements within Carmarthenshire. We have liaised with the [COASTAL project](#) which has resulted in some of our young people successfully securing jobs with support, working in retail outlets in Carmarthen. We have supported and run a weekly youth club for young people from the ages of 16-25 years. This continues to be very successful with the young people participating in the running of their club. The numbers of young people attending has increased over the last twelve months as the transition service has expanded.

A successful European funding bid was secured for Carmarthenshire which has enabled the transition team to recruit another 6 workers. They will work at Heol Goffa School in Llanelli and at Queen Elizabeth High School in Carmarthen to support severely disabled pupils to access work opportunities, training and leisure within their local areas. It is envisaged that this new team will work with up to 35 young people in the first year, rising to 75 in the second year. The new team consists of a transition social worker, a peer mentor, a psychology support worker, a family liaison worker, an independent living skills worker and a finance support worker. Referrals for this team will come from the two schools.

Effects on Peoples' Lives

Judgement

176 young people have been assisted through this specialist team in its first year of operation. There have been considerable improvements for service users under the new arrangements. These young adults now receive an enhanced level of care management during this period of change. Families now receive clearer communication including better clarity on funding routes for packages.

As the team develops in year two we will be strengthening the links with Heol Goffa and Queen Elizabeth schools and enhancing the multi-disciplinary practice of the team through the addition of nurses.

Other local authorities in Wales are looking at our model of working from a person centred approach. As a service, we now have the foundations in place to provide a supportive environment whereby disabled young people can develop their lives within Carmarthenshire.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; ✗ = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ Establish a group of senior managers from Health, Education and Social Services to oversee the transition process and to improve effectiveness and outcomes for young people;
- ✗ Secure the agreement of the NHS to fund two nurses in the Transition Team with the appropriate skills and experience;
- ✓ Put the newly agreed transition policy and protocols into practice;
- ✗ Help and support more young adults to be able to live independently as tenants in local, suitable homes.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- To implement the Trinity Fields project to target and meet the needs of young people aged 14 – 19 who have disabilities
- Working with Adult Services to secure the agreement of the NHS to fund 2 nurses in the Transition Team with the appropriate skills
- Make more further education opportunities available for young people and improve their access to existing opportunities.
- To participate on the Equalities Board with managers of colleges to ensure more equitable opportunities for children with both physical and mental disabilities

Youth Offending and Prevention Service (YOPS)

Services Provided

The service aims to reduce offending by children and young people and works in partnership with Dyfed Powys Police, Wales Probation Trust, Hywel Dda Health Board, HM Court Service, Community Safety Partnership and the Children & Young People's Partnership.

We work with 100-120 young people at any given time, who are on court orders and up to 20 young people who are assessed as being at risk of offending or anti social behaviour. The service is an important part of a network of agencies all working with young people to prevent offending and anti social behaviour.

Carmarthenshire has seen a falling number of young people entering the Youth Justice System. Those who do enter the Youth Justice System are re-offending less often than several years ago, and there are only a small number of young people in custody, at any given time.

Judgement

In the summer of 2010 the Service received a core case inspection by H.M.I. Probation who concluded minimum improvements were required in safeguarding and likelihood of re-offending work and a moderate improvement was required in risk of harm work. When compared to similar services, this places the practice of the YOPS within the top quartile in Wales.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = actions completed or progressed * = actions yet to be completed

- ✓ YOPS will work with its partners to develop a co-ordinated prevention strategy for children and young people at risk of offending and/or anti social behaviour.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- YOPS will commit resources to the development of team around the child, as a co-ordinated, multi agency, prevention response to children at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour
- Continue to work with other Local Criminal Justice Board partners to develop the DETER scheme to identify those young people who present the highest likelihood of re-offending. The scheme will form the framework for YOPS and the Police to direct adequate resources to prevent further offending.
- Continue to utilise European and Welsh Assembly funding streams to provide greater resources to support young people in employment, training and education placements, facilitate better continuity between placements, provide better assessments of the individual needs of young people and contribute to improving access to and design of some provision.

4. Adult Services

Safeguarding Adults from Abuse (Protection of Vulnerable Adults)

Carmarthenshire has a multi-agency Adult Safeguarding Board which provides strategic direction and governance arrangements for safeguarding and is chaired by the Director of Social Services.

During 2010-11, the Adult Safeguarding Board has developed a three-year Business Plan with five key themes, namely:

- Making Adult Protection everyone's business
- Learning from our practice
- Developing our workforce
- Invest in Adult Protection
- Promoting service user and carer involvement

The Adult Safeguarding Board has overseen the implementation of the safeguarding improvement actions noted in the Director's Annual Report 2009-10.

At the same time, the Council has responded positively to the key recommendations contained in CSSIW's National Inspection of Adult Protection All-Wales Overview report and the recommendations contained in the review of "In Safe Hands", undertaken by the University of Glamorgan on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Most notably, the Council has implemented:

- The new Wales Interim Policy and Procedures for Adult Protection;
- A coordinated safeguarding service with a single point of access for referral;
- A duty system to consider all referrals;
- A focussed approach to threshold decision making through the application of a risk-based assessment framework.

We have also brought together the Safeguarding Service, Commissioning and Contracting and Complaints Service under a single manager in recognition of the close links between the adult protection procedure, the escalating concerns procedure, contract monitoring and the complaints procedure.

In line with these changes, the Council has strengthened the relationships between the Safeguarding service and the Contracting service, through a Provider Performance Monitoring protocol, and with the Complaints service through weekly meetings.

The Safeguarding service has also begun work to develop closer local partnerships with Housing and Public Protection.

Effect on People's Lives

There were 504 cases opened to Safeguarding with 193 cases completed and 105 cases remaining open at the year end. 319 were deemed to be inappropriate referrals.

The percentage of completed referrals that led to an investigation was 78.8%, with those cases which were admitted or proved being 37.8%.

The percentage of adult protection referrals completed where the risk has been managed was 91%.

This is the 2nd year that we have been implementing the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) legislation. The aim of the legislation is to put safeguards in place to ensure that vulnerable people are not deprived of their liberty, unless it is necessary to do so for their own safety. We consider that implementation in Carmarthenshire has been successful in comparison with the rest of Wales. This is demonstrated by 37 DOLS assessments carried out by mental health professionals of people in care homes, predominantly older people. This was a high number compared to other local authorities, indicating that there is good awareness in Carmarthenshire of the new requirements for care homes to make a referral to us, in our role as the supervisory body. Of these referrals, 27 resulted in authorisation.

Judgement

The recent CSSIW inspection of Learning Disabilities service confirmed the potential for improvement with the implementation of these new arrangements.

Since implementation, the department has received positive feedback from its partners including the Dyfed-Powys police, Hywel Dda Health Board and service providers.

'I have attended two strategy meetings recently. Both meetings were very efficiently and effectively conducted. It is a marked improvement from the position under the previous procedures.'

- Dyfed Powys Police

We consider that the new model of Safeguarding has improved the arrangements, due to the application of threshold criteria using objective tools, the convening of strategy meetings in accordance with the All Wales template and service standards and more timely investigations with explicit emphasis on service user outcomes. However we recognise the need for continued development through the improvement actions for 2011/12 identified below:

Improvement actions undertaken during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; ✗ = remains to be completed / progressed

- ✓ Increase the strategic focus and effectiveness of the Adult Protection Committee together with raising the profile of adult protection;
- ✓ Implement one single point of access for referrals;
- ✓ Continue to refine and improve our policies and procedures on protecting adults, ensuring that we learn from best practice;
- ✗ Ensure the consistent implementation of agreed procedures across all teams via regular case audits;
- ✓ Continue to develop our workforce and provide effective training for practitioners;
- ✓ Significantly improve the recording of the decision making and assessment of risk at all points in the safeguarding process;
- ✓ To increase and improve administrative support arrangements for safeguarding;
- ✓ Ensure that the outcomes of referrals, strategy discussions and strategy meetings are made known to all relevant individuals.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- To protect adults we will develop and implement the means for service users to engage and participate in the safeguarding process
- For Adult Protection we will apply a risk management approach from referral to outcome
- We will put in place quality assurance processes to ensure that all safeguarding referrals are responded to in an appropriate and timely manner
- We will ensure that the front line workforce has the capacity, leadership and systems necessary to protect adults adequately
- We will develop and implement a communication plan to raise awareness and understanding of the new safeguarding arrangements, principally to make sure that safeguarding is seen as everyone's business
- We will improve and develop links with relevant service areas so the meaning of safeguarding and adult protection is established and understood, including the promotion of preventative measures
- We will ensure all staff who work to protect adults have full knowledge of their safeguarding and adult protection responsibilities.
- To continue to improve the effective administration of safeguarding policy and practice.
- To ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable adults we will undertake regular case file audits and evaluation of practice.

Services for People who Misuse Substances

Getting Help

During 2010/11, work has been undertaken with our partners in Hywel Dda Health Board, PRISM and Turning Point to develop integrated care pathways for adults with substance misuse problems. This has ensured that wherever possible, adults receive an initial assessment within 10 working days from referral and receive the service they need when they need it. Our working arrangements help avoid duplication between services and ensure that a multi agency approach is taken to risk management.

Turning Point has recently begun offering open access sessions at the multi-agency base we host in Llanelli. This means that people do not need an appointment and can drop in for a face-to-face appointment with a worker during office hours.

The additional social worker joining the team in 2011 has significantly increased the capacity of the team, enabling us to meet the increased demand for the service.

The team continues to improve care management practice and conducts an annual case file audit against case management standards. We have developed common assessment, care plan and risk assessment documentation with the Health Board specialist team.

Services Provided

The number of people accessing residential rehabilitation and other specialist services in Carmarthenshire has almost doubled with the number of bed days having increased from around 800 to over 2,000.

Within the year we have begun running the [Strengthening Families](#) programme as part of a national research trail funded by Cardiff University. The programme for families with children aged 10–14 years is designed to increase resilience within families and prevent young people from misusing alcohol and drugs. The project is being run in partnership with Education & Children's Services and Action for Children. We have run groups in Newcastle Emlyn, Ammanford, Llanelli and Carmarthen. Further groups are planned through the year with the focus on some of our more rural communities.

Our Hidden Harm project is a joint initiative between the council and Barnardo's Carmarthenshire Young Carers Service. The project aims to improve joint working between children's and adult specialist services to meet the needs of children and families affected by substance misuse. In conjunction with the Family and Community Team, we have developed and delivered specialist parenting programmes for parents with drug or alcohol problems. The project has been very successful and has now been extended to provide the service county-wide. The project was a finalist from over 70 submissions for the Care Council for Wales' Social Care Accolades 2011.

With Barnardo's Cymru, we hosted a Hidden Harm Conference which aimed to raise awareness and address the impact of parental substance misuse. The event was

extremely successful, being over subscribed and attracting over 60 professionals from children's services, education, health and a range of other local services.

Effect on People's Lives

We have been working with our partners to ensure that each service has a carer's champion. The role of the champion is to provide advice and support to carers and other people concerned about the effects of substance misuse.

We have implemented the Treatment Outcome Profile (TOP) which measures the outcome of our interventions for service users and their families.

Judgement

Despite an ever increasing demand for this service, the team continues to develop a range of innovative projects with partner organisations to meet these needs.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = actions completed or progressed; * = actions yet to be completed

- ✓ Improve our assessment and care management practice;
- ✓ Continue to build upon our links with Children's Services;
- ✓ Strengthen awareness within Carmarthenshire County Council's services and members;
- ✓ Play a lead role in the development of inter-agency working to deliver integrated substance misuse services in Carmarthenshire;
- ✓ Continue to raise the profile of the service to service users, carers and other stakeholders.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Implementing Care First as a case management system.
- Continue to develop Integrated Families Support Teams in conjunction with Children's Services
- Continue to strengthen awareness within Carmarthenshire County Council's services and members, especially within the Social Care, Health and Housing Department.
- Play a lead role in the development of inter-agency working to deliver integrated substance misuse services in Carmarthenshire especially for families support.
- Continue to raise the profile of the service to service users, carers and other stakeholders.

Services for People with Learning Disabilities

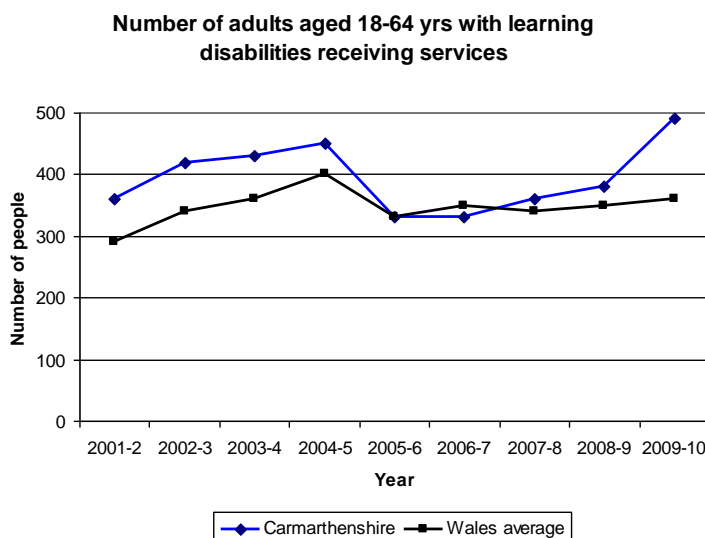
Getting Help

Providing accessible information and effective communication is essential to providing responsive, outcome focussed services. We continue to improve information and access to services and during the year enhancements have been made to our website, leaflets, documentation, the work of Career Pathway, service user engagement via one-to-one workshops and parent carer representative groups. During 2010/11, the council has been developing an effective call centre responding to social care enquiries and safeguarding referrals. We expect that this service will be extended during 2011/12 to provide a service for people with a learning disability and their families. We have developed various accessible documents including reviews, assessments and support plans using [Total Communication](#) (a method that uses different modes of communication depending on the individual's needs).

Although there remain a large number of people awaiting assessments and reviews, the number has decreased significantly during 2010/11 to 11 people awaiting an assessment and 281 people requiring a review. We will further reduce these numbers as a result of additional resources allocated to assessment and care management. Considerable work has taken place within the teams to manage the risks whilst awaiting review, which will be aided further when the fully electronic care management system goes live. The referral process within the teams continues to develop through an integrated approach to initial assessment and allocation although recording and risk management of those waiting for an assessment are not yet standardised.

The need to produce outcome focussed care plans informed by high quality assessments remains paramount. We believe this can be achieved through effective integrated working, involving the person and their carers in the process whilst providing continuous feedback and training to staff on the quality and content of the assessments. To achieve this, we have created a practice development programme to support key staff to improve their practice in relation to outcome-focussed planning, person-centred approaches and overall quality. In conjunction with this, a case file audit process has been adopted to provide a quality assurance framework across both community teams.

There was a significant increase in the number of people with learning disabilities receiving services in Carmarthenshire in 2009-10, as compared to other Welsh authorities, as shown in this graph. Carmarthenshire also increased spending on LD services by 12% in 2009-10, as compared to 15% increase across comparable authorities.



Since 2001-02, Carmarthenshire's spending on Learning Disabilities services has increased, in line with both the Welsh average and other comparable authorities. The proportion of spending on our in-house services has been decreasing from 2008-09, in common with the rest of Wales.

Services Provided

We continue to make good progress against the objectives set by our modernisation and improvement programme, [The Big Plan](#).

The number of supported living arrangements continues to rise with two new schemes opening last year bringing the total of supported living units up to 109. Much work has been undertaken to ensure services provide the least restrictive and cost effective support services. We have worked very closely with providers to remodel provision where appropriate for individuals whilst also mapping individuals' needs in relation to their existing and potential housing support needs.

ARENA now provides individualised supported employment to 40 participants. Work towards the realisation of the Coleshill Centre for Economic Inclusion (CEI) continues, with the business plan approved and development is progressing.

Our excellent Workstep programme, which provides tailored support to find, secure and retain jobs for disabled people with complex barriers to employment, received high praise from an ESTYN inspection in October 2009. The service has now been subsumed into Work-choice which now supports 262 individuals .

We continue to develop day time opportunities in line with our strategy of realigning and reconfiguring services to provide effective support for people which will promote independence through increase options to have a valued role within their community.

We are striving to move away from traditional models of 9 to 5 day services. A programme of person-centred workshops, to identify the needs of those people accessing day services, will provide us with the necessary information to develop a range of day opportunities which are community-based and outcome-focused. This will utilise existing community provisions without compromising appropriateness.

There has also been a focus on involvement and participation, as demonstrated by the implementation within Johnstown Day Centre of the active support model, which supports people with learning disabilities to plan the best use of their time, with the correct level of support and participate in all activities that make up day-to-day living.



'The Active Support programme has given the person the opportunity to do more meaningful activities'

'Communication between staff and between service users and staff has improved greatly' – Day Centre Staff

The [COASTAL project](#) has built up momentum, with a total of 169 participants now enrolled across all of the projects. The Career Pathway Team has increased stakeholders' awareness including various public and community groups. All of the projects continue to develop; and plans are well underway to reintroduce City & Guilds NPTC accreditation across all 3 STEPS projects.

Service standards have been produced by the department and monitoring against these standards will be undertaken by the contracting team during 2011/12. A service level agreement will be prepared.

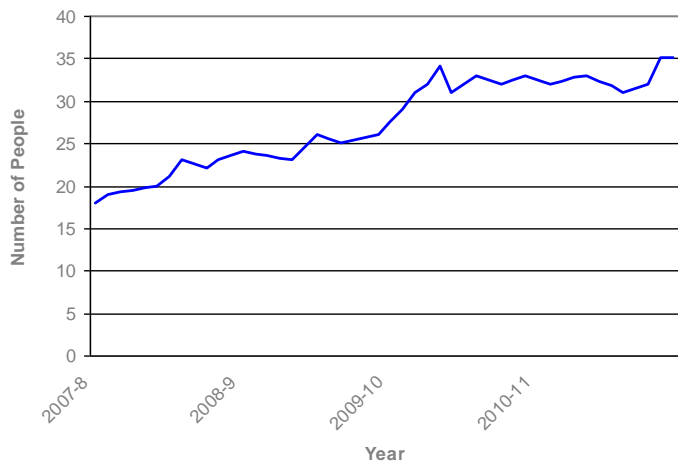
[Adult placement](#) is a regulated scheme for West Wales with Carmarthenshire being the lead authority. Services provided include short breaks (respite), short term and long term placements to 170 individuals from the homes of approved adult placement carers. The service also provides day and sessional services along with emergency placements. Services are delivered to all adult service users, and are viewed as a key element in both the personalisation agenda and the budget strategy, by providing cost effective short and long term placements.

This strategic investment has resulted in 985 placements during the year of which 92 were long term and 893 short breaks.

A recent CSSIW inspection highlighted that, *"Service users were appropriately assessed by social workers and other professionals included in the care of individuals and that service users were involved in the composition of their adult plan. Risk assessments were clear with evidence of regular review and that the scheme had in place policies and procedures providing guidance on how allegations of incidents of abuse should be dealt with and that carers had undertaken specific training and guidance on the actions that should be taken should abuse be suspected. The scheme continues to provide a well managed and organised service for vulnerable adults."*

There are currently 94 Adult Placement households across West Wales with a total of 164 approved Adult Placement carers which equates to a 48% increase over the last 12 months. 57 of these households are in Carmarthenshire. As a result of the proactive recruitment campaign there have been 17 new Adult Placement carer approvals this year.

Long Term Adult Placement Provision



There's something there for us, you know what I mean. It's like winning the lottery. That's how good it is here. - Adult Placement Service User.

Adult placement, Independent Living Fund (ILF) and the use of direct payments continue to provide individuals with a growing range of opportunities for independence. Currently in Carmarthenshire, there are 57 adult placement carer households, 201 people receive ILF payments and 80 people utilise direct payments to purchase their own care.

Respite/short break provision is a key aspect of the Big Plan in recognition of the vital role played by informal carers. The implementation of the short break policy, following a lengthy consultation process, provides a transparent and equitable allocation mechanism based on need. A respite coordinator has been appointed to manage the process as well as providing carers with a named single point of contact. Provision is commissioned via Adult Placement as the first option, the independent sector or the specialist services at Tir Einon for those with health-related needs.

The quality of commissioned services is assured through robust commissioning plans, provider forums, complaints monitoring, supported by the introduction of a provider performance monitoring system which collates concerns regarding the performance of a service provider. Working together with the provider, actions to address concerns are identified and monitored to achieve the right outcomes for the individual.

The local authority and the NHS are fully aware that neither partner can successfully deliver the required positive outcomes without joint and integrated working. Formal agreement has been reached to establish an Integrated Community Team under a single line of general management and commissioning framework led by the local authority. The model has been jointly developed and being adopted throughout the geographical boundaries of the Hywel Dda Health Board.

Effect on People's Lives

We have implemented a policy on the allocation of short breaks to service users and families that will ensure fair and transparent service delivery. 128 service users received a respite placement, significantly of which 55 received an adult placement respite stay. These respite services benefit the carers as well as the service users. All carers were offered a carer's assessment.

This is Robert, aged 20, who has moderate learning difficulties. Robert had enjoyed business and bricklaying courses in college but when the courses ended, Robert had little to do except watch television and play his games console. Robert and his parents were keen for him to be constructively occupied. Robert was referred to COASTAL and the Career Pathway Team for support that would enable him to access paid employment. They helped Robert to decide that he wanted to pursue opportunities for outdoor work.



Robert signed up to the Shaw Trust's local gardening project, a job awareness programme and an informal job search club. During the job awareness course, it was identified that Robert needed to further develop his confidence, communication and team working skills.

Robert's Career Pathway Officer then contacted Turning Point Cymru to refer him to their allotment gardening club. Robert also got involved with a dog walking scheme at an Animal Rescue Centre. Robert's confidence grew quickly and staff at Turning Point worked with him to build his communication skills, and Robert has now been invited to work as a permanent volunteer with a peer mentor. He has also helped staff at Turning Point with their Christmas Craft Stall at the local market and has attended cooking classes.

Robert has agreed to attend an information day with the Prince's Trust Team to find out more about their 12-week programme. This will hopefully enable Robert to continue to build his confidence and improve his communication and team working skills. With ongoing support, Robert is fully expected to make further progress towards his goal of full-time employment.

Judgement

The move away from expensive residential care by re-designing and investing in community based services, through collaborative working is well underway and gathering momentum.

Our contention that the West Wales Adult Placement Service, led and managed by Carmarthenshire, is one of the foremost and most successful of its type is evidenced by the fact that over 20% of adult placement carers in Wales reside within the 3 counties.

Re-modelling existing day services onto day opportunities remains at an early and planning stage but the work is well underway to further improve upon our employment services via the COASTAL project and to also enhance day services whilst alternative community based options are being developed.

We are acutely aware of the budgetary pressures on the service arising from a combination of the increasing numbers of complex cases coming through from transition and the age profile of parent carers and service users, and a clear budget strategy is in place.

Overview of Complaints – Learning Disabilities

An analysis of the complaints resolved this year showed that we received more complaints about learning disability services than in the previous year (29 compared to 18 last year).

Complaints about direct services increased from 6 to 16, mainly regarding changes to services provided within day centres and missed homecare calls.

Complaints about social work teams were slightly down from 11 to 9. The improvement over the last 2 years reflects that we have addressed the under-investment in assessment and care management, whilst recognising that we still have more work to do to reach the appropriate capacity in our social work teams so that we can provide a better service. There were also 3 complaints about transport services, under the “well driven” scheme.

There were 7 compliments for learning disabilities services.



Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = actions completed or progressed; ✗ = actions yet to be completed

- ✓ Adopt a formal agreement on the management and integration arrangements between the NHS and the local authority;
- ✓ Develop clear service standards for Learning Disability Services;
- ✓ Reduce the backlog of outstanding reviews by one third each year over the next three years. This will ensure clients' independence is being maximised and that support is cost effective in meeting their needs;
- ✓ By working collaboratively across the region, achieve better value-for-money services;
- ✓ Develop a clear vision, purpose and service standards for day services;
- ✗ Provide robust and consistent supervision throughout direct services;
- ✓ Implement regular case file audits and feedback;
- ✓ Develop an effective strategy to meet the needs of people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder;
- ✓ Implement a three-year recruitment strategy to recruit more Adult Placement Carers in specific geographical areas and with ground floor accommodation;
- ✓ Develop a training strategy for Adult Placement Carers in partnership with Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Complete the development of clear service standards for Learning Disability Services;
- Continue to strengthen the strategic partnership with the NHS and neighbouring local authorities;
- Continue to improve the timeliness in assessment and reviews;
- Continue to improve the quality and consistency of assessment and care management;
- Implement consistent supervision and appraisal practice across the service;
- To further improve engagement mechanisms to ensure effective communication with all stakeholders and that the views of service users are incorporated into service area reviews.
- Continue 3 year recruitment strategy to recruit more AP Carers in specific geographical locations and with ground floor accommodation and extend to increasing awareness of Adult Placement as a service option amongst vulnerable adults and their families.
- Continue to develop and deliver 3 year training strategy for Adult Placement Carers and ensure that within the next 12 months all approved Adult Placement Carers will have undertaken the Adult Placement Training Award.

Services for People with Mental Health Needs

Getting Help

Being able to access social care services quickly and easily is an important part of tackling problems early. Within Carmarthenshire, our mental health social work resources are located in Community Mental Health Teams. As these teams are secondary care teams, they are usually accessed through the General Practitioner or primary care team. We are aware that this does not make accessing mental health social care services easy. In response to this, we are looking at ways in which this can be improved.

During March 2011, we discussed our aims with the local mental health forum. One priority that we shall be working on with the forum is to develop a self assessment tool which will be used when we first assess someone's needs.

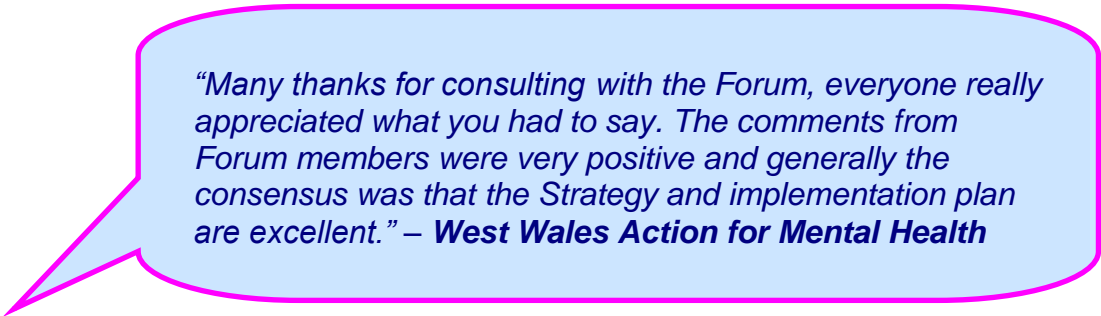
We undertook an internal review as we were not entirely satisfied with the care plan we were using. As a result we have developed a new care plan to give to service users following an assessment.

Services Provided

In line with our commissioning plan and budget strategy we are actively reviewing some high cost residential care packages with a view to enabling individuals to move towards more independent living situations, where appropriate. Wherever possible we want service users to be able to receive support in their own homes and communities. We already have a number of examples where people have moved out of residential care into supported tenancies or to services closer to home.

The council continues to financially support a number of third sector services specifically for people with a mental health problem. As many of these are direct access services, individuals benefitting are not counted on our care management database, and are not therefore included in the performance indicator for the number of people supported in the community. We are however aware that there were 432 people supported in this way during the year.

Since the last annual report we have developed a [Social Care Commissioning Plan](#) for the mental health and wellbeing of adults in Carmarthenshire and an implementation plan to support it. The commissioning plan was approved by Council during 2010 and we are currently collating views on it from service users and partner agencies.



*“Many thanks for consulting with the Forum, everyone really appreciated what you had to say. The comments from Forum members were very positive and generally the consensus was that the Strategy and implementation plan are excellent.” – **West Wales Action for Mental Health***

Through external funding, we were able to appoint a temporary parental mental health worker. Since autumn 2010, the worker has held a number of workshops involving mental health and children’s services staff and conducted an audit of case files. Early feedback from these exercises are the value of joint training, developing a practice exchange and looking at ways in which short placements can promote joint understanding and improved care pathways.


In 2010, working jointly with the Supporting People Team resulted in the commissioning and opening of a further supported accommodation project in Llanelli, enabling people to live independent lifestyles with support. A replica project in Carmarthen is scheduled to open in 2011/12.

During 2010 with the help of West Wales Action for Mental Health and the Mental Health forum, we involved service users in the recruitment and selection of social workers.

“Being a part of this panel made me feel, empowered, and respected, and that my opinions were very important to fellow panel members I would like to suggest that all interviews are carried out in this manner, and enjoyed the experience no end and would not hesitate to be included in future interviewing.” - Service User

Overview of Complaints – Mental Health

In common with previous years, very few complaints were received about mental health and substance misuse services, with only 5 being received this year. There were no complaints about our role as a supervisory body in the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) process, reinforcing our view that our first 2 years of dealing with DoLS referrals has been successful. There were also 4 compliments about mental health and substance misuse services.



Effect on People’s Lives

At any one time, our social workers in Community Mental Health Teams are supporting in excess of 300 people with severe and enduring mental health problems.

In respect of self directed care, 11 Direct Payments are recorded for service users with Mental Health problems. 8 of these cases are held by mental health teams and 3 by older people’s services.

Our Social Care Commissioning Plan outlines our intention to improve outcomes for service users and their carers. One way in which we do this is by using the least

restrictive interventions possible. As an example in 2010/11 there were 190 mental health act assessments (98 of which took place out of office hours). Of these, 105 resulted in no application of compulsory powers under the Mental Health Act and just under a third resulted in no admission to hospital.

Judgement

Although a comparatively small service within social care, our mental health services provide important support to some of the most excluded people within our communities.

We believe the development of a “social care specific” mental health commissioning plan has helped us highlight the unique contribution we make to mental health services locally and we are hopeful that it can influence the way in which service users and carers experience and increasingly shape service provision in the county.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = actions completed or progressed ✗ = actions yet to be completed

- ✓ Develop and agree a Social Care Commissioning Plan for Mental Health;
- ✓ Review our arrangements for access to social care in joint Community Mental Health Teams services;
- ✓ Ensure that all service users receiving our support are assisted to develop support plans that recognise their strengths as well as their problems;
- ✓ Develop a pro-active approach to utilising Direct Payments and promote independence;
- ✓ Evaluate the parental mental health pilot project with Children’s Services;
- ✓ Continue to monitor and analyse the use of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) across all service sectors;
- ✓ Contribute to the wider policy agenda on mental health by promoting good mental health and well-being.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Implement the actions from the Social Care Commissioning Plan for Mental Health;
- In conjunction with relevant service user forums develop and implement a self assessment tool;
- Promote independent living solutions for people referred to our services;
- Implement the findings from the parental mental health pilot project in conjunction with Children’s Services;
- Continue to monitor and analyse the use of the Mental Health Act and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS);
- Continue to involve service users in processes such as recruitment and selection, production of public information.

Services for Adults with a Disability or a Sensory Impairment

Getting Help

During the last 18 months, we have successfully developed, with Hywel Dda Health Board, a single integrated point of access called Careline+, which receives enquiries and provides advice and support to individuals who make contact. Careline+ is staffed by bilingual, specially trained enquiry receivers.

Careline+ provides access 24 hours every day for individuals who either use their lifeline alarm system or simply wish to make a referral for any of the professionals working within the integrated Community Resource Teams (CRT). The service continues to develop with more health and social care community services receiving their enquiries through this central point. Any member of the public, as well as professionals, wishing to contact any service within the Community Resource Teams will be able to do so through a single telephone number, email address, minicom number and fax number. Careline+ is also developing an online enquiry facility which should be available to the public by Autumn 2011.

Steady progress has been made in improving the standard and quality of assessments, through placing emphasis on social workers working with individuals to enable them to participate in their own assessments and care planning. Service users are encouraged to be as independent as possible, including accessing the Enablement service.

The new locality-based Community Resource Teams have been established. Health and social care community staff are co-located within the teams, sharing offices as informal multi disciplinary teams. This facilitates proactive discussions on service users' needs and interventions, joint working and better professional understanding within the teams, leading to better outcomes for service users.

A more holistic approach to assessing service users' and carers' needs has resulted from the Community Resource Teams' integrated health and social care assessments. There is less waiting time for these assessments and greater innovation in the services provided to support individuals.

Services Provided

Carmarthenshire has been very successful in developing direct payments and has a high percentage of physically disabled younger service users accessing direct payments and all the flexible benefits these afford. Independent Living Trusts and managed accounts are used when appropriate and work is underway to develop the service to accommodate third party payments. The Rowan Organisation, a 3rd sector organisation, is contracted by Carmarthenshire in partnership with Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, to support individuals with managing their direct payments. Joint three-county direct payments policy and procedures are currently being developed.

There have been occasional difficulties in providing home care in some areas of the county. However, direct payments are being promoted as an alternative that service users may wish to consider.

The Disability Resource Team is a joint-agency specialist team for individuals with degenerative neurological conditions and brain injuries. The team provides therapeutic and nursing interventions and care management across Llanelli and Gwendraeth areas. The service is being reconfigured to provide a specialist service for the whole county, drawing on policy and guidance for neurological services. Planned to be operational by the end of 2011, it will provide a service for those with the most complex needs as well as providing guidance for staff meeting the needs of people with less complex conditions.

Occupational therapists within the Community Resource Teams are employed by the council and Hywel Dda Health Board. All occupational therapy and physiotherapy enquiries are now received through Careline+ and are allocated across the team according to need, rather than according to employing organisation. The new integrated adaptations practice guidance prepared with the housing department, is being widely used by occupational therapists.

An accessible housing register to meet the needs of those awaiting accommodation which meets their physical disabilities is being developed by the occupational therapy service and housing.

The occupational therapy service prescribes equipment which is provided by the Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES). This service provides efficient delivery and excellent maintenance and servicing contracts. The Integrated Community Equipment Service, working in partnership with the Red Cross, is an excellent example of the 3rd sector working successfully with statutory services in order to provide a better service to the public. An equipment review panel is in the process of being set up, involving members of the Disability Coalition and the 50+ Forum alongside clinicians. The panel will consider new equipment and decide whether the item is fit for purpose and if it is economically viable for the equipment service to provide the item.

Telecare, or assistive technology as it is sometimes called, provides a comprehensive way of managing the risks to a person's health and home environment whilst giving increased peace of mind for carers. During 2010/11, Carmarthenshire's Telecare service has continued to grow with 1448 people receiving a service as of 31st December 2010. The service is usually provided within one working day from assessment to installation and use of the required equipment. A demonstration property has been opened in order to aid training, raise service awareness and to develop an assessment centre. Further work is planned to ensure that telecare works as part of the Community Resource Teams and integrates further into mainstream services.

The Sensory Impairment Service provides specialist assessment and rehabilitation for individuals who have sensory impairments. Carmarthenshire has commissioned Sense Cymru to provide specialist deaf-blind assessments, outreach work, and specialist training for staff. The Sensory Impairment Service Users' Forum has been cited by the Welsh Assembly Government as good practice.

Coleshill in Llanelli provides day care and training activities for approximately 80 people. It is intended to develop the centre into a Centre for Economic Inclusion (CEI). The centre will be run by a social enterprise, supported by the local authority, providing a one-stop shop for information, benefits advice, day care, educational and vocational training in partnership with other local agencies. Service users have been actively involved in developing the ideas for the centre.

Carmarthenshire in partnership with the 3rd sector has been developing a large number of services across the county. Services traditionally provided by the council, such as luncheon clubs, sensory impairment assessments and training, and disability equipment, are now provided in conjunction with 3rd sector organisations. This has led to a more robust and equitable service across the county. 97.1% of people with physical disabilities (aged 18 – 64 years) are supported in the community.

Effect on People's Lives

Informal feedback from service users has told us that services for people who have a physical disability or sensory impairment are of a high standard and are valued by service users. In recent years, promoting people's independence has been at the forefront of the development of our services. Carmarthenshire is moving away from traditional care provision towards developing tailor-made support for people in their own homes.

Individuals who have a disability have a valuable role to play in the development of these services. For example, the Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition has prepared a draft strategy for physical disabilities services, which is currently being consulted upon.

There is evidence of joint working across the Community Resource Teams with associated benefits to service users. For example, sensory impairment officers work effectively with specialist diabetes nurses; the enablement service provides a joint service with the therapists.

The number of service users in receipt of Direct Payments (206 people) is a particular strength of Carmarthenshire, with service users with physical disabilities representing the biggest client group.

Judgement

Carmarthenshire, in partnership with Hywel Dda Health Board, has a wide variety of innovative services for people with physical disabilities supporting them to live independent lives. The Community Resource Teams provide a new and inter-professional service enabling individuals to receive the appropriate service when and where it is required.

The new Centre for Economic Inclusion in Llanelli will provide service users with the opportunity for involvement and participation in service planning and certain aspects of service provision.

Further developmental work with third sector organisations and social enterprises, within the Centre for Economic Inclusion, should enable individuals to live independently in the community with support from voluntary, charitable and independent organisations.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed actions; ✗ = actions not yet completed

- ✓ Further training will be provided to social workers and care managers in order to improve the quality of social work assessments and care planning;
- ✓ The Direct Payments scheme will be developed by allowing aspects of personalisation to be adopted, such as managed accounts;
- ✓ A review of the Disability Resource Team will be undertaken to consider development of equitable provision across the county;
- ✓ The sensory impairment benchmarking project, led by the Welsh Assembly and which Carmarthenshire was involved in developing, will be implemented;
- ✓ Develop a Centre for Economic Inclusion for Carmarthenshire based at Coleshill in Llanelli;
- ✓ All 3rd sector commissioned services will be reviewed in order to ensure that they are aligned to the service culture and ethos;
- ✓ Complete the development of a strategy for future services for individuals with physical disabilities;
- ✓ Representatives of the Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition will be regularly invited to attend service management meetings as partners.

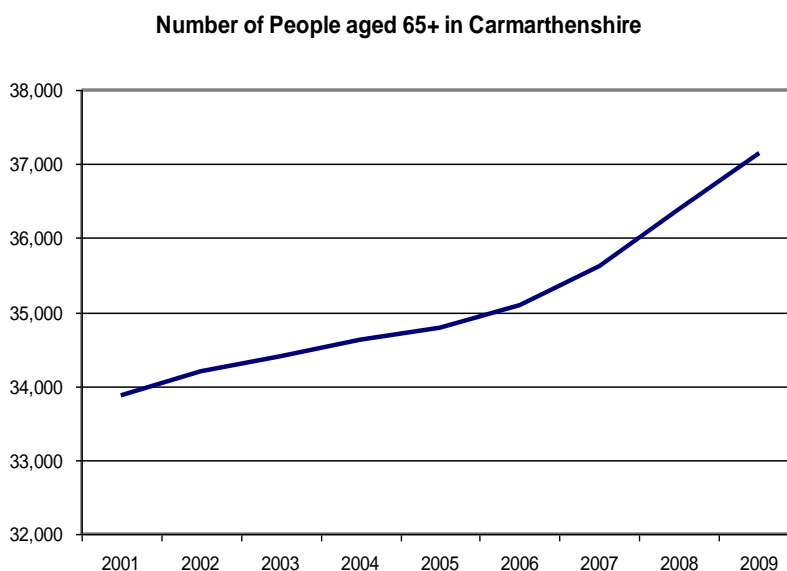
Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Community Resource Teams systems and procedures will be streamlined in order to ensure holistic partnership working;
- Careline+ will provide 24/7 enquiry receiving services alongside an online enquiry service;
- To develop the Telecare service further in order to mainstream the service and to streamline service assessments and interventions within the Community Resource Teams;
- The Direct Payments scheme will be developed in order to enable 3rd party payments. A three county policy on direct payments will be developed;
- A review of the Disability Resource Team will be undertaken to consider development of equitable provision across the county;
- Greater joint working with the 3rd sector will be promoted with regards to the Carmarthenshire Integrated Community Equipment Service;
- Building refurbishments at Coleshill will be undertaken in order to develop a Centre for Economic Inclusion for Carmarthenshire based in Llanelli;
- Complete the consultation on a joint health and social care strategy for future services for individuals with physical disabilities as prepared by the Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition for Action.

Services for Older People

Our vision is to support older people to live independent lives and to help them to recover from illness and injury to enable a return to independent living. Older people have told us that they would prefer to stay in their own homes and communities. We have developed, and are continuing to develop, a range of innovative services to offer people real alternatives to residential care whilst recognising that residential care homes continue to play an important part of a suite of flexible, responsive services for older people.

In Carmarthenshire, we have a growing population of older people. This demographic trend places a growing demand on social services for older people. We must therefore be consistent about the way that we prioritise our limited resources. In order to do this, people with a substantial or critical risk to their independence will receive a service to meet their assessed needs. People with lower levels of risk to their independence are encouraged to find their own solutions or are signposted to community resources.



Getting Help

As reported in the previous section, a single integrated point of access, called Careline+, has improved the arrangements for older people to access social services.

Health and social care community staff are co-located within the new locality-based Community Resource Teams, in anticipation of the implementation of a formal agreement, known as a “Section 33 agreement”, in 2011/12. The outcome of this will be seamless services that will remove barriers for individuals when they require both health and social care services and ensure that the appropriate service is provided at the right time. In the next year, the integrated arrangements will also be in place to include mental health services for older people.

Care management vacancies reported in last year’s annual report have all been filled, which has improved the capacity of social work teams. As a result of this, new referrals are being allocated for an assessment more quickly.

We have dramatically improved our performance in respect of the percentage of clients whose care plans should have been reviewed that were reviewed from 22.9% last year to 57.2% this year. It is anticipated our performance will further improve during 2011/12, as funding has been approved for three additional staff to review care plans.

A professional practice training programme for all care managers has led to an improvement in the quality of assessments and care planning, providing a person-centred approach which identifies the desired outcomes of any interventions.

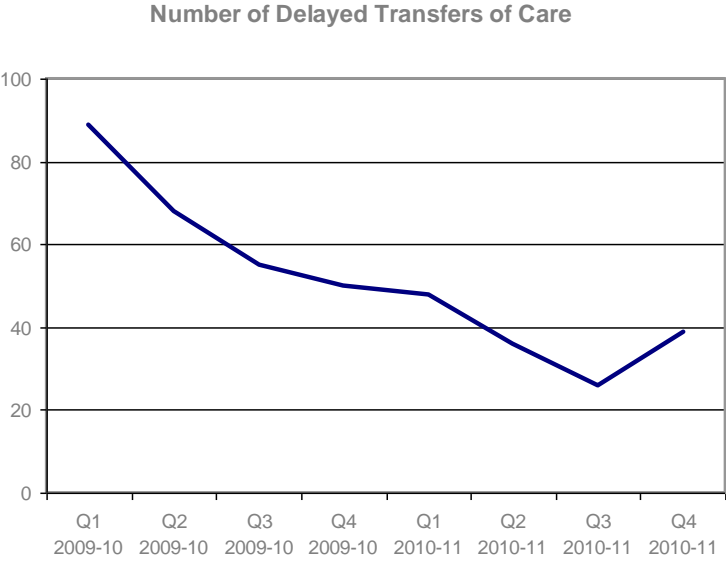
'It was a positive reminder of why we came into this job, what good practice is, and what we are trying to achieve.'

'Brilliant, I got so much out of it I can't believe it. I've been doing the job for a long time. The training has opened up a clear understanding of what I should be doing and what the job is all about, especially being outcome focussed and risk management. Best training I've been on in a long time.'

- Care managers

A multi-agency team has been working in the West Wales General Hospital to assess people who do not require admission to hospital but need additional help to return home safely. This has proved very effective in avoiding hospital admission for people who would not benefit from being in hospital.

The number of people whose discharge from hospital is delayed because of social care reasons, known as delayed transfers of care, has shown dramatic improvement from 15.1 last year to 8.54 (per 1000 population aged 75 years+) this year. This improvement is against a backdrop of increased emergency medical admissions and an increase in the acuity of the patients (a measure of the seriousness of a patient's illness). Given these trends, our focus for 2011/12 will be on sustaining this performance.



Services Provided

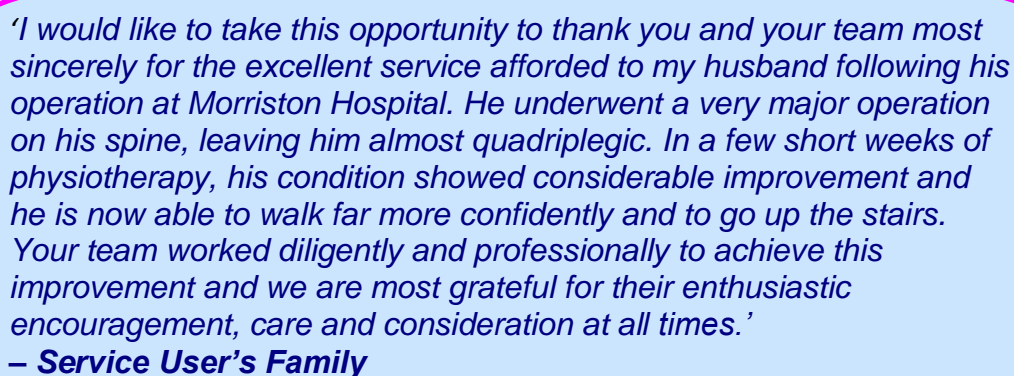
Promotion of independence underpins the services delivered to older people - by helping people to be able to care for themselves and to access support in the community. Examples of this include the successful transfer of all luncheon clubs that were previously supported by the council to community groups. The luncheon clubs now provide resources that are available to everyone. The transport service that previously transported people to and from the luncheon clubs has been redirected to take patients home when they are discharged from hospital, which in turn increases the capacity of the ambulance service to deal with emergencies.

Another example is the re-prioritising of our resources away from residential care by closing one care home in order to provide more independent accommodation, by

opening Cwm Aur, a new extra care complex in Llanybydder. Extra care homes differ from traditional care homes in that they offer people their own private accommodation, with their 'own front door'. Residents are able to access the care they need when they need it in their own home and benefit from the advantages of living within a complex with communal facilities.

Day centre services have been reviewed and plans are being developed to meet the needs of people with higher levels of need equitably across the county. These plans will be implemented in the next year.

There is now one integrated health and social care occupational therapy and physiotherapy service based in the Community Resource Teams. They are working closely with Enablement workers to maximise individuals' independence and to ensure timely and safe discharge from hospital. The Enablement service continues to expand and next year will operate an intake model of service to maximise opportunities for achieving independence.



'I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team most sincerely for the excellent service afforded to my husband following his operation at Morriston Hospital. He underwent a very major operation on his spine, leaving him almost quadriplegic. In a few short weeks of physiotherapy, his condition showed considerable improvement and he is now able to walk far more confidently and to go up the stairs. Your team worked diligently and professionally to achieve this improvement and we are most grateful for their enthusiastic encouragement, care and consideration at all times.'

– Service User's Family

Twenty two convalescence beds have been opened in three residential homes to allow people to recover after a period of illness or trauma and to make plans for the future, away from an acute medical setting. The beds are also available to health and social care professionals to prevent hospital admissions.

The number of hours of domiciliary care has been increasing, reflecting the increasing numbers of people with complex needs who are now assisted to live in their own homes. The brokerage service has streamlined the arrangement of domiciliary services. There has been some difficulty in providing services in particular rural areas where recruitment of care staff has been problematic for all agencies. Efforts continue to be made to reach potential employees and to find more creative ways of delivering services in these areas.

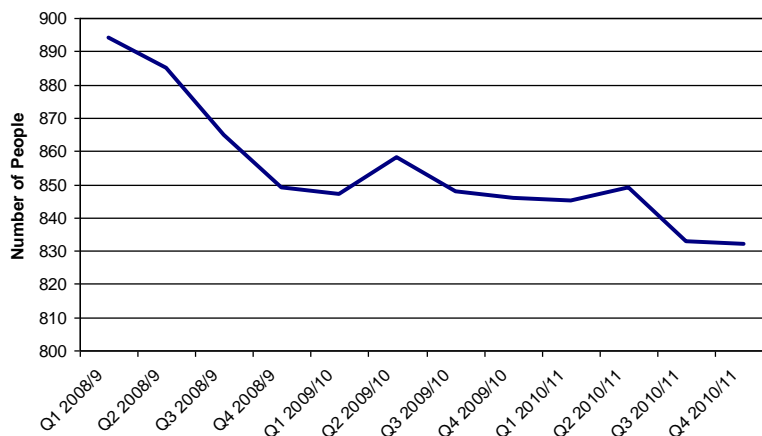
The Rapid Response Night service is now well established. In addition to providing scheduled care through the night that allows people to stay in their own homes, the service also responds to prevent unscheduled hospital admissions as well as responding to alarm calls from people alerting Careline+.

A specification has been developed for a "floating" support service (targeted support for people in their own home) for older people who have dementia or other mental illnesses and the service will be in place in the next year.

The success of our approach in developing innovative new services has resulted in 61 fewer people requiring residential care over the last 3 years.

Whilst the number of frail people requiring residential care has shown a considerable reduction, there is rising demand for placements in nursing and specialist residential care for people who have dementia.

Clients aged 65+ years in Care Homes



It is anticipated that the development of specialist services to care for people with dementia in their own homes will reduce the need for residential placements. Such a service has been piloted in one locality of the county. This has proved successful in improving the care delivered, supporting carers and avoiding the need for residential care. Collaboration with the local psychiatric team has proved an additional benefit.

Overview of Complaints

This year, there was an increase in the total number of complaints received. This increase was accounted for by more services being provided in the community rather than in residential settings, which is a more complex delivery model.

Complaints were concerning shortfalls in service, eligibility criteria, assessments, requests for information and communication with the department.

10 complaints progressed to Stage 2 of the statutory complaints procedure, with 1 complaint progressing to Stage 3.

There were 61 compliments received - 39 for the independent sector care providers, 15 for in-house services and 7 for social work teams.



Effect on people's lives

The improvement in the quality of assessments and involving people in the outcomes they would like to result from their care plans is beginning to lead to a more person-centred approach. A range of services has been developed that promote independence and provide flexible care. This has allowed people with the greatest levels of disability to remain in their own homes when in the past they may have been admitted to residential care. Those people who have the potential to recover have been assisted to regain skills and control. Service users have been very positive about the benefits of these services.

Providing advice and, at times, services at the accident and emergency units of hospitals during the day and at night has prevented hospital admissions. This has benefits for the individual and relieves pressure on the hospitals. Improved performance

in avoiding delayed transfers of care has also benefited individuals and ensures hospital resources are used appropriately.

83% of clients aged 65 years+ are supported in the community, showing a marked increase compared to last year's figure of 77.8%. 232 service users received a respite placement, which benefits the carers as well as the service user.

Judgement

We have continued to move away from a culture of encouraging dependence of older people, towards one of promoting independence. Services assist people to maximise their abilities and residential care is only considered as an option when returning home is not possible.

Delays in assessments and reviews and providing domiciliary care services in some parts of the county are still cause concern but work is underway to improve performance in these areas.

The development of Community Response Teams offers an opportunity to maximise resources and to provide seamless services for older people. The integration of mental health services is still at an early stage but when this is complete, there will be a whole system of integrated health and social care services.

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed actions; ✗ = actions not yet completed

- ✓ We will ensure there is sufficient capacity in the Assessment & Care Management teams and the appropriate skills to assess, plan and review to support people to live independently.
- ✓ We will integrate the Canlaw and the Enablement services.
- ✓ We will develop the Contact and Access Team to provide a service that can respond effectively to requests for assistance over a 24-hour period.
- ✓ Work towards Telecare Service Association accreditation to ensure quality standards for service delivery.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- We will work with Health and Voluntary sector partners in accordance with the National Service Framework to improve the services for older people who have dementia and other mental illnesses and support their families.
- Improve links between financial and service activity performance, and improve unit cost information.
- The Enablement Service will extend to work with people who have more complex needs to give everyone an opportunity to be as independent as possible.
- Review day services for people who have complex physical needs or require care because they have dementia to ensure that services are accessible and sufficient.
- Integrate mental health services for older people in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government's Dementia Plan.
- Ensure that care plans are reviewed within agreed time scales.
- Reduce the delays in allocation of referrals for assessment.
- Utilising the elements of the CRT, develop rapid response systems to prevent hospital admissions and carer burden.

Services for Carers

Getting Help

We have continued to deliver the Carmarthenshire Carers Strategy that has been extended into 2011, when new Welsh Assembly legislation is expected to commence. There are 5 strands to the strategy, as follows:

- **Identifying and recognising carers**

A revised publicity campaign, the carers' information boards in hospitals and the Investors in Carers scheme, Carers Week and Carers' Rights Day were promoted. Many carers benefited from carers' rights training and the carer awareness training for staff continued.

A new initiative by the Stroke Association (a commissioned service) is proving very successful in identifying carers. A Stroke Association family support worker attends hospital wards around visiting times. Carers welcome the informal advice and signposting from an independent practitioner. It is intended to replicate this model across a variety of hospital wards using the carers support workers network to reach more carers.

Awareness of young carers has been promoted, with Barnardo's now reporting much better recognition of young carers in our schools. A multi-agency conference has been held to address the impact of parental drug and alcohol use on children and young people/carers.

The new Careline+ service has incorporated the identification and recognition of carers as an integral part of the team's knowledge base. This will assist us to identify more carers and help more carers to recognise themselves as carers. This will encourage carers to access information and to be aware of their right to an assessment from the outset of their caring career.

- **Information for carers**

Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services are contracted by the council to provide a 'Carers Service', which includes a carers handbook (revised every 18 months), a carers newsletter (published quarterly), a telephone signposting and low level support service, planning and delivery of Carers Week and Carers Rights Day. We also commission information services from Stroke Association, Alzheimers Society, Hafal, Mencap and Barnardo's.

The carers information boards, located strategically in the county's hospitals, are being managed by the network of carers support workers who ensure that the information displayed is up to date and appropriate. These are proving invaluable in helping carers to recognise themselves as carers with the Carers Service reporting a marked increase in the number of carers who are contacting the service as a direct result of seeing the information boards.

A carers information audit is being conducted with many primary care services responding to the audit questionnaire to help inform next steps and prepare the ground for the emerging carers measure from the Welsh Assembly.

The percentage of carers who were offered an assessment or review of their needs was 41.3% and the percentage who had an assessment or a review was 56.2%.

Services Provided

- **Breaks for Carers**

Although the percentage of carers who were assessed who were provided with a service is low, at 21.5%, we consider that this performance indicator, taken in isolation, does not truly reflect the services provided to support carers.

Carmarthenshire provided 1295 respite placements to 309 clients and 552 adult placement respite stays to a further 72 clients during 2010/11. This totalled 9841 nights of respite care provided.

The register of respite and short breaks providers is now circulated to teams and included on the council's and partner agencies' websites. A stand alone website has been postponed until we have established whether neighbouring councils wish to collaborate on this initiative.

A West Wales/Hywel Dda Health Board strategic carers' group has been formed.

The funding for short breaks, provided from Welsh Assembly grants, has been secured enabling our partner agencies in the third sector to maintain the services they provided in previous years. During 2010/11 the number of carers' grants was 64.

- **Support for Carers**

Support for carers continues in a variety of ways. Predominantly there is the carers support workers network – a group of workers based within statutory and voluntary sectors with a remit to provide information and support to carers. In the last twelve months, two services for carers have developed significantly Eiriol, an advocacy service for carers of people with enduring mental illness, and the Stroke Association.

Mental Health carers can now expect the support and representation of an independent advocate from Eiriol when attending meetings regarding the ongoing care of service users. This has resulted in much higher levels of satisfaction for carers.

The targeting of carers in hospitals will go a long way to assisting the implementation of the “Investors in Carers” scheme that is presently being developed for secondary care. A concerted effort to engage with, and secure collaboration from, appropriate colleagues in health will help deliver better outcomes for carers.

There is a range of carer support groups in Carmarthenshire supported by the carers support workers network. The groups are held at convenient intervals and locations. Some of the groups have become self-sufficient, without the support of a worker.

In 2010/11, the Alzheimer’s Society was commissioned to provide carer training. Over 35 carers this year have undergone training on the care of people with dementia. The training gives carers an important insight to the specialist care needed for this client group. It enables carers to cope better and sustain their loved ones at home for longer.

Effect on People’s Lives

Equality for Carers

Carers are often trapped in poverty through their commitment as carers. A group known as ACE (Action for Carers Equality) meets quarterly to examine opportunities for carers, with representation from the third sector, statutory sector and Job Centre Plus. The work of the group has involved ensuring that our own organisations are aware of, and have responded to, the need for carers’ issues to be included in HR policies such as flexible working, compressed hours, and career breaks. Promoting good practice to all employers in Carmarthenshire will follow. Job Centre Plus is now providing a service for carers that pays for replacement care costs that support carers to attend training or job coaching. All staff in the Job Centres has received carer awareness training.

There is a partnership between Crossroads and mid and west Wales Chamber of Commerce that has successfully drawn down £1.4 million to support carers into employment or into education. Young carers, as well as adult carers, are eligible.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Provide better performance management information from our IT system, CareFirst to inform strategic development;
- Develop a new Carmarthenshire Carers Strategy, in line with the Welsh Assembly’s new legislation.

Adult Services - Outcome Improvement Targets

The Council has entered into a three year agreement with the Welsh Government to deliver some key outcomes for the residents of Carmarthenshire. This is how we performed in the first year of the agreement.

Targets and actions for 2010/11:

✓ = on target; ✗ = not on target

- ✓ Develop and deliver aligned/integrated Community Health and Social Care Services through establishing locality based Community Resources Teams as part of a Section 33 Agreement for Carmarthenshire between the Council and Hywel Dda Health Board.
- ✓ Monitor the number of people who leave the Enablement Service with a reduced level of care.
- ✓ Maintain an annual external accreditation of the Careline service.
- ✗ Increase the number of adult clients provided with a direct payment to enable them to independently source their own care **from 195 to 217 – Achieved 206.**
- ✓ Continue to work in partnership with Hywel Dda Trust to further enhance the quality and range of equipment available to clients/patients through the Integrated Community Equipment Service.
- ✓ Establish a total of **20 convalescence beds** in the county to provide short term intense care to aim to get clients back to their own homes - **Target exceeded.**
- ✓ Provide a new catering training project for people with a disability, as part of the COASTAL project, to support clients to gain employment and independence.
- ✓ Monitor the number and outcomes of clients that access the work-based training opportunities via COASTAL.
- ✓ Further develop and monitor the Immediate Response Night Care Service to provide a service that can effectively respond to requests for assistance over a 24 hour period.
- ✓ Reduce the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons **from 262 to 253 – Target exceeded.**
- ✓ Reduce the rate of older people who the authority supports in care homes in line with our vision of helping people to maintain their independence **from 803 to 793 – Target exceeded.**
- ✓ Open a new Extra Care facility in Llanybydder in partnership with Gwalia Housing, to provide a range of flexible care and accommodation for older people **by September 2010.**
- ✓ Reduce the number of calendar days between initial contact for a Disabled Facility Grant and receipt of an Occupational Therapist assessment by the Home Improvement Team **from 101 days to 95 days.**
- ✓ Monitor the number of Learning Disabilities and Mental Health clients who are helped and supported to own or rent their own property.

Targets and actions for 2011/12:

- Develop and deliver aligned/integrated Community Health and Social Care Services through establishing locality based Community Resources Teams as part of a Section 33 Agreement for Carmarthenshire between the Council and Hywel Dda Health Board.
- Monitor the number of people who leave the Enablement Service with a reduced level of care.
- Maintain an annual external accreditation of the Careline service.
- Increase the number of adult clients provided with a direct payment to enable them to independently source their own care **from 206 to 217**.
- Continue to work in partnership with Hywel Dda Trust to further enhance the quality and range of equipment available to clients/patients through the Integrated Community Equipment Service.
- Monitor the number and outcomes of clients that access the work-based training opportunities via COASTAL.
- Further develop and monitor the Immediate Response Night Care Service to provide a service that can effectively respond to requests for assistance over a 24 hour period.
- Reduce the rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons **from 149 to 119**.
- Reduce the rate of older people who the authority supports in care homes in line with our vision of helping people to maintain their independence **from 786 to 763**.
- Reduce the number of calendar days between initial contact for a Disabled Facility Grant and receipt of an Occupational Therapist assessment by the Home Improvement Team **from 95days to 90 days**.
- Increase the percentage of Learning Disabilities clients who are supported in the community **from 86.69% to 86.95%**.
- Increase the percentage of Mental Health clients who are supported in the community **from 73.85% to 74.81%**.

5. How the Council supports Social Care Services

Delivering Social Services

Workforce

Carmarthenshire's workforce is our biggest asset in providing quality social care services. We support our staff and the county's independent sector social care workforce with highly regarded training over 1100 learning and development opportunities reaching over 5000 employees in the social care workforce were funded from the Welsh Assembly's workforce



development grant. Targets for staff to achieve NVQ qualifications in residential and domiciliary care services have already been exceeded demonstrating an effective use of resources with 313 employees achieving qualifications including 68 community care staff achieving NVQ levels 2, 3 & 4, 23 managers gaining management qualifications and 10 people graduating in social work. We regularly monitor the Welsh language skills of the workforce and support staff to develop these skills in order to deliver social services in the service user's preferred language.

The First Year in Practice programme for newly qualified social workers has ensured that their learning and development continues through out their first year working as a qualified social worker. This programme was a finalist in the Care Council for Wales Social Care Accolades 2011 under the category of effective recruitment and retention.

The Safeguarding Children report commented: *"Social Care's primary assets are the stability and resilience of their workforce"*.

Recruitment and retention of social workers is the single biggest challenge facing social care and we intend to give this issue a high priority. Children's services has been successful at recruiting newly qualified social workers this year but is finding it hard to retain those with the most experience in front line child protection roles. In Adult Services, we have successfully filled vacancies in our social work teams.

A consistent theme for improvement within CSSIW's inspection reports of Carmarthenshire has been that the efficiency of HR processes need to be improved. Sickness absence management remains a challenge and other key HR processes, such as recruitment, need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. In recent inspections of the Adoption Service and the Adult Placement Service, human resources records were found not to meet regulatory requirements.

CSSIW Inspectors found that *"The outcomes for the children whose files were looked at were very positive. The commitment and energy of some social workers were found to be exemplary, particularly in working to achieve permanence for children"*.

The Annual Improvement Report by the Auditor General for Wales (Jan 2011) found that within Children's Services, *"Staff are developed appropriately and sound supervision arrangements are in place."*

The authority has been recognised as an 'Investor in People' and achieved the 'Basic Skills Award' and was the first authority in Wales to be awarded the 'Platinum Corporate Health Standard'.

100% of social workers in Children's Services received an appraisal. In Adult Services, 48% of staff received an appraisal which represents an improvement and we intend to continue to improve during 2011/12.

"A great deal of development has been done to bring together care management, therapy and home care into the same patch bases. Staff described some of the positive benefits of this and how just relocating people into same rooms had greatly improved joint working. Some staff described their initial resistance to the change but the general consensus was that staff were now positive and adapting to a new way of working. It is a very positive achievement to have combined hospital and social service occupational therapists into one team and will be interesting to see the outcome in efficiencies and experience for the service user from this." - CSSIW

Improvement actions during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed actions; * = actions not yet completed

- ✓ Improve recruitment of social workers and develop specific initiatives to retain experienced social workers in the most demanding areas of work;
- * Work with Human Resources to improve the efficiency of processes and continue to manage and reduce sickness absence;
- ✓ Evaluate the outcomes of the Health & Social Care Worker project;
- ✓ Provide eight training places annually for unqualified staff on the Open University social work degree course;
- ✓ Work with Human Resources to improve the accuracy of statutory records.

Improvement actions during 2011/12

- Improve the awareness of managers and staff of the council's whistle blowing policy;
- Improve the number of staff receiving an annual appraisal in Adult Services;
- Continue to proactively manage sickness absence to reduce current levels;
- Deliver the learning and development to support the integration and restructuring of adults and children's services;
- Prioritise safeguarding training across children's and adults, by working with partners;
- Contribute to ensuring sufficient qualified social workers to meet the service needs;
- Improve the retention of qualified and experienced social workers within adults and children's services through the promotion of the First Year in Practice programme and the new PQ Framework.

Performance & Information Management; Quality Assurance

We have a strong culture of performance management in which "everyone has their part to play". Children's Services have a strong track record of performance management, and we have seen a step-change in Adult Services. CSSIW's joint review follow up inspection in 2008 noted "*Performance management was identified as requiring a sea-change by the Authority: such change has been achieved*".

Our IT systems provide impressive capability for senior managers to analyse live data and to "drill down" to the appropriate level. In Children's Services, the care management system is linking in with Education systems to enable closer monitoring of looked after children's education and attendance. The roll out of the Unified Assessment Protocol (UAP) Care Management process will be completed in 2010/11. The Integrated Children's System (ICS) has been replaced by the Electronic Record and we are in the process of updating these to eliminate duplication, reduce bureaucracy and increase the amount of time that social workers spend with families.

An inspection report by CSSIW stated, "*The authority's (Carefirst) database is satisfactory and provides increasingly accurate information. Data are evaluated frequently and regularly with an increasing ability to capture the quality of the services*".

Improvement actions in our business plans and performance indicators are monitored quarterly through our corporate performance information monitoring system (PIMS) and this is regularly reported to members. The same system also records evidence that improvement actions have been effective. Our health partners can access PIMS for joint action plans and we are making arrangements for our regulators, such as CSSIW, to be able to access the information they require via PIMS.

Within Children's Services, regular audits have taken place on aspects of the service. These include initial and core assessments of both assessment teams, supervision and private fostering audits. As part of LSCB Audit & Evaluation Sub Group an audit of the outcome of all referrals made by health colleagues on a quarterly basis has been undertaken.

The Annual Management letter in 2009 from the Wales Audit Office commented, *"Because of the Council's good performance management arrangementsthis enabled the Council to become the first authority in Wales to receive a £1.9 million Improvement Agreement grant from the Welsh Assembly."* and *"The Council has a robust performance management framework."*

Shaping Services

Commissioning & Contracting

The Welsh Assembly Government 2010 document "Fulfilled Lives, Supportive Communities: Commissioning Framework Guidance and Good Practice" has defined the standards and challenges for local authorities if they are to achieve effective social care commissioning and procurement.

We have evaluated the department using the Institute of Public Care self-assessment checklist and found that we have mostly or completely achieved the standards. An Action Plan to address the challenges of the guidance is being developed.

Currently, adult services spend almost £38 million with the independent sector, a figure in excess of 50% of adult services expenditure. Consequently, it has been important for the department to maintain its contract management and contract monitoring focus on service provision coupled with pursuing procurement opportunities to secure high quality and value for money services.

Achievements for 2010/11 include:

- Robustly applying the Escalating Concerns guidance, having clear links with safeguarding, care management, Hywel Dda Health Board and CSSIW
- Establishing a pan-disability select list of service providers for supported living
- Implementing a three-counties tender for direct payments
- Implementing both a Framework Agreement for domiciliary care and agreeing contingency plans with service providers to avoid shortfalls in service provision
- Implementing an effective and efficient brokerage service for purchasing domiciliary and day care
- Working closely and constructively with service providers to achieve safe, reliable and value for money services

- Identifying opportunities for third sector organisations to develop services
- Working positively to a collaborative agenda with Hywel Dda Health Board and neighbouring local authorities.

Through implementation of the placement strategy for children we have been able to retain larger numbers of looked after children who are looked after with local foster carers. We now have one of the lowest percentages in Wales of children placed outside of the authority's boundary. Children diagnosed with autism pose a significant challenge to this strategy with insufficient resources available locally to meet this growing need. However, the opening of Garreg Lwyd in September 2011 which will meet the needs of autistic children will assist in meeting this challenge.

Projects that are currently delivered in Children's Services through Cymorth funding are being re-aligned around the Families First criteria.

The Annual Improvement Report by the Auditor General for Wales (Jan 2011) stated that *"within Children's Services, partners and service users are involved in the planning and development of services."*

Improvement actions undertaken during 2010/11

✓ = completed or progressed; ✗ = remains to be done

- ✓ Build on the opportunities to be gained by regional commissioning and contracting;
- ✓ Implement the 2010 placement strategy for children;
- ✓ Consider developing a residential and education resource for older children with autism as an alternative to purchasing out of county placements.
- ✗ Extend our approach to contract monitoring of commissioned services to internally provided services;
- ✗ Work towards gaining key stakeholder support for modernising services;

Improvement actions for 2011/12

- To apply the Provider Performance Monitoring protocol to ensure safe, reliable and value for money services are delivered for the whole care sector including in-house services;
- To redefine and strengthen the existing commissioning and contracting structure in light of current trends and requirements, in particular to address the challenges of the noted Commissioning Guidance document
- Identify opportunities and plan for collaborative procurement where appropriate to achieve high quality and value for money services to meet the identified need of service users and carers;
- To continue to develop the brokerage service to ensure all service user packages are placed appropriately;
- To collate and analyse data for commissioning purposes;
- Work towards gaining support from members, partner organisations and other stakeholders for modernising services.

Planning & Partnerships

In Carmarthenshire, there is a strong tradition of working in partnership with statutory partners, the independent sector and the 3rd sector. We have strong partnership working arrangements in Children's and Adult Services, as well as a Local Service Board which has health and social care as its priority.

"The authority has a far reaching vision for integrated and inclusive services. Importantly the integration of services is now beginning to demonstrate positive outcomes for children and young people", ESTYN 2009.

These partnerships are delivering on partnership priorities such as reducing the delays experienced by some people when they are discharged from hospital and a joint approach to continuing care for people with health and social care needs. Effective partnerships with the police, education and health have been identified as a key strength in inspections by both ESTYN and CSSIW.

"Partnership working at an operational level is well developed.....with evidence that integrated working is already beginning to show added value in terms of improving outcomes for children" CSSIW 2008. "The relationship between the authority and key partners around the need to safeguard children is mutually supportive and resilient" CSSIW 2009.

The authority has been successful in bidding with Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion in becoming a family first pioneer for an enhanced team around the child initiative. We are also placing a bid in conjunction with these two counties to secure a venue for an Integrated Family Support Team. Investment in this project will go ahead with joint funding agreed from probation, health and the police for an Integrated Family support Initiative in the East of the county to better target some of our most vulnerable and challenging families. However, there is more work to do to improve Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for vulnerable children and young people. It is planned to fully integrate Children's Community Health and Children's Services with a formal proposal for consultation due in 2011. Among the principles agreed are that the integration should reduce duplication and assist the production of savings; facilitate the creation of single points of access for service users; lead to the more efficient allocation of resources and reduce bureaucracy.

We are involved in several projects working with partners across south and west Wales, and we recognise that collaboration offers opportunities to gain better value for limited public funds.

During 2010/11, Community Resource Teams were established in each of the County's three localities (Llanelli, Aman Gwendraeth and Teifi Tywi Taf). The teams consist of a number of different professional disciplines including social work and care management, enablement, domiciliary care, speech and language therapy, dietetics, occupational therapy, chronic disease management, physiotherapy, sensory impairment and housing. This has already led to a stronger multi-disciplinary approach between staff with different professional groups developing a shared responsibility for clients in the community. The next step is to work towards establishing fully integrated systems and processes to further support and streamline the work of the community teams.

A Locality Manager has been appointed to each of the three localities to work on behalf of Carmarthenshire County Council and Hywel Dda Health Board to lead and manage the health and social care services within the locality. An Assistant Locality Manager will also be appointed during 2011/12. These posts are jointly funded by the Council and the Health Board. The joint management structure between the Council and the Health Board has enabled the integration of community services to take place and will further strengthen the approach to challenging traditional ways of working and different cultures within the organisations and developing new systems and processes in order to create greater capacity within the service.

The Regional Partnership Forum for South West Wales has been driving forward the collaborative programme across a range of services including Social Services. The Directors of Social Services of seven local authorities have formed Mid and West Wales Social Services Improvement Collaborative (MiWSSIC). This consortium provides the mechanism for ensuring we are maintaining the pace of collaboration and joint working, including:

- The development of a regional strategic commissioning framework to cover all client groups and joining the existing South East Wales Improvement Collaborative consortium for procuring children's placements.
- Significant parts of the infrastructure to support service delivery be organised more collaboratively with shared legal services in place and long standing arrangements for a single Direct Payments Scheme for Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire and joint staff development and training programmes now being delivered.
- Exploration of a national adoption agency where in West Wales (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire) we already have a joint service between three counties.
- Establishing a national framework contract for care homes and non residential services, where in West Wales the three local authorities and the Health Board have agreed on common terms and conditions and service specifications for the contracting for placements with the independent sector.
- The establishment of an integrated learning disability service across Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire with Hywel Dda Health Board.

We have also taken the initiative in looking to rationalise the number of partnerships and strategies which Welsh Government have required and are about to launch our first Integrated Community Strategy which replaces seven strategies, achieving significant efficiencies in resources across all partners.

In order to provide a formal framework for the establishment and further development of the teams the Council and Hywel Dda Health Board have both approved a "Section 33 Agreement" which acts as the overarching agreement for the formal integration of services. This is a significant step forward from the informal partnership arrangements which were previously in place and will support the further development of community based health and social care services. Establishing the formal agreement sets a precedent for the commitment of the Council and the Health Board to further developing the integration agenda and enables the work to be taken forward without having to rely on the current goodwill that exists between the partners. This agreement will provide a framework for the organisations which is open and transparent for all interested parties. It is planned that the first two service

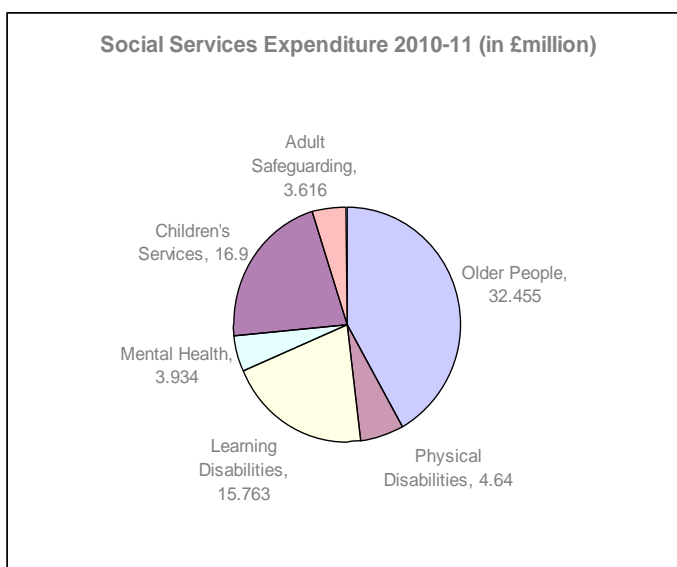
specific schedules will focus on the primary, community and social care service and learning disabilities services.

Improvement actions for 2011/12

- Partnership arrangements will consider how to demonstrate that joint working is improving outcomes for local people.
- Complete needed changes to the operation of the West Wales adoption consortia.

Financial Stability & Resources

The council spent over £77 million last year on social services, and we strived to make our limited and decreasing resources go further. There is growing demand for services in both Children's and Adults Services. In the current economic climate, we will be facing severe pressure to not only do more with less, but to do things differently. We are implementing clear budget strategies in each service area to deliver greater efficiencies. There is strong corporate support for social care and a good understanding of the budget pressures in both Adult and Children's Services. Recognising this, additional investment has been allocated to Learning Disabilities and Children's services.



Recognising this, additional investment has been allocated to Learning Disabilities and Children's services.

In Older People's Services a report by the Social Services Improvement Agency, [Better Support at Lower Cost](#) commented, "The study found that some councils are preparing in a very thorough way for the likely challenges ahead. Others were waiting for the final settlement figures that the Welsh Assembly Government announced in December 2010 before planning their savings. In order to get a full year effect of any savings that need to be made in social care plans should be drawn up for those savings at least one year in advance. This approach is evident in Carmarthenshire, Conwy, Denbighshire and Wrexham councils where medium term financial strategies for the next three years include savings targets that have to be reached before the financial year in question. It is worth noting however that even with these councils' well-presented and developed plans they will be hard pressed to make savings at the levels required by the settlement. Councils are aware of this and are continuing to work on contingency plans to ensure that they do succeed.

Examples of different approaches to strategic planning in Welsh councils include:

Carmarthenshire County Council: Identification of clear principles for change reflected in a three year budget strategy, supported by complementary strategies for accommodation, domiciliary care and community-based support."

There is clear management accountability for managing resources and we have a good track record of joint working to maximise resources. For example, the Carmarthenshire Integrated Community Equipment Service pools together funding from the NHS and from the council. The Transition Team has been formed from pooling resources from Adult and Children's Services. In Children's Services, it is widely recognised that services are already very cost-effective with outcomes good whilst funding per head of child population remaining firmly in the bottom quartile.

We also spent over £¾ million on our capital programme which included the opening of the Cwm Aur Extra Care Home in Llanybydder, the development of the Coleshill Centre, further work on the Integrated Community Equipment Store, offices for the Flying Start Team and the development of the Carreg Lwyd Autistic Centre.

In its corporate assessment of the council in June 2010, the Wales Audit Office reported that, *"The Council's budget has been well-managed in recent years and has a track record of making sure its services are delivered with the resources it has available. It is also making progress in supporting older people and promoting their independence, although managing the changes needed in this respect, will be a financial challenge. Adult mental health services and other aspects of adult services are improving and the Council recognises the need to sustain these improvements.*

The Council continues to develop and refine its approach to medium term financial planning and how to make best use of the money it has.

The Council's budget has been well-managed in recent years with balanced budgets achieved at both directorate and corporate level. This places the Council on a sound footing going forward into a period of significant change and financial cuts as it has a track record of making sure its services are delivered with the resources it has available. However, the Council has some real challenges to address if it is to secure the level of savings it envisages and councillors will have to make some difficult decisions."

CSSIW found that Children's services has performed well when measured against the key performance indicators and has made good progress with managing the increasing demand for services which has been experienced across the South west region. There are areas for improvement and these are recognised by the authority which has developed plans to address the issues. Children's services have been able to achieve this position and run its services cost effectively. There is evidence of the use of budgets to meet identified needs which work towards better outcomes for children and protect resources in the longer term.

Additional investment has been agreed to meet the rising costs of looked after children, to fund additional social work posts and for greater financial reward for some social workers in this sector.

Improvement actions for 2011/12

- Continue to deliver on the work in adult services reconfiguration in order to address both outcomes for service users and improve the long term financial difficulties faced by community care, in line with the SSIA report's recommendations;
- Develop the links between resource allocation decisions to service planning priorities in order to support service reconfiguration;
- Further develop the service to incorporate the views of service users and partners in the systematic reviews of Children's services;
- Pooling of resources for substance misuse between Adults and Children's services.

Providing Direction

Leadership, Culture and Management Structure

The council has a clear and well-publicised vision for its future direction for both Adult and Children's Services. Due to the nature of the business and the changing circumstances with key partners, we keep the management arrangements and structure under review to ensure they are fit for purpose, and have sufficient capacity to support high quality professional and business management.

There is a record of effective leadership for children's services and this is reflected in its performance overall. Children's Services have had positive evaluations of leadership and management: *"Senior Managers provide strong and confident leadership"* (ESTYN 2009) and *"The involvement of every tier of management in influencing service delivery is an impressive feature. Case supervision is regular and supportive."* (CSSIW 2009). *"Carmarthenshire were providing effective leadership"* CSSIW 2010. The Annual Improvement Report by the Auditor General for Wales (Jan 2011) commented that *"There is effective leadership and an inclusive approach to improvement."* and that *"Children's Services are one of the better led, performing and better value in Wales"*.

There is increasing evidence of cultural change in Education & Children's Services with education and social care working more closely together to meet the needs of children and families. Repeated Inspections have evidenced that staff interviewed are engaged in the improvement agenda, there is a culture of inclusion and commitment to achieving the best outcomes for children in Carmarthenshire. Social work supervision and appraisals in children's is 100% and supervision is rated as good or excellent by staff.

The process by which the statutory responsibilities of the Director of Social Services and the Chief Officer for Education are discharged has been agreed by the council and is working well. There is evidence from inspections that the statutory responsibilities of the Director for Social Services are being carried out, and these arrangements are effective.

In Adult Services, we are continuing to drive the necessary momentum for cultural change, and there are positive indications that the culture is changing to become increasingly open and one that promotes independence. CSSIW found that “*New leadership in adult services is beginning to demonstrate improvement in some aspects of performance.*”

Improvement actions for 2011/12

- To continue to improve and sustain performance across adult services
- To continue to implement methods for improving communication and involving staff in changes in adult services

Corporate & Political Support

Social care has strong corporate and political support, robust scrutiny arrangements and high level engagement through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, the Health, Social Care & Well-Being Partnership and the Local Service Board, which has chosen health as one of its key priorities. Children’s Services has developed an extremely effective Corporate Parenting strategic group with elected members and senior officers who all play an active role in visiting social work teams and looked after children.

CSSIW and Wales Audit Office have found there to be a strong framework and a base of corporate and political support for social services.

Joint Review inspections have noted that the authority is “*an ambitious Council with a strong corporate lead*” with “*a real depth of support for social services evident across the corporate management team*”. Also noted was that there is “*informed support from elected members and corporate managers*” and in Children’s Services, “*There is support for the integration agenda from corporate managers and senior elected members who have also brought commitment, skills and added value to numerous Task and Finish groups, including those on Corporate Parenting and Complex and Special Needs*”.

In recent inspections, members have demonstrated an understanding of the issues for children’s services and there is cross party support and commitment. Elected members play an active role in monitoring the performance of Children’s Services where a cross party group have visited social work teams, met looked after children and actively championed the workforce corporately in scrutiny, Executive board and full council. This has led directly to additional resources into front line staff support.

The Annual Management letter in 2010 from the Wales Audit Office stated that “the Council has a strong drive and focus on improvement and is preparing well for the difficult times ahead. But, it has to be realistic about what it can do and focus on the effects of its work on local people.”

Improvement actions for 2011/12

- To strengthen and continuously provide scrutiny and drive for improvement in adult services;
- To improve engagement with local communities re proposed service changes in adult services

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adult placement – accommodation and care provided for an adult with social care needs in the Adult Placement Carer’s own home

ASB – Adult Safeguarding Board

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CICES – Carmarthenshire Integrated Community Equipment Service

COASTAL – Creating Opportunities and Skills Team Alliance

Common Assessment Framework – an easy to use assessment that is common across agencies

Core Assessment – an in-depth assessment of a child’s needs

Corporate Parenting – the role that the Authority plays in helping to support children who are “looked after”

CSSIW – Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Cymorth – a fund to support the development of children and young people

Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC) – delay when being discharged from hospital into social care services, for a variety of reasons

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) – a new law to protect vulnerable adults in hospitals or care homes who might be deprived of their liberty

Eligibility criteria – set of standards or rules governing access to services

Estyn – the education and training inspectorate for Wales

Extra care complex – self-contained accommodation units offering assisted living and care support

Families First Pioneers - A project to improve the deliver of services to families across Wales, especially those living in poverty

Flying Start – a local authority grant to support children under four and their families

Green Paper – a government proposal to stimulate debate and consultation

HR – Human Resources

IRO – Independent Reviewing Officer

Looked after children – children and young people who are legally in the care of the local authority

LSCB – Local Safeguarding Children’s Board

LSB – Local Service Board

National Service Frameworks – policies set by the NHS and the government to define standards of care

NHS Continuing Health Care – a package of continuing care arranged and funded solely by the NHS

Respite – short-term temporary care

Team around the child model – a team of multi-agency practitioners who co-ordinate support services

Telecare – assistive technology: alarms and monitoring devices that support vulnerable people at home

Trinity Fields Project – this is a joint project involving nine local authorities in Wales, to research the reasons why young people with learning disabilities do not progress to full employment and/or independent living.