



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**A Hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Monday, 4th October, 2021 at 11.00 am**

Contact: Emma Wilkins - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 07385401935)

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Thursday, 30 September 2021 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they **must** notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. 21ST CENTURY SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME - BAND B UPDATE

To receive the report of the Director of Education & Inclusion Services providing Members with an update on the Council's revised 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme (SOP), recently approved in principle by the Welsh Government.

3. REVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

To receive the report of the Director of Education & Inclusion Services providing Cabinet with details of a review of Special School Provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf Council.

(Pages 13 - 24)

4. UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES AND THE CHANGES TO THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION JOINT COMMITTEE

To receive the report of the Chief Executive providing Members with an update on the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

(Pages 25 - 36)

5. CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services providing Cabinet with the Annual Report for 2020/2021 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

(Pages 37 - 84)

6. REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services providing Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021.

(Pages 85 - 106)

7. FRONTLINE SERVICES; HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

To receive the report of the Group Director, Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services setting out the detailed capital programme for the additional funding allocated to maintaining the Council's highways and transportation network.

(Pages 107 - 112)

8. IMPROVING THE COUNCIL'S RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY

To receive the Joint report of the Director of Human Resources and Service Director Democratic Services & Communications providing Cabinet with a number of options that could improve the Council's recruitment process, so as to make it easier for the Armed Forces Community and veterans to overcome barriers to civilian employment.

(Pages 113 - 152)

9. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

“That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act”.

10. LIVING WAGE FOUNDATION - PAYMENT OF THE REAL LIVING WAGE FOR INDEPENDENT SECTOR SOCIAL CARE PROVIDERS AND DIRECT PAYMENT RECIPIENTS

To receive the Joint Report of the Group Director, Community & Children’s Services, Director of Human Resources and Director of Finance and Digital Services containing exempt information, which seeks Cabinet approval to extend the Real Living Wage to adult independent sector social care providers located in Rhondda Cynon Taf; specifically, those commissioned (excluding specialist placements) to provide older people residential and nursing care, supported living, extra care and home care and personal assistants providing care and support through direct payments for Adult and Children’s Services, in light of the growing and sustained pressures on domiciliary and residential care and the need to support this essential workforce.

(Pages 153 - 158)

11. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.



Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair)
Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor G Hopkins

Officers: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Paul Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services
Barrie Davies, Director of Finance & Digital Services
Louise Davies, Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Neil Griffiths, Head Of Financial Services - Community & Children's Services



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4th OCTOBER 2021

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – BAND B UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)

Author(s): Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's revised 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme (SOP), recently approved in principle by the Welsh Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note that the investment in the approved SOP has increased significantly from £167 million to £252 million, an increase of £85 million.
- 2.2 Agree to receive further reports on projects as they develop and progress through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges approval processes.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To build upon the investment and successes of projects already delivered through the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme to improve the quality of the education provision and learning environments for all learners throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Members will recall, that at the meeting of the Cabinet held in July 2017, approval was given to submit a SOP to the Welsh Government to secure funding through Band B of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme. The SOP outlined the Council's ambitions to continue to invest in the education portfolio throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf, and an approval in principle was secured from the Welsh Government totalling £167 million. This investment was to be split between both Capital and MIM (Mutual Investment Model) funded projects.
- 4.2 Since receiving approval in 2017, a number of projects have been progressed and Members have continued to receive updates on these projects. The current position of the existing Programme is as follows:
- **Hirwaun Primary** has been completed;
 - Works at **YGG Aberdar** are on site and progressing well;
 - Works at **YG Rhydywaun** are on site and progressing well;
 - Planning consultation has commenced for a new **Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin**;
 - Detailed design is nearing completion for 3 new primary schools funded through MIM, these are **Pontyclun Primary, Penygawsi Primary** and **Llanilltud Faerdref Primary**;
 - The creation of **2 all-through schools** is progressing in **Pontypridd** and **Hawthorn**; and
 - The new 6th form teaching block and significant improvements to **Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School** are at the design stage.
- 4.3 Since our SOP approval in 2017 a number of national and local priorities have been realigned which has resulted in new legislation being developed and disseminated by the Welsh Government to all Local Authorities. This includes Cymraeg 2050, Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, New Curriculum for Wales, the 10 year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), and Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales.
- 4.4 The Council has made a number of commitments to ensure that it can deliver its statutory obligations in line with these strategies, and where it can, exceed them. As a result, the Council has committed to invest more in Welsh medium education, it has committed to ensure that improvements to its special school provision continue, it has committed to deliver more improved 21st Century classroom environments, and it has committed to create more community facilities on our school sites. The Council's overarching ambition is to increase the number of learners benefitting from 21st Century Schools funding, investing in our schools to meet the needs to our young people and our wider communities, as we continue to strive to make every school a great school.
- 4.5 The revised SOP and the significant increase in the investment allows the Council to deliver on these commitments and achieve these ambitious targets. The original SOP totalled £167 million of investment and the new Programme

totals £252 million, which is a substantial increase that enables a further £85 million to be invested in the schools of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4.6 Development work will now commence on the revised Programme and a number of key projects will be progressed. This additional 21st Century Schools funding has been earmarked for the following projects:

- Ysgol Llanhari – to modernise and replace the majority of the existing buildings;
- Ysgol Cwm Rhondda – creating a new 3-19 all through school by remodelling and modernising the existing site or building a brand new school on an alternative site;
- A new English medium primary provision for Glyncoch to replace the two existing schools, subject to statutory school reorganisation consultation and decision making processes;
- A new special school to cater for the increased demand for the Council's special school provision, a report on this proposal will be put before Cabinet shortly;
- A new 21st Century school for Penrhys Primary;
- A new 21st Century school for Maesybryn Primary; and,
- A new 21st Century school for Tonysguboriau Primary.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.

5.2 Equality and Community Impact Assessments will be prepared for every project delivered as a part of this Programme and will be shared with the appropriate committees at the appropriate time.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Welsh Impact Assessment will be prepared for every project delivered as a part of this Programme and will be shared with the appropriate committee at the appropriate time.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Any statutory consultation required in respect of any projects delivered within this Programme will be undertaken in accordance with the arrangements outlined within the School Organisation Code 2018.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As projects are developed and final costs identified, individual reports setting out the Council's financial contribution will be put before Council for approval on a project by project basis.
- 8.2 Any revenue and capital costs that are accrued in preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.
- 8.3 All projects will be developed in accordance with the Welsh Government's business case approval process.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Part 1 of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act") imposes a number of general duties on all local authorities in Wales. The general duty in section 13 of the 1996 Act is to contribute (so far as the Council's powers enable them to do so) towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.
- 9.2 Section 13A(3) of the 1996 Act states that a local authority in Wales must ensure that their relevant education functions and their relevant training functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the subsection applies, including those who are of compulsory school age or are below school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.
- 9.3 Section 14 of the 1996 Act then requires the Council to secure sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education in the Council's area. Schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity for appropriate education.
- 9.4 Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes; and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 9.5 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Code. Local authorities must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the 2013 Act, act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the Code and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. A copy of the Code is found here:
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:
- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
 - Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education.
- 10.2 Due regard will be made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, during project development.

It is expected that each project will contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to achieving a zero carbon building and building to BREEAM excellent.
- Providing additional school places to meet Welsh Government targets and to promote the Welsh language in the community.
- Ensuring an inclusive and equitable education is available for all learners.
- Opening new community facilities, creating opportunities for local people to utilise.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Creating a new school environment that can deliver the New Curriculum for Wales as set out in the national mission statement.
 - Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor sport facilities for pupils.
 - Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible, to build the new school.
 - Engaging with the community on a thorough consultation with opportunities for all stakeholders in the community to engage throughout the process.
- 10.3 An Equality Impact Assessment, including further detail on the contribution of each project to the Wellbeing of Future generations Act, will form an integral part of project development.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This significant increase in 21st Century Schools and Colleges funding for Rhondda Cynon Taf provides an exciting opportunity for more learners and our communities to benefit from improved educational and community facilities.

- 11.2 It will allow more learners to be taught through the medium of Welsh. It will support the access of more vulnerable learners to 21st Century Schools' facilities. It will deliver exciting opportunities for the community focussed schools' agenda, putting schools at the heart of our communities. It will help us deliver our Net Zero Carbon targets. This investment will allow the Council to continue to deliver its ambitious goal to make every school a great school.
- 11.3 It is recommended therefore that Members formally approve the proposal to allow the Programme to develop, so that more schools and communities within Rhondda Cynon Taf can continue to reap the benefits of this important investment.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers-

None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET**

4th October 2021

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR
MRS J ROSSER)**

Item:

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact:

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4th OCTOBER 2021

REVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

AUTHOR(S): Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services and
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and
Transformation

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with updated information following the [report](#) presented to Cabinet in February 2021 where Cabinet agreed to additional scoping work being undertaken including feasibility studies, where appropriate, to inform potential proposals for change in our special school provision.
- 1.2 This report includes opportunities for further investment and recommends the next steps to address the demand for additional capacity in our special school provision.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - i. Note the content of this report.
 - ii. Acknowledge the pressures on our special schools and the need for significant investment to increase capacity and manage increased demand.
 - iii. Note that investment has been included within the Council's revised 21st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme to invest in a new special school within the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).
 - iv. Agree to receive further reports as the proposal develops and progresses in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, and Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges statutory approval processes.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To address the demand for additional capacity in special schools in the County Borough of RCT to accommodate the growth in learner numbers.
- 3.2 To acknowledge that the statutory duties placed upon the Council to deliver the obligations of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET Act), will compound the pressures placed on the special school sector and our capacity to make statutory provision for the learners that require it.
- 3.3 To secure appropriate provision for pupils with additional learning needs and avoid long-term budget pressures for the Council.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At the current time, there are 600 learners accessing education across four special schools in the County Borough of RCT. The Council currently has four special schools:
 - Maesgwyn Special School, Cwmdare, Aberdare.
 - Park Lane Special School, Trecynon, Aberdare.
 - Ysgol Hen Felin, Ystrad, Rhondda.
 - Ysgol Ty Coch, Tonteg, Pontypridd, which includes a satellite base in Buarth y Capel, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd.
- 4.2 Information on each special school was provided in the previous [report](#) presented to Cabinet in February 2021, including information on the educational provision, the age range of the learners, and an overview of the school site, including property condition information and suitability ratings. This information has not changed and remains valid.
- 4.3 Also acknowledged within the same report were the difficulties placed on special school admissions as special schools do not have a capacity calculation, unlike other school provisions. Learners are placed in special schools based on an assessment of their needs and as a consequence special schools cannot be classed as full. Measuring the Capacities of Schools in Wales – October 2011 confirms that the capacity assessment method for calculated school capacities applies to all community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools in Wales. The method does not apply to nursery or special schools or pupil referral units.

The Current Pressures

- 4.4 The following data analysis is based on data derived from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) unless otherwise stated. This analysis gives an indication of the children and young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in the County Borough of RCT.

- 4.5 Table 1 outlines the total number of children and young people who accessed their education in one of the four special schools (including the Buarth y Capel satellite base) from the academic year 2013/2014 to 2020/2021. The data clearly shows the steady rise in learner numbers accessing special school provision.

Table 1: Total Special School Learner Numbers

Total Number of Children and Young People who Access their Education in Special Schools in the County Borough of RCT Between the Academic Years 2013/2014 2020/2021									
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	9/2021
Total Number of Learners	483	488	531	539	543	562	577	574	600

- 4.6 Table 2 outlines the total number of children and young people who accessed special schools broken down into each of the four special schools (including Buarth y Capel) from the academic year 2016/2017 to September 2021.

Table 2: Trend Data Between Academic Year 2016/2017 and September 2021

Total Number of Children and Young People who Access their Education in Special Schools in the County Borough of RCT Between the Academic Years 2013/2014 to 2020/2021						
Special School	Academic Year					
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	Sept 2021
Maesgwyn School	132	130	127	130	119	120
Park Lane School	101	93	97	88	93	104
Ysgol Hen Felin	169	178	179	186	184	191
Ysgol Ty Coch	137	142	159	173	178	185
Total	539	543	562	577	574	600

- 4.7 The PLASC data comparison demonstrates that there has been a consistent increase in learner numbers in both Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch. The current numbers on roll as of September 2021 cumulatively across the special schools in the County Borough of RCT is **600**, demonstrating another significant increase. Numbers of learners in Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch are currently 191 and 185 respectively and reflects the continued pressure on placements in these schools.

- 4.8 As stated in the previous report, based on the overall growth in number of learners requiring special school placements in the last 4 years, it seems inevitable that the number of learners will continue to grow over the next 5 to 10 years. In recent years, there have been more learners with significant needs who need placement in a special school setting than there have been places. The trend data suggest that this will continue to be the case. Whilst it has been possible to address this through remodelling and building works this is becoming increasingly challenging and options for extending school sites are now limited.
- 4.9 It is not just the increase in the number of learners accessing our special schools that are causing the pressures, it is also the increase in the complexities of the learners' needs that attend these specialist provisions and the staffing numbers required to meet need.
- 4.10 It is difficult to provide a breakdown in the needs of the learners that attend our special schools given the complex nature and numerous iterations of any ALN diagnosis. Following guidance from colleagues in Inclusion Services, and for the sole purpose of this report, we will use the staff ratio bandings to evidence the growing complexity of need in our special school provision. Utilising this data will highlight the changes in the staffing levels required to support each learner depending on presenting need over the last few years, further evidencing the change in need and the increased demand placed upon this sector.
- 4.11 The staff bandings according to learner need are detailed below in Table 3. For a class of 10 for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties requiring enhanced support (BAND 1+), there would be a requirement for 3 teaching staff and 4.5 learning support staff to meet need of this complexity – at total of 7.5 staff. This illustrates the intensive support required for children with the most complex needs and does not include the intervention required from highly specialist health professionals e.g., nurses, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and physiotherapists.

Table 3: Staffing Based on Pupil Banding and Need

Band	Band of Learning Difficulty	Number of Teachers per 10 FTE Learners	Number of Learning Support Assistants per 10 FTE Learners
1+	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (Enhanced)	3	4.5
1	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	2	3
2	Severe Communication Difficulties	1.8	1.8
3	Severe Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	1.5	1.5
4	Severe Development Difficulties	1.3	1.3
5+	Other Learning Difficulties (Enhanced)	1	0.5
5+	Other Learning Difficulties	1.115	0.9

4.12 In January 2021, the special schools had the following learner numbers, which are broken down according to the corresponding banding categories detailed in Table 4.

Table 4: Data for January 2021 Based on Learner Numbers

January 2021	Band of Learning Difficulty							TOTAL Post 16
	B1+	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5+	B5	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
Park Lane	11	10	21	10	38	0	3	93
Ysgol Hen Felin	14	26	30	39	73	0	2	184
Maesgwyn	10	6	4	19	46	2	32	119
Ysgol Ty Coch (Including BYC*)	7	39	38	22	54	0	5	178
Total	42	81	93	90	211	2	42	574

In the main our special schools have significant numbers of learners at Band 4, with lower numbers of learners with high end needs (Band 1+) and lower end needs (Band 5/5+).

This data can be compared with the number of learners in the staff banding categories from January 2016 which are detailed in Table 5 below. As can be seen from the table below, the band B1+, which has the highest level of staff to learner ratio, was not a category. This new banding was introduced in 2017 to provide the additional support required for learners with increasingly complex and profound needs.

Table 5: Data for January 2016 Based on Learner Numbers

January 2016	Band of Learning Difficulty						TOTAL Post 16
	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5+	B5	
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	
Park Lane	34	9	5	51	0	0	99
Ysgol Hen Felin	31	38	7	97	0	0	173
Maesgwyn	16	3	27	14	63	18	141
Ysgol Ty Coch (incl Buarth y Capel)	48	7	6	52	0	0	113
Total	128	57	45	214	63	18	539

4.13 This data shows very clearly the increase in learners requiring the support of the higher staffing ratios as specified in categories B1+, B1, B2 and B3. This is especially the case in the two largest special schools, Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch, with the numbers rising from 76 and 61 in 2016, to 109 and 106 in 2021 respectively for all of these categories.

4.14 This data is important as it not only shows the change in the number of learners requiring additional support, but it also demonstrates the increase in the numbers of staff required to work in our special schools due to the enhanced complexity of need, which also has a detrimental impact on the physical space pressures, further compounding the effects on capacity within our special school provision.

National Curriculum Year

4.15 Table 6 that follow outlines the national curriculum year of the learners who access their education in each of the four special schools (five sites including Buarth y Capel). This data was correct as of 21st September 2021 and is not taken from the PLASC.

Table 6: National Curriculum Year of Learners that Access their Education at Special School

National Curriculum Year of Learners who Access their Education at Special School							
Key Stage	National Curriculum Year	School				Total	
		Maesgwyn Special School	Park Lane Special School	Ysgol Hen Felin	Ysgol Ty Coch (Ysgol Ty Coch and Buarth y Capel Combined)		
Foundation Phase	Nursery	0	5	3	5	13	100
	Reception	0	4	10	5	19	
	1	0	10	10	9	29	
	2	0	8	17	14	39	
Key Stage Two	3	0	9	12	7	28	144
	4	0	4	11	24	39	
	5	0	6	16	15	37	
	6	0	9	19	12	40	
Key Stage Three	7	9	15	15	16	55	150
	8	13	1	18	10	53	
	9	19	5	10	19	42	
Key Stage Four	10	11	5	11	11	38	73
	11	9	6	10	10	35	
Key Stage Five	12	23	4	7	14	48	133
	13	18	8	17	9	52	
	14	18	5	5	5	33	
Total		120	104	191	185	600	

The data indicates:

- The national curriculum year with the highest number of learners was year 8 with 55 learners.

- Key stage three was the key stage with the highest number of learners with 150 learners.
- However, figures are relatively consistent across all key stages.

Updated School Information

- 4.16 Since the previous report in February 2021, the works to increase the capacity at Ysgol Hen Felin have commenced and a 2-classroom modular build is due for completion by the end of the year. This will provide much needed additional space at the school site to cater for the additional numbers currently on roll at the school site.
- 4.17 Further works at Ysgol Ty Coch have been undertaken over the summer holidays with remodelling carried out to increase the capacity on the existing school site. In addition, plans are progressing to add a modular building on Buarth y Capel, again with the objective of increasing the capacity at this important facility.

5. FUTURE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 In summary, the trend data clearly indicates that the demand on the Council's special school provision is significant and current patterns suggest that this will continue to grow. Our existing special school sites are constrained and will continue to be so unless an increase in special school provision can be created. The previous report put before Cabinet in February 2021 described the geographical limitations of each school site, and the conclusion reached was that all opportunities to extend and increase capacities have been explored and where possible, undertaken.
- 5.2 As there are no alternative options to extend the current special schools on their existing sites, the acknowledgement is that the only feasible alternative is to build a brand new provision on a new site, growing the special school provision within the County Borough and increasing the number of special schools from four to five. The benefits to the Council will include financial benefits in terms of cost avoidance in relation to very costly out of county placements for learners with the most complex medical and health needs. By creating a highly specialist 21st century special school environment it will enable the Council to meet the needs of learners requiring access to highly specialist therapeutic facilities, equipment and resources required to meet all needs, including complex medical and health needs in the County Borough. The Council places significant importance on educating some of our most vulnerable learners in their local communities so that they can access local services and effective multi-agency working in settings close to their homes.
- 5.3 In addition, building a new special school will allow a review of the existing catchments to be undertaken and options for realignment to be explored. The objective of any catchment change recommended as a part of the review will be to free up valuable capacity in the existing special school

provision and create much needed additional places for the County Borough for the benefit of our communities.

- 5.4 Given the considerable changes planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with the implementation of new legislation, the ALNET Act (2018), building a new special school, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council successfully delivers on its statutory obligations.
- 5.5 This proposal will be developed alongside a review of existing special school provision so that our learners with the most significant ALN have access to the best possible special provision across the County Borough. This will include a review of existing out of county provision, with a view of potentially developing local specialist provision for learners with the most significant medical and health needs.
- 5.5 A site has not yet been selected and the Council is currently undertaking the final stages of an appraisal on a number of potential sites with good external facilities. It is not possible to disclose potential sites at present as some are not currently under Council ownership.
- 5.6 Should this proposal be approved, the creation of a new special school will be subject to a statutory school organisation consultation.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.
- 6.2 Equality and Community Impact Assessments will be prepared if approval is granted to progress with the proposal. The assessments will form an integral part of the consultation documentation and will be available on the Council's website for public viewing.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 If approval is granted to progress, the consultation process in respect of the proposal will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's Statutory Code – School Organisation Code (011/2018)¹.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

¹ [Welsh Government's Statutory Code – School Organisation Code \(011/2018\)](#)

- 8.1 Without this investment, there is a potential future financial risk to the Council arising from the pressures on special school places. Where need cannot be met in the County Borough out of county placements would have to be sourced. The resulting costs of securing independent special school placements outside of the County Borough would put a significant financial burden on the Council. In this situation, the Council would have to find significant revenue costs to support these placements.
- 8.2 The Council has successfully made a bid to Welsh Government to include a new special school provision in its overall funding envelope of the Band B Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme. This project will be developed in accordance with the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges business case approval process. Noting the preferential rates afforded to special school projects, with a Welsh Government intervention rate of 75%.
- 8.3 If approval is granted, a report setting out the Council's financial contribution will be put before Council for approval when appropriate.
- 8.4 Any revenue and capital costs that are accrued in preparing the financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 Section 316 of the Education Act 1996² specifies that children and young people with SEN should normally be educated in mainstream schools so long as this is compatible with them receiving the special educational provision that their learning difficulty calls for, the efficient education of other children and young people and the efficient use of resources.
- 9.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires Local Authorities to ensure that SEN/ALN provision is kept under review. Sections 1:20 and 1:21 of The Code of Practice also requires Local Authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of school funding arrangements in supporting and raising the achievements of children and young people with SEN.

10. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015

- 10.1 The proposals will ensure that two of RCTCBC's three key priorities will be met. These include:
- Economy: Building a strong economy.
 - People: Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
- 10.2 The proposal will ensure that some of the Council's most vulnerable learners will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes. The proposal will ensure more efficient and effective use of resources which

² [Education Act 1996](#)

promotes the development of social inclusion and positive outcomes for learners. This will also have a beneficial impact on transport costs and on carbon emissions.

- 10.3 Organising services so that they are focussed on early intervention and prevention is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015³ and a key element of the Council's Corporate Plan.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The Welsh Government and legislation requires Local Authorities to regularly review arrangements for supporting learners with ALN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities.
- 11.2 The priority for the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and early years settings, and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. If the cycle of deprivation and underachievement is to be broken, a top quality education that meets the needs of all children and young people is essential. It is also hoped that by investing in our special school provision in the County Borough of RCT we would further reduce the need for out of county placements for our learners with the most complex needs.
- 11.3 Given the increase in the numbers of learners accessing our special schools, the restrictions of the existing school sites, and the implementation of the new ALNET Act (2018), there is a need to increase our special school provision to ensure that it will meet the needs of our future residents. Without expanding the capacity of provision in the County Borough of RCT there is a risk that we will be unable to meet any future increase in demand for special school placements.
- 11.4 It is recommended therefore that Cabinet acknowledge the pressures on our special schools and the need for significant investment to be prioritised in the sector in order to increase capacity. It is also recommended that Cabinet recognise the opportunities presented by the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges funding, and as such agree to receive further reports as this vital proposal develops and progresses. Future development of the proposal will be carried out in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, and Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges statutory approval processes.

³ [Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015](#)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH OCTOBER 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

**REVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

AUTHOR(S): Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services and
Andrea Richards, Service Director, 21st Century Schools and Transformation

Background Papers

**REVIEW OF SPECIAL SCHOOL PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF
CABINET**

25TH FEBRUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

AUTHOR(S): Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services (Tel: 01443 744008)
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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH OCTOBER 2021

UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES AND THE CHANGES TO THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION JOINT COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- (i) Update Members on the introduction of Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021;
- (ii) Consider the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 that came into force on 1 April 2021, in respect of the establishment and operation of CJCs, with the economic well-being, transportation and strategic planning functions coming into being on 28th February 2022; and
- (iii) Consider the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet Report that sets out how the functions of the current Joint Committee will be transferred to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 1st March 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the new regulations that have established the South East Wales CJC and the future development of the following functions across the region from 1 March 2022; (1) economic well-being, (2) strategic development planning, and (3) developing transport policies;
- 2.2 Note the decision of the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee on 20th December 2021 to transfer its existing functions, that are principally in respect of the City Deal agreement as committed to by the ten South East Wales councils in March 2016, to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 28th February 2022. The transfer of the City Deal from the existing Joint Committee to the new Corporate Joint Committee, enables

the smooth transition of the City Deal functions, which include existing regional economic well-being and transportation functions.

- 2.3 Request that additional updates are provided to Cabinet as further detail is provided by Welsh Government into the powers and responsibilities of the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the potential devolution of powers and functions from Welsh Government to the Corporate Joint Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The formation of CJC's as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act will, over time, alter the landscape and governance of some strategic economic well-being, strategic planning and transportation functions currently undertaken by the constituent councils making up the CJC across the South East Wales Region or Welsh Government or another Welsh Government sponsored public body. WG hope they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government, where regional planning and delivery makes sense, using them as a means of maximising outcomes for the people of Wales by maintaining local democratic accountability, reducing complexity and making the best use of resources.
- 3.2 WG have published the regulations to establish the South East Wales CJC and set out, at a macro level, how the CJC would operate. Further detail and discussion will continue between the Welsh Government and 22 Welsh councils to set out, clearly, the scope of the functions the CJC's will be responsible for.
- 3.3 In South East Wales, the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet has sought to be proactive and has agreed to transfer the functions under the City Deal agreement, previously approved by UK Government, Welsh Government and the ten councils in March 2016, to the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee on 28th February 2022, the date when the economic well-being, strategic planning and transportation functions come into being for the new CJC.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Local Government and Elections Act introduced into the Senedd in November 2019 included (in Part 5) provisions to create via regulations a vehicle for consistent regional collaboration between principal councils - CJC's. WG's aim is to ensure there are consistent, resilient and accountable regional arrangements for the delivery of three important functions (i) strategic land use planning (ii) strategic transport planning and (iii) economic development. This approach is seen as all the more important given the COVID 19 pandemic as ways are found to help Wales recover.

- 4.2 Welsh Government (WG) maintain that the model of CJs builds on the best that has already been achieved in the development of regional arrangements in different parts of Wales. In South East Wales, the Cardiff Capital City Joint Committee Cabinet which has led on the City Deal is an excellent example where the councils achieve significantly more than they would individually by collaborating and undertaking economic and well-being and transport functions that no individual council had the capacity or the capability to undertake.
- 4.3 Over the autumn and early winter of 2020, Welsh Government consulted local government and others on the specific functions of a CJC, how it will be governed, its legal status as a corporate body, whether it can employ staff and financial powers. This information was used to develop the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee regulations, approved on 17th March 2021.
- 4.4 WG believe that by establishing CJC's through regulations it will provide more coherence and less complexity in the approach to regional governance arrangements in exercising the three functions proposed. Their aim is to reduce complexity and duplication of effort and resource. WG hope they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government, where regional planning and delivery makes sense, using them as a means of maximising outcomes for the people of Wales by maintaining local democratic accountability, reducing complexity and making the best use of resources.

5. KEY FEATURES OF THE SE WALES CJC & MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED AND ADDRESSED

- 5.1 As a reminder for Members, in contrast to other joint committee structures, CJs will be separate corporate bodies and legal entities to their constituent councils which will be able to directly employ staff, hold assets and budgets, and be directly responsible for exercising functions.
- 5.2 A CJC will not be the only vehicle through which local government can collaborate but the intention is to provide local government with a powerful new tool where appropriate.
- 5.3 CJs aim to offer a consistent approach to strategic planning and delivery at a scale where it makes sense to do so. WG believe they will help to align the key strategic decisions which underpin the sustainable development and transformation of regions as a whole.

Decision-making

- 5.4 The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Regulations 2021 (the Establishment Regulations) came into force on 1 April 2021 to establish the body corporate known as the South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee and the functions the CJC will undertake once they come into force on 28 February 2022.

- 5.5 The Establishment Regulations contains key provisions in respect of the CJC, including its membership and how it makes decisions. Under the Regulations the CJC's membership comprises 10 council members, one for each constituent council which constitute the CCR, and a member from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority who is only permitted to vote on matters relating to the strategic planning function. The Regulations also provide that the member for each Council shall be the executive leader or the elected mayor (depending how the Council operates).
- 5.6 As such, it is the members of the CJC (executive leaders of the constituent councils) which make decisions on behalf of the CJC as a separate corporate body. The Establishment Regulations provide that the members vote in relation to any matter to be decided by the CJC and that each member shall have one vote (save for the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority which can only vote on matters relating to the strategic planning function). The CJC makes decisions by majority, save for certain decisions which require the member's unanimous approval. This is consistent with the manner in which the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet has operated to date under the Joint Working Agreement and the clear intention is to follow the same governance model under the CJC. The Regulations also provide that determining an alternative voting procedure for the CJC or how the CJC's budget will be funded are decisions requiring unanimous approval.
- 5.7 The CJC is required under the Establishment Regulations to make standing orders for the regulation of its proceedings and business to supplement the constitutional provisions set out in the Regulations. As such, the standing orders which supplement the Regulations are intended to mirror and codify the existing governance provisions under the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Working Agreement. The standing orders will then be approved and adopted by the CJC's members which are the authorised decision-makers of the CJC under which each Council will be represented and each Council will have an equal vote.
- 5.8 To be clear, in the case of the economic well being and transport functions to be transferred to the CJC from the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) Cabinet, the standing orders and the Regulations themselves will then replace and supersede the existing Cardiff Capital Region Joint Working Agreement (JWA) (and no further JWA or any other form of articles of association will be required). The JWA will, from that point, have served its purpose and will cease to have effect; on the clear understanding that the principles and terms contained within the JWA will have been transposed into the governance model for the CJC via the Establishment Regulations and the standing orders.
- 5.9 Although the CCR JWA will not apply to the CJC, it is in essence a contract between the ten Councils. Therefore in order to bring the contract to an end formally, under the terms agreed by each Council when signing up to the JWA, each Council will be required to provide formal written notice of termination of the JWA. This will require a decision of each Council to instruct an appropriate officer to serve formal written notice in accordance

with Clause 2.1.2 of the JWA. This can be done at any point after the inception of the CJC and is purely a formality of contractual administration.

- 5.10 There is therefore **no requirement** for each Council to separately decide upon a matter in respect of the CJC before any decision can be passed and adopted by the CJC. Instead, such authority and power is vested in the CJC's members to make decisions on behalf of the CJC (including approval and adoption of the standing orders).

Proposed initial functions

- 5.11 The initial functions for the CCR CJC, as prescribed by the Establishment Regulations, relate to preparation of Regional Transport Plan, Strategic Development Plan and the exercise of Economic Wellbeing powers (already utilised by CCRCD).
- 5.12 Other potential functions are aspirations to be negotiated with Welsh Government as enacted 'transfers of power' over agreed periods of time. These include: City-region tourism and place branding, Inward Investment, future iterations of the Valleys Taskforce and Regional Park, aspects of business support, regional business engagement, Regional Bus and strategic planning and delivery around regional-Energy. There will also be opportunity to further develop the City Deal property/ housing funds, and access to UK Government funding to support business innovation and research and development.
- 5.13 There is a shared view amongst chief executives and senior economic development officers within the region that the proposed roles and functions of the CJC offer no threat to the role and responsibilities of local authorities. Councils will continue to remain best placed to undertake local activity around economic development, planning, transport with LAs retaining all existing wellbeing powers and the ability to determine local planning with the CJC empowering and supporting local, regional and national delivery. Where it is requested that functions be devolved to regions from Welsh Government or their sponsored bodies – this is about a decentralisation approach and achieving alignment and concurrency with local arrangements.

Staffing / Resources

- 5.14 The South East Wales CJC will have the flexibility to agree the staffing and resourcing required and to determine the approach it takes to such matters. For example a CJC will be able to employ and recruit staff in its own right; make agreements to have staff placed at the CJC's disposal; and undertake secondments (in and out) to enable CJC's to discharge their functions. CJC's must 'appoint' a Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Governance Officer (however, these could be provided by a constituent authority, or seconded etc).

- 5.15 In addition to the above, prior to the transfer of the Cardiff Capital Region functions to the CJC, detailed consideration will need to be given to whether and to what extent TUPE applies. Currently staff working for the CCR are employed by constituent authorities as CCR does not have the ability to employ staff directly. Those staff are subject to the terms and conditions, policies and procedures of the constituent authorities. The CJC is its own legal entity, and therefore will have liability for any staff it employs. Further, the Establishment Regulations state that staff employment by constituent authorities and placed at the disposal of the CJC will be treated as a member of staff of the CJC for the purposes of any enactment relating to the CJC. Therefore, prior to the transfer of CCR functions, and prior to the direct employment of staff by the CJC or the placing of any staff at its disposal, the CJC will need to develop a comprehensive suite of employment policies and procedures that will apply to CJC's employees, as well as template employment contracts for the staff that it employs directly.
- 5.16 In considering the above, the CJC will need to comply with the requirement in the Establishment Regulations that staff employed by the CJC must be appointed on terms and conditions (including terms and conditions as to remuneration) that are 'substantially similar to those of officers within a constituent council undertaking responsibilities which the CJC considers to be reasonably comparable.' Given that there are ten constituent Councils, each with its own different structures, employment terms and conditions, policies and procedures, the CJC will need to consider how best to comply with this obligation, whether it be adopting the most advantageous of these terms and conditions, or adopting a median position.
- 5.17 Further clarity is required from Welsh Government and the LGPS in relation to access of CJC staff to the LGPS, including the relevant fund as Constituent Councils currently overlap between The Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan Pension Fund, The Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Pension Fund, and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Pension Fund.

Funding

- 5.18 CJsCs will be funded by their constituent councils, in proportions that they will be able to determine. As is the case with the constituent councils, a CJC will be required to calculate its budget requirement, taking into account any other funding streams it might receive. The regulations state the CJC members (leaders) must unanimously agree a budget and that 'constituent' councils must pay a proportionate amount. If there is a disagreement on the proportionality of funding, Ministers have powers of direction.
- 5.19 In providing further detail, there are essential matters that need to be considered by Welsh Government before the CJsCs are able to set a budget, such as the CJC's status in terms of VAT, and other taxation matters, associated pensions arrangements (e.g. a 'Scheduled Body' or

an 'Admitted Body') and the financial responsibility for any borrowing, lease, financial guarantee and similar future liabilities and risks.

- 5.20 The first South East Wales CJC Budget will have to be set by 31 January 2022 in accordance with the requirements of the Establishment Regulations. The planned transfer of the CCR Joint Committee on 28th February 2022 into the CJC will hopefully make the setting of the budget and a business plan for the CJC a much simpler task than expected. The approach to setting a business plan and budget for City Deal is already in place as part of the processes of the Regional Cabinet where annual and 5 year rolling budgets and business planning takes place.
- 5.21 In respect to the delivery of the City Deal, the existing Joint Working Arrangements sets out each Local Authority's Revenue contributions towards the costs of operating the Regional Cabinet and Core City Deal Office functions. It also sets out maximum permitted increases. This funding should be sufficient for the first phase development of the CJC, and the financial commitments already agreed by the 10 partner authorities should continue as previously agreed.

Scrutiny

- 5.22 The Establishment Regulations provide that each CJC is required to put in place appropriate scrutiny arrangements. Such arrangements should be at the discretion of the CJC. The Establishment Regulations also require that a CJC has an Audit and Governance Committee. The Regulations of General Application also include provision so that any scrutiny committee does not include a member of the CJC (or one of its sub-committees), that it could include members (including non-executive members) of the constituent principal councils, that scrutiny committees will be able to source independent advice from experts and that membership should seek to take account of political balance in the constituent principal councils.
- 5.23 Irrespective of any joint scrutiny arrangement, individual council scrutiny committees would be able to seek to scrutinise regional bodies as they do now. A balance will need to be struck however in managing multiple scrutiny demands on senior CJC staff and members across several constituent authorities' scrutiny arrangements.

6. TRANSFER OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION TO THE SE WALES CCR

- 6.1 The South East Wales CJC regulations provide the functions of the CJC that come into force on 28 February 2022. This effectively means that the Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee must be ready to "go live" and operate via the CJC body by 1 March 2022. In light of the regulations, the CCR has undertaken an exercise with its professional advisors to:
- Assess its current Joint Committee model for the CCR considering its advantages and disadvantages;

- Assess options available to the CCR for a new operational and delivery structure via the CJC; and
- Determine the optimum operational and delivery structure for implementation by the CCR as part of its transition to the CJC.

6.2 At the CCR Cabinet meeting on 20th September 2021, the CCR Cabinet considered the following four options:

- **Option 1 – Do nothing and stay as we are** – This option is therefore a continuation of CCR’s existing operational and delivery model which consists of Cardiff Council assuming the role of Accountable Body, to deliver CCR’s investments/projects on behalf of itself and the other partner councils to fulfil the objectives of the CCR;
- **Option 2 – Lift & shift – “like for like” model** – This option involves transposing CCR’s existing governance arrangements into the CJC such that the CJC acts as the decision maker and adopts the existing role of the Joint Committee by replicating the CCR Joint working Agreement governance arrangements. However, under this option the Accountable Body would continue to act as the vehicle body for project delivery and not the CJC;
- **Option 3 – Lift & shift – single corporate entity/CJC** – This option involves transitioning CCR’s existing operational and delivery model into a single corporate body, the CJC. This would mean:
 - Carrying across CCR’s existing governance arrangements under the JWA to the CJC such that the CJC adopts the existing decision-making and oversight role of the Joint Committee; and
 - Analysing existing projects/pipeline projects and, where appropriate (in the case of existing projects), transferring such projects to the CJC to act as the vehicle for project delivery going forwards.
- **Option 4 – Holding Company Structure** – This option establishes the CJC as the decision-making entity and provides for the CJC to adopt the existing role of the Joint Committee. This would be achieved by overlaying the governance arrangements of the CJC set out under the Regulations with CCR’s existing governance arrangements under the JWA.

6.3 The Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet considered a detailed option appraisal and decided that Option 3 was the preferred model as it:

- Ensures that the partner councils retain absolute control over CCR decision making;
- Allows for a bespoke governance model which can follow the terms of CCR’s Joint Working Agreement;
- Does not require a partner council to assume the role of accountable body and the additional burden and risks associated with that role;
- Rings fences delivery risk from the partner councils;
- Takes advantage of Welsh Government policy and the Regulations by transposing CCR’s existing decision-making and project delivery into the CJC.

- Provides a framework by which the CJC, as a separate corporate body, can naturally evolve over time on a project by project basis.
- 6.4 Further information on the decision of the CCR Cabinet is available on the following link [Agenda for Regional Cabinet on Monday, 20th September, 2021, 9.30 am - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)
- 6.5 It is important to emphasise to Members that Welsh Government has bestowed the economic well-being, strategic planning and regional transport functions upon the CJC at its inception. The Regional Cabinet has resolved to adopt a 'lift and shift' transition from the CCR to the CJC, and will therefore replicate, as far as possible, the provisions of the JWA within its standing Orders. The adoption of standing Orders by the CJC is a matter for the CJC itself under the legislation. Therefore, a decision of constituent Councils is not required. The JWA will need to be terminated in due course. This will require written notice of termination by all 10 constituent councils pursuant to Clause 2.2 of the JWA. It is proposed that termination will take place after the CJC has adopted its standing Orders.
- 6.6 Now that the Joint Committee has determined the optimum operational and delivery structure for the CJC, CCR's Project Team will now work alongside professional advisers to implement the decision and to complete the transition by February 2022. This will be a significant undertaking which will require (amongst other matters):-
- Engagement with Welsh Government to ensure that the detailed regulations to be put in place to supplement the Regulations align with the Joint Committee's chosen structure;
 - An analysis of existing projects and contracts that CCR has in place via the Accountable Body or other Partner Councils along with the pipeline of upcoming projects in order to understand whether and how such projects should be transitioned to the CJC. This will involve a due diligence exercise involving legal, financial, tax and accounting workstreams;
 - The CJC to prepare a 12 month business plan setting out activities to be undertaken by the CJC in the discharge of its functions, calculation of the CJC's budget requirements and how the CJC's budget requirements will be met;
 - The CJC to agree the CJC's budget requirements for its first two financial years at a meeting of the CJC by 31 January 2022 and how this will be met;
 - The CJC to appoint the chairperson and vice-chairperson at its first meeting; and the CJC to establish a Governance and Audit Sub-Committee in accordance with the Regulations.
- 6.7 Over the next few months as greater clarity and understanding of the CJC model becomes available from WG via the detailed Regulations, further reports will be presented to Cabinet on the processes to create a functional CJC by 1 March 2022.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equality or diversity implications aligned directly to this report. CJsCs will be subject to the Equality Act 2010 and Welsh Language Standards.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned specifically to this report at present.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS & LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The relevant legislation linked to the introduction of CJsCs and how they would operate is set out in the body of the report.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 10.1 WG say in developing the CJC mechanism for local government regional collaboration there is a particular emphasis on applying the sustainable development principle. In particular, building resilience for the long-term and ensuring the proposals are grounded in collaboration and integration of objectives with local government. The proposals for regionalisation of some local authority functions reflect the ways of working as they are intended to enable local authorities to plan for the longer term and require collaboration and joint working between local authorities. The proposals also support further integration of services and pooling of often limited resources and expertise, providing a greater level of capacity and capability overall and providing space for strategic thinking and planning that has been largely squeezed out in individual local authorities.
- 10.2 In addition to ensuring the sustainable development principle and five ways of working underpin its approach and they have also considered how a regional approach can maximise our contribution to the well-being goals. In doing so they say CJsCs put in place a new framework to enable local government to make their contribution to the goals more effectively. This means the direct contribution of CJsCs to achieving the goals is limited, but the indirect contribution will be much more significant.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 CJsCs will have functions that cover economic well-being, strategic planning (LDPs will remain with LAs) and transport. WG hope they act as the catalyst to the development and implementation of collaborative arrangements across local government,
- 11.2 WG have published regulations that establish the South East Wales CJC and set out how the CJC would operate.

11.3 The Cardiff Capital Region Joint Committee Cabinet has considered the best approach to transferring its City Deal responsibilities into the new CJC to:

- Ensure that the partner councils retain absolute control over CCR decision making;
- Allows for a bespoke governance model which can follow the terms of CCR's Joint Working Agreement;
- Does not require a partner council to assume the role of accountable body and the additional burden and risks associated with that role;
- Rings fences delivery risk from the partner councils;
- Takes advantage of Welsh Government policy and the Regulations by transposing CCR's existing decision-making and project delivery into the CJC.
- Provides a framework by which the CJC, as a separate corporate body, can naturally evolve over time on a project by project basis.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Overview & Scrutiny Committee

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4th OCTOBER 2021

**ITEM: UPDATE ON WELSH GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS TO ESTABLISH
CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES AND THE CHANGES TO THE CARDIFF
CAPITAL REGION JOINT COMMITTEE**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE
LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Background Papers

Freestanding Report.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH OCTOBER 2021

CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS CLLR HOPKINS and CLLR LEYSHON

Author: Nikki Kingham, Business Manager, CTM Safeguarding Board

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to share with Cabinet the Annual Report for 2020/2021 for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. See Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes and endorses the content of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report for 2020/2021.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board has a statutory responsibility to publish an Annual Report on 31st July each year, to demonstrate its effectiveness in exercising its functions in the preceding financial year.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Annual Report is twofold; it is a tool of accountability and a tool for evaluation. Accountability has three components:
 - accountability to the public;
 - accountability to the statutory partner agencies of the Board; and
 - accountability to the inspectorate bodies.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in RCT, Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

4.2 The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board Business Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

4.3 SUMMARY OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2020/2021

4.4 The Board published an Annual Plan on 31 March 2020, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children, young people and adults. As the Board stood down non-critical activities due to the pandemic, it was unable to fully implement its Annual Plan this year. However, some work was carried out to progress with its priorities and additional work, as a result of the pandemic, also emerged. Full details can be found in the report attached but a summary of the progress made against priorities is provided below:

4.5 Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice

4.6 The development of a Learning Framework, setting out how the Board will create an enhanced learning culture, was put on hold. However, the Board was still able to carry out the following improvements:

- Established a multi-agency Monitoring Group to ensure that recommendations from Practice Reviews are progressed, implemented and reviewed accordingly.
- Re-designed action plans to make them smarter.
- Increased the use of 7 minute briefings to summarise learning.
- Trained 23 new Practice Review Chairs and Reviewers.
- Undertook 4 multi-agency audits.
- Delivered 2 multi-agency practitioner events.
- Carried out evaluations on 2 Board protocols.

4.7 To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board

4.8 The Board was able to achieve the following in relation to this priority:

- Continued to regionalise protocols and guidance, approving 7 updated regional documents during the year.
- Made good progress in relation to tackling child sexual exploitation across the region by making the links between the already established groups set up to address this issue.
- Identified opportunities for the Cwm Taf and Bridgend MASH to collaborate.
- Good links established with Parc Prison in Bridgend.
- Focused work carried out to regionalise the data that is reported to the Board's Adult and Child Quality and Performance groups to enable clear and consistent regional comparisons to be made.

4.9 **Strengthen the links with other Partnerships in the region in relation to areas of common concern**

4.10 In pursuance of this objective, this year the Board achieved the following:

- Established a cross-partnership regional approach to suicide prevention
- Progressed with improvements to the MARAC process
- Made good links via the Bronze Groups with Substance Misuse, Housing and Domestic Abuse agencies

5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time.

6. **WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 A Welsh version of the Annual Report will be available on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board website.

7. **CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 The Annual Report has been developed in conjunction with all statutory partners of the Safeguarding Board. It has been approved by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and shared with the Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the responsibilities and the functions of the Regional Safeguarding Boards, which includes the publication of an Annual Report on the 31st July each year.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 The Board contributes to elements of the work of the Public Service Board by reporting on safeguarding activity.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This year's Annual Report recognises the shift in the priorities of the Board to focus on critical activity only in the past year, due to the pandemic. Despite this, it was still able to deliver on some of the additional targets that were set at the start of 2020 and outstanding tasks will be carried forward into the coming year.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH OCTOBER 2021

**CWM TAF MORGANNWG SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT
2020/2021**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO
HOLDERS CLLR HOPKINS and CLLR LEYSHON**

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact:

Nikki Kingham, Business Manager, CTM Safeguarding Board

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Cwm Taf Morgannwg Bwrdd Diogelu Safeguarding Board



Annual Report 2020-2021



Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Cwm Taf
University Health Board



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1. Introduction and Foreword - Chair of the Regional Safeguarding Board

Welcome to the 2020-2021 Annual Report for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board.

This Annual Report presents an overview of the work that the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board carried out in 2020/2021 in pursuit of our aim to ensure that the people of Cwm Taf Morgannwg are safeguarded from abuse, neglect or other forms of harm.

In March 2020, the Board published an Annual Plan setting out its priorities for the coming year. At the same time, we entered a period of unprecedented challenge and uncertainty when the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the nation with a devastating impact for so many individuals, families and communities. Understandably, the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns had a significant impact on the Board's ability to carry out some of its functions, with resources being targeted towards critical safeguarding activities only. Many of the Board's non-essential meetings and sub groups were stood down and in their place, local Bronze-Command groups were set up to ensure that our most vulnerable people continued to be protected.

Our partner agencies rose to the challenge with determination and dedication, despite continual pressures on staffing capacity and the need to comply with strict government guidelines around social distancing and self isolation. I would like to thank each and every person working for and on behalf of our partner agencies, in hospitals, care homes, in the community and on the front line of service delivery, for their hard work and commitment to safeguarding the people of Cwm Taf Morgannwg during the past year.

This year's Annual Report recognises the shift in the priorities of the Board to focus on critical activity only in the past year. Despite this, we were still able to deliver on some of the additional targets that we had set ourselves at the start of 2020 and outstanding tasks will be carried forward into the coming year.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board please contact our Business Unit by e-mailing: ctmsafeguarding@rctcbc.gov.uk

Paul Mee, Chair of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board



2. Safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg

The area of Cwm Taf Morgannwg Morgannwg covers the local authority areas of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf with a population of approximately 428,000¹

The **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board** is a statutory partnership made up of the agencies that are responsible for safeguarding children and adults at risk in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The aim of the Board is to ensure that people of all ages are protected from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm. This also involves preventing abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm from happening.

The work of the Board is delivered via a Sub Group structure, which aims to support multi-agency safeguarding in Cwm Taf Morgannwg. The Lead Partner (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council) employs the staff of the Board's Business Unit and holds the Board budget, to which the statutory partner agencies contribute.

The two key **safeguarding** objectives of **protection** and **prevention** underpin the work of the Board and inform the priorities each year.

The responsibilities and functions of the Board are set out in the statutory guidance under Part 7 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It has an overall responsibility for challenging relevant agencies so that:

- There are effective measures in place to protect children and adults at risk who are experiencing harm or who may be at risk as the result of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm; and
- There is effective inter-agency co-operation in planning and delivering protection services and in sharing information.

Safeguarding Children

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Statutory Guidance define a 'child' as a person who is aged under 18.

S.130 (4) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines a child at risk as a child who:

- Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm;
- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs).

What do we mean by Harm?

Harm is defined as:

¹ Source: Census 2011

- ill treatment - this includes sexual abuse, neglect, emotional abuse and psychological abuse
- the impairment of physical or mental health (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).
- the impairment of physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development (including that suffered from seeing or hearing another person suffer ill treatment).

Types of Harm

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples for each of the categories of harm, abuse and neglect included in Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk:

- **physical abuse** - hitting, slapping, over or misuse of medication, undue restraint, or inappropriate sanctions;
- **emotional/psychological abuse** - threats of harm or abandonment, coercive control, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks, witnessing abuse of others;
- **sexual abuse** - forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening, including: physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts; non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways;
- **financial abuse** - this category will be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be:
 - not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments; or
 - complaints that personal property is missing.
- **neglect** - failure to meet basic physical, emotional or psychological needs which is likely to result in impairment of health or development.

Risk from other actual or potential harm to a child or young person may also result from:

- Criminal Exploitation such as County Lines
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Radicalisation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Safeguarding Adults

S126(1) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines an adult at risk as an adult who:

1. Is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect,
2. Has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and

3. As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Abuse:

- can be physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial (includes theft, fraud, pressure about money, misuse of money),
- take place in any setting, whether in a private dwelling, an institution or any other place.

Neglect

This describes a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health).

It can take place in a range of settings, such as a private dwelling, residential or day care provision.

The following behaviours could also place the adult at risk of abuse or neglect (this list is not exhaustive):

- Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV) this includes Honour-based Violence (HBV) and Female Genital Mutilation
- Modern Slavery
- Domestic abuse and violence against men
- Criminal exploitation

Reporting Concerns

In Cwm Taf Morgannwg, all safeguarding concerns are reported to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). For the relevant contact details please refer to the information at the end of this report.

The **Cwm Taf Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** sits within the structure of the Safeguarding Board and acts as the single point of contact for all professionals to report safeguarding concerns across Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The MASH has been fully operational since May 2015, having been set up to enhance safeguarding practice, with agencies working together to receive all safeguarding referrals and share relevant agency information to make joint decisions. The Cwm Taf MASH partners are: South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, National Probation Service, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Children and Adult Safeguarding Teams, Education, and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

MASH activity comprises:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Adults at Risk Safeguarding
- Domestic Abuse (MARAC - Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

The key aims of the MASH relate to the following themes:

- Improved co-ordination and consistency of threshold/decision making when a safeguarding report is raised
- Improved response times leading to earlier interventions
- Reduction of repeat referrals

During 2020/2021 the Cwm Taf MASH has continued to ensure that the main focus is to respond to all safeguarding concerns promptly in a multi-agency setting. Partners have operated on both a virtual and physical platform with a combination of both office based and remote working within Covid risk-assessed parameters.

The **Bridgend Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)** has been operational since July 2018 with the official launch having taken place in October 2018. The Bridgend MASH partners are South Wales Police, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, National Probation Service and Bridgend County Borough Council (Adult Safeguarding Team, Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) (Children and young people), Early Help, Education, Housing and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

The key aims of the Bridgend MASH are:

- Streamlined decision making through enhanced intelligence
- Risk is collectively addressed
- Opportunity for early intervention and prevention of repeat referrals
- Demand being created but repeat referrals can be effectively reduced

Bridgend MASH is governed by the Bridgend MASH Operational Board and Bridgend MASH Executive Management Board with both boards including representation from all partners. These Boards and Groups have continued to meet throughout the year 2020/21 to guide Bridgend MASH on an operational and strategic level.

Bridgend MASH has continued to operate on a physical and virtual platform during 2020/2021 to ensure individuals in Bridgend continue to be supported wherever there are safeguarding concerns. A comprehensive risk assessment was completed that has enabled people to work in a safe environment. Partners work on a rota basis within their agencies to ensure social distancing is maintained.

3. Members of the Safeguarding Board

The Lead Partner for the Board is Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and the membership complies with the statutory guidance issued under Part 7 of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014.

A list of members is attached as Appendix 1.

4. What did the Board do in 2020/21 to meet its outcomes?

In March 2020, the Board developed a strategic response to the pandemic, recognising that the impact on the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children, young people and adults may be significant. We needed to be sure that those most at risk continued to be protected from abuse, neglect and other kinds of harm and that partner agencies had effective measures in place to carry out their critical safeguarding responsibilities.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID WE FACE?

Board partner agencies faced unprecedented challenges in the past year, the impact of the pandemic on organisations, staff and the people we serve was evident, some of which are summarised below:

Organisational Challenges:

- The swift introduction of exceptional delivery models
- The need to make best use of technology and new platforms
- The need to respond innovatively and quickly to assess risk
- Additional demands in relation to safeguarding checks by Police and the need to house rough sleepers and the homeless
- The management of the vaccine roll-out
- The additional pressure on healthcare settings
- Increased emphasis on partnership working to manage risks, support business continuity and support the pressures on Health.
- Working with third sector organisations to support adults and children in our communities.

Workforce Challenges:

- Reduced ability to deliver services due to fluctuating staff absences at short notice.
- Needing to implement home working arrangements at short notice
- Separating work and home life, home schooling, 'pandemic fatigue' and increased levels of anxiety
- The need to enhance staff support
- Steep learning curves for the provision of PPE, testing of staff and Test, Trace and Protect (TTP)
- Bereavements, in particular in care homes which had a significant impact on residents and staff wellbeing
- Reduced services leaving individuals and carers without their support networks

Challenges for the People We Protect:

- Long term effect of children not being in school or seeing friends and family
- Increased social isolation and mental health issues
- Increased risks linked to substance misuse, domestic abuse, suicide/self harm
- Significant impact in our care homes

HOW DID WE RESPOND?

The Board put in place the following measures:

- Established Silver (regional) and Bronze (local) Command responses to coordinate the critical safeguarding activities of our partner agencies
- Ensured that reports were submitted to Gold Command and the Regional Safeguarding Board on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, highlighting any risks or issues requiring escalation
- Received guidance from Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board to ensure that the statutory duties of the Board were being fulfilled

Through the Bronze and Silver structure we were able to monitor the risks associated with:

- The scale and nature of safeguarding reports in relation to children and adults at risk, domestic abuse and suicides.
- The use of technology and virtual approaches to manage critical work, including strategy discussions and child protection conferences.
- The engagement of families in these processes.
- Visits and investigations, in particular when households and residential establishments were self-isolating.
- Staffing capacity and resources.
- Access to schools, childcare and preventative services.

The Bronze meetings were initially held weekly with representation from a broad range of agencies, some of whom had not attended meetings regularly before or been invited to sit on Board sub groups previously e.g. CAMHS and Drive (which operates a perpetrator programme in the region). New multi-agency safeguarding data was also collected and monitored during the lockdown. Following feedback that agencies were keen for the good work that took place during the first lockdown to continue, the Board agreed the establishment of regional Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Groups, which allowed us to maintain these positive working arrangements.

Virtual meetings also increased the attendance of some agencies who we have previously struggled to obtain regular attendance from. This has provided added value to our arrangements, including being able to identify and source quick solutions with partners for high risk cases, that were being impacted on by access barriers created by the pandemic conditions (e.g. access to specialist CAMHS).

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD

The Board is required to carry out a number of statutory functions but clearly business as usual was not possible during the pandemic as partners were called upon to respond to the urgent and unprecedented demands facing services. Non-critical areas were put on hold and as the crisis subsided, virtual technologies improved and further guidance came through from the Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board, the Board was able to re-start some non-critical areas of work.

Executive meetings of the Safeguarding Board were held throughout the year to monitor the situation regularly.

5. How did we implement our Annual Plan and what were our key achievements?

The Board published an Annual Plan on the 31st March 2020, setting out its priorities for safeguarding children, young people and adults in 2020/21.

The Annual Plan for 2020/21 can be accessed at: www.ctmsb.co.uk

As the Board stood down non-critical activities, it was unable to fully implement its Annual Plan this year. However, some work was carried out to progress with its priorities and additional work, as a result of the pandemic, also emerged.

In relation to the Strategic Priorities, a summary of the work carried out is below.

Strategic Priority 1: Enhance and promote a learning culture where the Board can evidence the difference it is making to safeguarding practice

Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems and practice is a core function of a Safeguarding Board. We wanted to focus on learning from the experience of professionals working in our partner agencies, through the findings of case audits undertaken on an inter-agency basis, as well as through the learning from multi-agency professional forums and child and adult practice reviews.

As part of developing a positive culture of learning and development, we aimed to ensure that information was widely disseminated within the workforce and that the Board monitored the extent to which any recommendations were implemented.

The development of a Learning Framework, setting out how will we create an enhanced learning culture, was put on hold. However, we were still able to carry out the following improvements:

- Established a multi-agency Monitoring Group to ensure that recommendations from Practice Reviews are progressed, implemented and reviewed accordingly.
- Re-designed our action plans to make them smarter.
- Increased the use of 7 minute briefings to summarise learning.
- Trained 23 new Practice Review Chairs and Reviewers.
- Undertook 4 multi-agency audits.
- Delivered 2 multi-agency practitioner events.
- Carried out evaluations on 2 Board protocols.

In addition, the Board partner agencies progressed this priority individually, some examples of which are as follows:

RCT Children Services developed a Quality Assurance and Learning Framework (QALF) that sets out to embed a framework that includes the key components of a quality assurance framework, namely; reliable and comprehensive performance management information; audit of cases, both thematic and individual; observations of practice and quality assurance of supervision; training and development of staff; and service user feedback and participation in service development.

South Wales Police began collating and reviewing suspected suicides and drug overdoses. This information has been shared with other partners across the region via the newly-established Suicide Review Group and the Immediate Response Groups. Work continues to try to prevent such tragic deaths and Neighbourhood Teams and Police Volunteers have been utilised to distribute posters, signposting agencies which can assist when individuals are vulnerable.

Bridgend Children Services has continued to share learning in response to national, regional and local issues and to the learning needs of staff across the Council. An important element of Bridgend's outcomes-focused Assuring Quality Framework is to be able to identify and evidence what is working well and what needs to change to respond and support people's wellbeing.

Merthyr Tydfil Children Services considers that the only true way to evaluate practice is to look at it from a 360° perspective. This involves looking at the data, the quality of practice and most importantly, whether there has been a positive difference to the lives of children and families. A key element of Merthyr's Quality Assurance Framework is undertaking thematic audits, these cover safeguarding practice and allows consideration of areas for development and areas of good practice on which to continually build.

Case Study - Merthyr Tydfil Adult Services

An 82 year old women (M) was taken to a hospital by Police due to her husband (T) allegedly slapping her at her home. This was one of several previous incidents.

M was assessed as not having capacity and a nursing assessment recommended an Elderly Mentally Inform residential placement. However, her husband wanted her to return home and ward staff said M was asking to return home to T.

A multi-agency meeting was required to discuss the risks associated with M being discharged and what destination would be in her best interests. As there had been historical events of abuse between both parties, due to capacity issues it was felt that M would be unable to protect herself from harm.

Following Section 126 enquiries, a strategy discussion was held which found that during the 13 year relationship between M and T, there had been an increase in domestic police reports over the past 4 years.

A decision was needed on whether M needed protecting or if this could be managed at home with a package of care and support.

A best interest meeting was held where the views of M were established, as well as those of her husband.

It was felt that the risks could have been mitigated by a robust Care and Support Plan with a large package of care. This was the least restrictive outcome at the same time ensuring that M was being seen regularly by professionals who would be able to report any concerns quickly.

A further meeting was held and attendees in this meeting included the Council's solicitor to give legal advice, as well as a further risk assessment being undertaken and clearly documented.

Along with the implementation of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures, the following actions which were agreed included:

- Discharge planning to include 4 calls per day, to be implemented at week of discharge.
- Social Worker to visit weekly plus unannounced visits.
- Advocate to remain involved.
- Social Worker to maintain regular contact with safeguarding and maintain regular updates.
- Social Worker to inform care agency of safeguarding concerns and request that all incidents are recorded immediately reported.
- Clear contingency plans in place.
- Strategy group to reconvene in 6 weeks.

The case is now closed with the safeguarding risks incorporated into the care and support plan and is managed by care management.

Strategic Priority 2: To have in place a fully integrated, functioning regional Safeguarding Board

On 1 April 2019, the regional footprint for safeguarding changed and the Safeguarding Board assumed responsibility for the Bridgend area in addition to Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The membership and remit of the Board and its Sub Groups were reviewed to reflect this change and we began adopting common processes, protocols and templates. As we entered our second year as a new regional Board, we were keen to further harmonise the joint arrangements to ensure that there is a consistent and joined-up approach to regional safeguarding.

The Board was able to achieve the following in relation to this priority:

- Continued to regionalise our protocols and guidance, approving 7 updated regional documents during the year.
- Made good progress in relation to tackling child sexual exploitation across the region by making the links between the already established groups set up to address this issue.
- Identified opportunities for the Cwm Taf and Bridgend MASH to collaborate.
- Good links established with Parc Prison in Bridgend.
- Focused work carried out to regionalise the data that is reported to the Board's Adult and Child Quality and Performance groups to enable clear and consistent regional comparisons to be made. This has put us in a better place to inform what sub-group QA work is needed.

KEY ACHIEVEMENT

The Board's updated Pre-Birth Referrals and Conferences policy has been well received. This moved the point of referral to Children Services from 16 week gestation to as soon as possible, giving more time for services to work closely with pregnant women. This policy was also directly informed by a Child Practice Review and included specific advice about the importance of actively seeking information from and actively engaging with fathers during pre-birth assessments.

Board partner agencies contributed to this priority individually, some examples of which are as follows:

South Wales Police underwent a new Force Restructure to mirror the newly created

regional Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding geographical area. This resulted in a reduction of Senior Officers who attend the Board meetings and therefore a review of police attendance at the various meetings was reviewed and developed to meet the demand.

Bridgend CBC is now represented on all relevant Sub Groups and meetings of the Board.

Education and Inclusion Services representatives on the Board have taken full part in discussions on strategic areas to ensure that the move from Cwm Taf to Cwm Taf Morgannwg has been inclusive and explored key themes of how the Safeguarding Board has worked to include a third local authority. Good links exist across the Education Directorates in the three local authorities, and relationships are well established.

RCT Adult Services have contributed to various working groups designed to achieve consistent process and practice across the Region, including work to regionalise the documentation toolkit for Adult Safeguarding. Adult Services provides the Chair for the Adult Safeguarding Quality Assurance and Performance Sub Group and they have worked with partners to achieve Regional performance measures and a dataset.

Case Studies - RCT Adult Services

The Welsh Ambulance Service Trust raised concerns about poor care by a domiciliary care agency of 58-year-old man with alcohol-related self-neglect and serious health conditions.

Following enquiries, the Lead Coordinator arranged a strategy meeting where it became apparent that even with an increased package of care in his current home, his needs would still not be met.

Having received alcohol detoxification in hospital, he was able to make a mentally capacitated decision about where he lived and his care and support arrangements.

He was keen to retain his independence but acknowledged he could not manage in his current accommodation.

The Strategy Meeting resulted in him being referred for extra care accommodation and both he and his family were delighted at the prospect of a move to more supported accommodation.

There was also learning for the domiciliary care agency about sharing concerns about regular refusal of care interventions.

A Learning Disability Day Centre reported unexplained bruising on a 50-year-old woman, who, on account of her learning disability, could not explain how she had sustained the bruises. She lived with her mother, who has health needs herself, and her older brother.

Following enquiries and an initial strategy meeting, a Care and Support Protection Plan was developed that included a clear requirement on the provider agencies and the family to report any issues promptly to the Lead Practitioner and to address home conditions with the family.

After a further incident, the family were visited but there was insufficient evidence for police to pursue any charge. The Lead Coordinator convened an outcome strategy meeting, where it was apparent that the protection arrangements for the adult at risk were much more robust. There have been no further incidents of unexplained injuries, home conditions have improved and the family are communicating much better with all

agencies.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen the links with other Partnerships in the region in relation to areas of common concern

In pursuance of this objective, this year the Board achieved the following:

- Established a cross-partnership regional approach to suicide prevention
- Progressed with improvements to the MARAC process
- Made good links via the Bronze Groups with Substance Misuse, Housing and Domestic Abuse agencies

Board partner agencies contributed to this priority individually, some examples of which are as follows:

There is a clear commitment to collaborative working across **RCT County Borough Council**. The RCT Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) contributed to the setting up and running of the Education Hubs during lockdown, which provided a safe space for vulnerable and key workers' children to attend. The recent Care Inspectorate Wales Assurance visit highlighted that providers felt relationships with them had been strengthened during the pandemic and a culture of trust had developed. Partnership working was particularly prominent in the MASH, with well-established relationships with partners and co-operation between multi-agency professionals, ensuring effective working in relation to sharing information, identifying, and monitoring children's needs and risks.

Throughout the pandemic **South Wales Police** utilised and shared the conference call facility which was a newly adopted vessel in order to hold virtual meetings during the lockdown phases. This eased difficulties in partnership working and strengthened links with the Board. Discussions were initiated with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office to look at closing gaps where there is cross over in work between the work of the Public Services Boards and Safeguarding Board.

Bridgend CBC has also continued to be committed to working collaboratively across Bridgend, including the setting up and running of the Education Hubs during lockdown. The recent CIW Assurance Visit undertaken to the Council, which had a focus on how well social services continued to help and support adults and children (with a focus on safety and well-being), highlighted that partner relationships are strong, productive and well established, and especially prominent within the MASH.

RCT Adult Services are members of all relevant Partnerships across the Region, including the 'Together for Mental Health' partnership, the Community Safety Partnership and the Regional Partnership Board. There is also representation on the Regional Serious and Organised Crime Board, the MAPPA Strategic and Operational Groups and the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Steering Group.

Specific Focus Areas during the Pandemic

Safeguarding in Care Homes

The three local authorities worked closely together with the Health Board and Public Health Wales during the pandemic, along with other key agencies, to ensure that care home providers continued to be monitored and continued to raise concerns around safeguarding.

Contract Monitoring Teams maintained daily contact, via telephone and e-mail, with all care homes to carry out checks, obtain reports on staffing levels and to provide support. Any concerns with regards staff and resident testing were reported to the Contract Monitoring Officers and, where appropriate, escalated to the CTMUHB testing team.

All relevant information and guidance from Welsh Government, Public Health Wales and CIW was shared promptly with the homes. Weekly contact was made to provide advice with regard to complying with the guidance, along with weekly calls taking place between Local Authority Commissioning, CIW and Environmental Health Officers. Weekly written updates, providing a RAG status and key figures in terms of testing and staff figures were submitted and collated on a weekly basis, and shared with CIW.

As the pandemic unfolded, hospitals were under significant pressure and there were occasions where patients were discharged with minimum and/or inconsistent information regarding their level of needs and care requirements and this did result in additional pressure on care homes to provide required support.

The provision of PPE was one of the main concerns within the sector especially during the initial period. Initially, Contract Monitoring Teams facilitated the distribution of emergency PPE based on the care homes where there were confirmed or suspected cases of infection, in line with national and Public Health guidance. Additional PPE was also procured to distribute where needed as it was identified that there was a potential gap between supply and need. As the supply of PPE from WG increased this was then coordinated centrally and distributed by the Local Authority on a weekly basis, based on an agreed model.

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Teams continued to be fully operational. Advice was sent out to all Care Homes at the beginning of the lockdown period to inform them that they should continue to submit DoLS applications and that all applications would be strictly prioritised according to urgency. As it has not been possible to visit Care Homes to meet with relevant people, assessments were completed remotely using available evidence with telephone or video calls to relevant people when they can manage these forms of communication.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Learners

Education Services within Cwm Taf Morgannwg recognised the importance of safeguarding vulnerable learners in the very early stages of the pandemic and took a multi-agency approach to ensure their safety during times when the children and young people would be out sight of professional services, who may have in usual circumstances, been able to identify any signs of harm, abuse or neglect.

RCT Education Services developed a Vulnerable Learner Protocol which used intelligence gathering from Children Services and provided schools with a clear system of the most

vulnerable pupils within their school and expectations on frequency of contact.

Schools were opened as emergency hubs for vulnerable learners and key workers' children to provide a level of support, but there were still children identified as vulnerable who either did not take up placements or did so infrequently. Those schools who were unable to contact could request for the Attendance and Wellbeing Service to undertake an emergency visit.

This was further developed by September 2020 to incorporate a revised model of delivery for the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS). An Integrated Wellbeing Pathway was created which involved AWS, Youth Engagement and Progression, Resilient Families Service, Education Psychology and Eye 2 Eye Counselling Services. Schools were able, and continue to be able, to refer to AWS on a 3 day rota for any pupils they have not seen or been in contact with. AWS will undertake a doorstep visit to sight the children, offer wellbeing support and signpost to the above identified services where needed. This led from September to March, to over 8000 home visits being completed and pupils remaining to be regularly sighted by professionals.

Merthyr Tydfil's Education Services also developed a multi-agency process to ensure they stayed in touch with their vulnerable learners who may have required access to the Hubs. To enable that the process worked as efficiently and effectively as possible, it was recommended that Hub schools held the relevant details of all of the children from their catchment schools. This would help to facilitate the timeliness of referrals to MASH.

Suicide Prevention

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board and its partners recognised a need to address the increasing number of suicides in the region and in considering a suitable response, it was recognised that the responsibility for dealing with and preventing suicides sat with a number of different partnerships and structures across the region. It was noted that although each of these partnerships and structures played an important role in trying to tackle the issue of suicide, there was no joined-up approach in place and opportunities to collaborate had not been maximised.

A Suicide Prevention Steering Group was set up in July 2020, co-ordinated and chaired by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board. Membership of this group consisted of multi-agency representatives from:

- Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board
- Together for Mental Health Partnership (including the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Sub Group)
- Cwm Taf Community Safety Partnership
- Bridgend Community Safety Partnership
- National Co-ordinator for Suicide and Self Harm Prevention

A detailed scoping exercise on the current provision for tackling suicide in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region was carried out to identify any gaps and/or opportunities to improve co-ordination and collaboration. As a result, the following actions were agreed:

- The regional approach to Suicide and Self Harm should follow the six objectives of the Talk to Me 2 strategy. All current arrangements identified in the scoping exercise should feed in to these objectives.
- Formally adopt the IRG protocol as the regional response to all suicides that meet the definition of a critical incident.
- Set up a regional Suicide Review Group to receive data on, and review, completed suicides in the region. The Group should identify themes, patterns and trends and consideration to be given to reporting its findings to the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Group.

6. Safeguarding Themes

Audit Activity

Achieving improvement in safeguarding policy, systems and practice is a core function of the Board. This year, a new approach to audit work was agreed, to be carried out via task and finish groups and recommendations made by case audits were monitored to identify how practice is adapted to reflect any learning. The key learning themes from two completed audits are summarised below:

AUDIT ACTIVITY	THEMES IDENTIFIED
<p>Child S</p>	<p>Decision-making and levels of accountability:</p> <p>Chronologies help to provide a whole picture of what is going on within cases and can be a good predictor of future harm. Where a child has been placed on the CPR more than once, a multi-agency chronology should be completed by the Core Group, which may prevent issues from being looked at in isolation and limit the risk of professional over-optimism.</p> <p>There needs to be improved communication within agencies with regards to escalating concerns to appropriate management within their organisations and with partners.</p> <p>The Core Group guidance needs to be amended to include the need for legal services to sit in on Tier 2 meetings to provide a legal view on thresholds.</p> <p>Engagement:</p> <p>The voice of the child, alongside their lived experience must remain at the centre of professional activity and decision-making and direct work must be undertaken to ensure that this is known.</p>



Conference and Core Group meetings must ensure that children and young people's wishes and feelings are discussed as a distinct agenda item within all meetings.

Assessment and Planning:

Disguised compliance to be considered in all Case Conference and Core Groups as being a potential factor in why a Part 6 Care and Support Plan is not progressing and the Conference Chair should discuss this as an option during meetings.

Core Groups must be given priority by all agencies, and Conference reports must detail when they have taken place and the Conference Chair must question if this information is missing.

Single agency and Safeguarding Board multi-agency audits on CPR cases should monitor that Core Groups are being held as per procedures and if not, that this is being highlighted by the Team Manager, Conference Chair and / or through the triggering of the CTM Safeguarding Board Escalation Process for raising concerns about the effectiveness of multi-agency practice.

Professionals need to have a clear and shared understanding of what neglect looks like. Where a child has been placed on the CPR for neglect and the Core Group cannot agree on what 'good enough' looks like, the assessment tools that are available to assist with this should be completed as soon as possible

Recording:

The quality of documentation completed on children on the CPR needs to be sufficiently detailed, accurate and to be completed on time.

Professional disagreements need to be recorded on a child's records and in meeting minutes, so that there is more emphasis on reporting concerns and challenging partner decisions if little action has been taken, with an audit trail to support that action was taken.

Case responsible professionals need to take ownership for seeking feedback from Children's Services in respect of the C1's they have submitted.

When different decisions on the threshold for action for siblings is being taken, the rationale for this needs to be recorded on their respective files.

Workforce development:

Children subjected to a second period of registration must be identified in supervision by their worker (including Conference Chairs), and receive enhanced attention by Supervisors, so that the professionals working with them receive all the support they require and timely decision-making that meets the child (ren's) well-being needs.

Supervisors need to ensure that the risk assessment and management tools that exist to help professionals in their work are encouraged and completed at the right time, especially when a case has become stuck and / or there are disagreements about threshold.

Adult L

- The use of Multi Agency Meetings should be more frequent and arranged promptly for complex clients.
- Mental Health Services need to trust feedback from providers and react to concerns more promptly and comprehensively.
- Care Plans and Support Plans need to work side by side.
- Crisis Team need to be more understanding when arranging assessments, by taking into account transport issues for clients especially late at night.
- Crisis Team need to feedback to Support Staff their reasons for no support provided in order to explain to the client.
- The Adult Safeguarding Team needs a robust process for responding to repeated PPNs and escalating risk and need.
- No identified need for transition to adult services from 16+
- It should not be assumed that CMHT input is not required because an individual is receiving support from a Supported Housing Provider.
- Communication between the multiple agencies involved in this case must be addressed and a strategy introduced on communication, sharing information on care and treatment, also to include what to do in a crisis or at times of concern.
- Clarity needed around the disclosure of concerns when an individual discloses 'at risk' behaviors, particularly when safeguarding issues arise.
- The importance of case recordings and that a focus is given to the outcome achieved.
- The amount of PPNs should have triggered a process to raise as a significant concern.
- There is a general assumption that once health take primacy then there is no need for a PPN as this would be duplication.

Adult Practice Reviews and Child Practice Reviews

The Board is required to carry out a Child or an Adult Practice Review in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of a child or an adult at risk is known or suspected. The Board did not publish a Child Practice Review in 2020/21.

The Board published 1 Adult Practice Review during the year and this is available on the Board's website [APR CTMSB1/2019](#).

The learning themes coming out of this review were as follows:

1. Ensuring the most appropriate use of legislation for adults requiring inpatient care
When applying a legal framework for an inpatient, best practice would include discussions with all relevant parties involved in their care and treatment. Staff need to have a clear understanding on how and who makes referrals. Timely referrals to advocacy services should be made where patients lack capacity.
2. The patient pathway between older persons mental health wards
Where there are concerns over the appropriate placement for any patient these should be escalated through the Care and Treatment Plan review process. Where specialist placements are required, there are established processes for accessing these through the Health Board and Local authority funding panels. Applications will be based upon a current needs assessment.
3. The reporting and recording of safeguarding incidents
In environments where there are a high number of incidents between vulnerable adults there is the danger that a culture of professional tolerance develops, resulting in high staff thresholds for challenging behaviour and an under reporting of serious incidents.
4. The role of the multi-disciplinary team
A wide range of evidenced based interventions should be available to all patients on older person's mental health wards. As well as the individual benefits this provides, this will also ensure a balanced multi-professional approach to minimising potentially restrictive practices.

Partner agencies were able to respond to the outcome of this review as follows:

Merthyr Tydfil CBC has considered the learning, referral pathways are in place and working well and there is a commitment to fulfilling the role as part of a multi-disciplinary team in relation to adult mental health.

All Learning is incorporated into **WAST** safeguarding training, policies and procedures as appropriate. There has not been any learning/required actions specific to WAST staff, however identified generic themes are disseminated throughout the Trust.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC disseminated the report to all managers and teams. Training has been delivered on Mental Capacity/Best Interests Decision-Making & applications to the Court of Protection. Training has also been delivered on the use of the Mental Health Act and the interface with the Mental Capacity Act. Further guidance has been produced

for staff on identifying cases where application to the Court is necessary, including use of IMCA and other professional advocates in this process. A greater awareness of social work staff and managers in the need for Court proceedings is evident from notifications to the DoLS Team of relevant cases and the increasing number of cases referred to the Court.

RCT Education and Inclusion Services, deal with Child safeguarding issues for the majority and therefore some of the recommendations from this review did not align. However, Adult Practice Review CTMSB1/2019 highlighted in Recommendation 1 and 4 the importance of staff being aware of their roles and legislation and the consideration of when practitioners should report to safeguarding and when they should report to police. These areas are routinely covered in training sessions with schools and school staff are required to undertake Level 1 training refreshers annually.

7. Information Training and Learning

The Board is required to review the training needs of practitioners in the area and ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding training, taking into account themes and learning arising from the delivery of the Board's functions. This work is monitored by the Board's Training and Learning Sub Group.

The majority of the multi-agency safeguarding training is planned, delivered and co-ordinated by the local authority-based Training Departments. The delivery of training in 2020/2021 was impacted by the pandemic and agencies had to quickly move towards virtual approaches. Despite this, the **Cwm Taf Training Department** delivered 128 safeguarding training courses to 993 people from a range of agencies. The majority of these people were employed by the local authorities but agencies represented also includes health, nurseries, police, housing providers and voluntary organisations.

At the start of the pandemic, the inability for **Bridgend Training Department** to deliver face-to-face training either in-house or commissioned led to cancellations and postponements of planned events, and interrupted momentum in the delivery of some regional training priorities. Reduced venue availability and social distancing requirements restricted numbers at in person events by 50% on average throughout the year. Covid-19 accelerated growth in the use of digital and virtual learning programmes and Bridgend has seen an increased take up in e-learning, and has significantly expanded safeguarding e-learning available on its website. In Bridgend, 55 courses were delivered to 863 people from a range of agencies, these include staff, foster carers and volunteers. This data also includes schools safeguarding training.

National Training Framework on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

Since implementation, 12,231 staff members from Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Bridgend County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council have completed Group 1 training. Figures are not available locally for the Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust or the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service as they report directly to Welsh Government.

The table below outlines Cwm Taf Morgannwg progress in 2020-2021:

Group	Numbers completed
1	1735 (LA data only)
2	154
3	0 (no group 3 trainers)
4	12
5	5

In addition, the Health Board incorporates the Ask and Act training package into their Safeguarding People training, which allows them to illustrate the impact of domestic abuse on children and their families, and how this abuse can manifest in adulthood and beyond.

Multi Agency Practitioner Events (MAPF)

A MAPF on **Radicalisation** took place in November 2020. This event included a presentation on Radicalisation, Extremism and the 'Prevent' programme and on the findings from a CTMSB Review of a case where a young person from the region was convicted of terrorism offences.

Welsh Government Training Grant

The Board receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government to support additional safeguarding training activities. This year the grant enabled us to support the following:

- The delivery of Stress, Trauma and Resilience training to members of staff from a variety of agencies.
- ASSIST Suicide Prevention training to 48 members of staff across all partner agencies.
- A Wellbeing workshop, held during Safeguarding Week 2020, where 27 staff were in attendance.
- CSE awareness raising session to 30 practitioners
- On-Line Abuse and CSE training to 30 participants

The **Welsh Ambulance Services** safeguarding team developed appropriate training packages to suit both virtual and face to face delivery to meet safeguarding educational requirements during the Pandemic. This included required updates on Wales Procedures.

- 60% of WAST Training was delivered virtually and 40% face to face.
- 63% increase in demand to train staff in comparison to last year (due to huge recruitment drive within the organisation)
- 95% compliance Safeguarding Children (2985/3141)
- 92% compliance for Safeguarding Adults(2778/3035)
- 84% for VAWDASV group 1 (3430/4091)
- 1110 tot staff trained Group 2 Ask and Act

RCTCBC Education has focused this year on providing opportunities for staff across the central service area and schools to be able to access safeguarding training that may not have

been available previously. This has included 4 training dates for Hafan Cymru 'Disclosure of Abuse' training and 6 training dates for Women's Aid delivered VAWDASV Group 1 Training.

Since the Summer 2020, **RCT Adult Services** have adapted to be able to deliver virtual training and have continued to do so. Whilst it is difficult to measure the impact that training has on practice and outcomes for adults at risk, the RCT Adult Safeguarding Team receives the highest number of Safeguarding Reports across the 3 Local Authorities in the Region from a wide range of professionals and agencies, which suggests that there is a high level of awareness of adult Safeguarding across the public service landscape in RCT. There is an equally high level of DoLS applications, again suggesting that awareness of the requirements of the Mental Capacity Act is strong.

Safeguarding Week 2020 took place in November 2020 and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board, along with all other Safeguarding Boards throughout Wales, took this opportunity to work with its partners to highlight safeguarding issues and promote safeguarding activities.

The Board and its partners focussed on positive mental wellbeing and preventing suicide, with the emphasis being on **'Talking Saves Lives'** and the importance of people reaching out and talking whenever they may be struggling and feel that things are getting on top of them.

A programme of events and activities was developed for the public, young people and professionals. Some of the events which were included were:

- A presentation on the link between mental health and domestic abuse. 55 people attended.
- Prevention of Child Sexual Exploitation, which discussed real case studies, how multi-agency working, resilience building and intervention can reduce the risk of CSE, in high-risk cases. 37 people attended.
- Managing Mental Health in the Workplace, which gave a first-hand account of how difficult it can be from a supervisor's perspective in managing a member of staff suffering from depression. 32 people attended.
- "Keeping the Peace and Falling to Pieces" was a presentation by former Metropolitan Police Commander, John Sutherland, who suffered a breakdown and who spoke about his experience. 61 people attended.
- A [webinar](#) By Dr Tom Slater of Cardiff University on suicide prevention was recorded, circulated to the Board and its partners, uploaded to the Board's website and promoted through social media.

Feedback from the above events was very positive. Some comments received include:

"Thank you very much for the event today..... it is vitally important we break any stigmas around mental health and events like this are steps to make that happen!"

"Thank you very much for sharing your experience and reflections with us. It is extremely important to break the stigma of mental health and sessions like these are very powerful and make a difference."

"It's been a privilege listening to your experiences and positive to see that with the right support, things can get better and I think that will give a great deal of hope to many."

The full activities programme can be viewed [here](#).

During Safeguarding Week, **Cwm Taf Morgannwg Mind** launched 'Project Speak' – a three year project to strengthen suicide prevention, including a range of training programmes, awareness raising campaigns and prevention support across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

A section called 'Talking Saves Lives' was created on the Board's **website**, with a prominent banner on the page highlighting this. This section contains information on a range of support services, apps, training and resources for adults, children and young people, professionals and parents and carers.

The visits to the CTMSB website from 11th until 21st November was 692 in comparison to the number of people who visited the site from 1st until 10th November, which was 277.

A **radio advert** with Heart Radio ran from 16th until 20th November, which directed listeners to the Board's website. The estimated reach for this radio campaign was 176,000 listeners.

Dissemination of Information

As part of developing a positive culture of learning, the Board has disseminated best practice and learning within the workforce via Multi-Agency Practitioner Forums (see above), information within the Board's e-bulletin as well as updating the website with reports and learning outcomes from Adult/Child Practice Reviews and audits.

The [Autumn bulletin](#) was developed and circulated within the Board and its partners in September 2020 and included information on:

- The Board's response to the Covid 19 pandemic
- The Board's Annual Plan and Annual Report
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Recently approved policies and procedures
- Learning from case reviews
- Campaigns

Social Media

Throughout the year, information on a range of safeguarding issues for both the public and professionals was shared on the Board's Facebook page and its Twitter account which was launched in the Summer.

Social media was a key communications channel used to raise awareness of Safeguarding Week, to promote the messages on well-being, mental health and suicide prevention and sign-posting to support services.

The Board's **Facebook** page reach was 37,055 and the **Twitter** account was 24,300.

Website

Information on a range of safeguarding issues was uploaded to the website throughout the year and in direct response to the pandemic, a specific section was created and called "Keeping Our Communities Safe During Covid-19".

To make this as prominent as possible, a bright yellow banner was placed on the home page of the website taking people to this information, which was been broken down into 'Public' and 'Professional' sections. Please select this [link](#) to view these pages.

8. How have we collaborated with others?

Working in partnership with other agencies is integral to the work of the Board. We do this in a number of ways, with individuals, agencies, partnerships and organisations both within and external to Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Community Safety Partnerships

The Board collaborated with the Community Safety Partnerships in relation to 4 ongoing Domestic Homicide Reviews during 2020/2021. Representatives from the Community Safety Partnerships sit on Safeguarding Board Sub Groups and joint work on Suicide Prevention and Domestic Abuse continues.

Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board

Representatives of the Board have continued to engage and participate in the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, led by Cardiff and the Vale Safeguarding Board. A theme has emerged with the implementation of Section 5: Safeguarding Allegations/ Concerns about Practitioners and Those in Positions of Trust (Professional Concerns). Discussions are ongoing, with a view to achieving consistency across Wales.

Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board

The Business Managers from all 6 Regional Safeguarding Boards across Wales met with Welsh Government and the National Independent Safeguarding Board on a weekly basis for most of the year. Discussions focussed on the situation across Wales and the UK with regards the pandemic. Similar meetings were also held with Board Chairs.

NISB members attended all Board meetings during 2020/2021.

Other Regional Safeguarding Boards

The Board Chair and the Board Business Manager have continued regular contact with their counterparts across Wales to share good practice and resolve any common issues/barriers.

9. PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVING

Children, young people or adults who are affected by the exercise of the Safeguarding Board's functions should be given the opportunity to participate in the work of the Board.

How have we achieved this?

Unfortunately, much of the Board's engagement and participation work reduced during 2020-21 because of the pandemic. Where possible, information technology has been used to maintain contact with people and develop new types of service delivery. The use of online platforms such as Teams, as well as the development of the phone-in systems has ensured that schools are more involved than ever in strategy discussions and conference meetings as the ability to remain at school but take a full and active part in meetings has increased

RCT's Youth Engagement and Participation Service, has continued to provide enriching opportunities and support services for young people across RCT. This has included a range of support on its social media platforms for children, young people, parents, and carers. Mental Health and Wellbeing Officers based with the YEP Service, offer specific support and advice for young people struggling with their own mental health. Face-to-face youth work is provided on school sites, ensuring that young people have a familiar face to engage with for 1:1 sessions, and YEPS secured the funding for a School Based Counselling grant to provide dedicated support to young people with poor mental health and reluctant to return to school following Covid.

For **RCT Children Services**, digital meeting room technological solutions have been sourced to enable the move to a position where hybrid meetings can be held with children and families. During a recent CIW Quality Assurance visit, there was an emphasis on exploring how well the local authority was ensuring people, carers and practitioners are having their voices heard, making informed choices, and maintaining control over their lives. The inspection concluded that the local authority had made clear its strategic and operational intent to support vulnerable young people, adults and carers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and maintained a line of sight on the changing COVID-19 landscape, resulting in clear plans and innovative practice/responses to address the challenges presented.

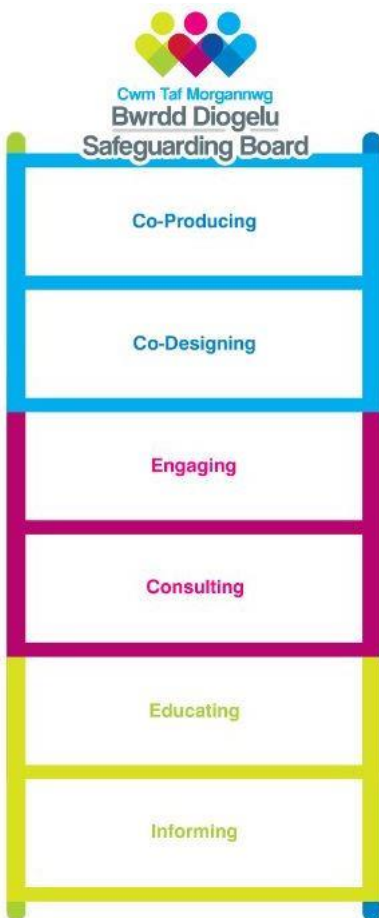
The **WAST** Patient Engagement and Community Involvement team have worked with children and older people in formulating a charter for both groups which provides our staff and volunteer workers with the expectations of these individuals who use our service. They have also worked closely with the deaf community, learning disability groups and currently with carers on how WAST can support them in accessing the service.

South Wales Police has relied heavily upon volunteers, Special Constabulary and communities to improve the engagement of communities. Virtual community meetings are ongoing and ways in which to report crime have been enhanced. Surveys within certain communities has also helped in understanding the needs of communities.

Bridgend College organised a number of activities in 2020 for students on safeguarding issues, including:

- Two workshops on self-harm, which aimed to make students aware of why people self-harm, how to stay safe and where to access support. Students were supported by staff to attend the workshops and feedback was very positive from both.
- Six workshops on mental health which were run by Mental Health UK and Hafal and which raised awareness on mental health and resilience and how to develop proactive strategies. Students enjoyed and benefitted from the workshops, with staff commenting that groups are more cohesive and supportive.
- A session was delivered by the Breck Foundation to staff at Bridgend College on raising awareness of the dangers of gaming and online grooming.

Bridgend Youth Council arranged for a workshop to be held in November 2020, followed by on-going drop-in sessions on the impact of loneliness and isolation on young people’s mental health. The Reach Out Workshop with Youth Cymru helped members of Bridgend Youth Council understand the impact that loneliness and isolation can have on their mental health, especially during the covid-19 pandemic and recurring lockdowns. The Youth Council members, aged between 11 and 25, were able to understand and recognise mental health triggers of loneliness and isolation and knew where to access support if needed. This led to regular online Chat and Chill Drop In’s so that the young people had a social outlet during lockdowns or holidays and felt connected and supported by Bridgend County Borough Council’s Participation Team.



A **Ladder of Participation** has been developed in order to measure how well we are doing in engaging with our communities and service users. This will be embedded into the work of the Board in 2021/2022.

As shown in the diagram on the left, there are six rungs to the ladder, with each rung representing a different level of participation.

Public voice activity on every step of the ladder is valuable, although participation becomes more meaningful at the top of the ladder.

Starting at the bottom is fine – and in fact, to be expected – as long as the ambition is to keep moving up the ladder, reflecting on how much service users and the community are involved.

10. Contributions of Board Members

Each Safeguarding Board partner has a responsibility to ensure that the Board is operating effectively. There are clearly defined Terms of Reference as well as role profiles for Board members.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC)

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council involvement and contribution to the Board comes from Children and Adult Services, Education, Housing and Public Protection. There is good representation on all meetings and sub groups of the Board.

Communications on safeguarding matters are shared with colleagues and schools and the Board website is promoted widely to enable increased participation. An annual Student Conference is held during Safeguarding/Anti-bullying Week with pupils to ensure increased understanding on matters such as County Lines, Racism, Bullying, Healthy Relationships etc. to enable learners to make more informed choices.

During the suspension of some Board activity due to Covid-19, MTCBC chaired Bronze Command ensuring safeguarding services across Merthyr remain co-ordinated.

MTCBC also contributes to the work of the Board in the following ways:

- Chairing the Board's Protocols & Procedures Group
- Leading and co-producing regional guidance
- Being Vice Chair for Adult MASH Quality Assurance & Performance
- Chairing a Child Practice Review
- Reviewer for an Adult Practice Review
- Panel member for a Domestic Homicide Review
- Supporting the development of the Suicide Review Group

MTCBC provides performance data and contributes to audit work as sub-group activity as required.

MTCBC contributes directly to updating and creating Adult, Children and Joint Safeguarding Board Policies. MTCBC also contributes to the facilitating of safeguarding training across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)

Children's Social Care continues to provide professional representation, consistent attendance and active contribution at the Board and all Board Sub-Groups and Task Groups. During the pandemic period BCBC continued to attend those groups which report to the Safeguarding Board as well as the additional meetings held as a result of the pandemic. Attendance has not been compromised as virtual opportunities have arisen and enable communication and participation to continue.

BCBC are committed to safeguarding at a senior management level through active contribution in the Regional Safeguarding Board, with our Director of Children's Social Care,

Head of Children and Adults Social Care in attendance along with the Group Manager for Safeguarding who chairs the Child & Adult Practice Review Subgroup and has responsibility for BCBC's Multi-agency safeguarding Hub (MASH).

This year, staff within the Educational Engagement Team (EET) made links with both regional and national Safeguarding in Education leads to work collaboratively on developing training, supporting with issues within safeguarding and education directorates and implementing/ reviewing local and national policies. This is then fed back into the CTMSB meetings as appropriate.

During the early part of the pandemic the BCBC Safeguarding Group Manager took responsibility for chairing the Bronze meetings.

BCBC Children's Social Care actively contribute to safeguarding processes including:

- PRUDiC
- Child/Adult Practice Reviews
- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Multi Agency Practitioner Forums
- Immediate Response Groups
- Suicide Review Group
- Case and Thematic Audits

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC)

RCTCBC endeavours to ensure appropriate representation, consistent attendance and active contribution at the Board and all Board Sub-Groups and Task Groups. During 2020/2021 we have tried to ensure that attendance at meetings has been minimally affected by staff absence and service pressures because of COVID 19.

There is a clear commitment to safeguarding at a senior management level through active contribution to the Regional Safeguarding Board, and our Director also chairs the Safeguarding Board. The Service Directors and Heads of Service also attend the Board and there is also representations on the Operational Committees.

During the early part of the pandemic, the RCT Service Director for Children's Services chaired the Silver Command meetings and the Head of Service for Safeguarding chaired the Bronze meetings.

The Head of Service for Safeguarding Children chairs the CQAP subgroup and the Head of Service for the Youth Offending Service chairs the Engagement Participation and Communication Sub group. We also provide the vice-chair for PPG.

Children's actively contributes to safeguarding processes including:

- PRUDiC
- Child/Adult Practice Reviews
- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Multi Agency Practitioner Forums
- Immediate Response Groups
- Suicide Review Group
- Case and Thematic Audits

Education and Inclusion Services have been heavily involved in the work of the Board including the sub-groups throughout the last year. Board meetings have been consistently attended by the Education and Inclusion Services Director and her nominated deputy when she has been unable to attend. Information has been shared as and when necessary with full participations in discussions of Board agenda items.

The pandemic, and the challenge this placed on Education, did make it difficult at times for officers to attend all sub-group meetings but best endeavors were made. In September 2020, the education representatives across the Board sub-groups were reallocated to take into consideration changes within roles and to ensure good attendance. A deputy was also named for all groups to ensure consistency in approach if the initial representative was unable to attend.

RCT Adult Services participated and contributed to all Board meetings during the year and attended the Bronze and Silver meetings, providing data to demonstrate our on-going safeguarding arrangements. We have an excellent track record in attendance at meetings and make a significant and consistent contribution to the work of the Board, including the provision of Panel members, Reviewers and Chairs for Practice Reviews and MAPFs.

South Wales Police

South Wales Police (SWP) has been fully committed in the work of the Board for 2020/2021. The demands placed upon them due to the pandemic and the new force structure required them to restructure roles and responsibilities quickly to adapt to the new demands.

SWP representatives on sub groups, and Board meetings can be generalised as an active participation role and support has been given to workstream leads through the completion of actions, reports, development of policy, and sharing of data to enhance the work around safeguarding practices of the board.

With regards attendance at the Board meetings this is reinforced from a senior management position and the data around attendance is reviewed regularly. Performance around police attendance for 2020-21 being what can be described as frequent; and any incidents of non-attendance by the SWP representative (or a deputy) is by exception due to operational necessity reasons, but updates are provided.

SWP made several contributions to Safeguarding Week for 2020, focused on learning for professionals in managing mental health issues to further promote learning in this subject area.

In addition given the new geographical area SWP has adopted to cover the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area a process of sharing best practice between MASH's has been undertaken and significant improvements have been made in several area of business through this learning processes, PPN demand and risk assessment is one such example increasing professionalism and risk management in domestic abuse.

Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust

The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) achieves the safeguarding objectives of each Regional Safeguarding Board by effectively working together to ensure good outcomes for people who have contact with their service within the Board Region. This has included

engagement with Child and Adult practice reviews, Domestic Homicide Reviews and all Safeguarding strategy meetings associated with the protection of individuals and their families within the Safeguarding Board Region. Providing information for Immediate Resource Group meetings, PRUDiCs and members of board sub groups.

The COVID 19 period has resulted in national recognition of increased vulnerability for Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse. The pandemic has impacted the safeguarding team within WAST in all activities. Particularly responsibility in working with partner agencies and ensuring that staff were appropriately trained to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. WAST has continued to uphold the strategic requirements placed upon the organisation despite many of the safeguarding team being re-deployed to support operational and IPC demands during the initial COVID response.

WAST analysis of this impact clearly demonstrates a significant increase in safeguarding activity within our organisation. This is illustrated in an increase of almost 50% in concerns identified and reported to Local Authority by WAST staff. Their safeguarding responsibilities have been supported by the recently embedded digital reporting system (Doc works). This system will enable them to provide regionally specific safeguarding data monthly as well as annually to the Safeguarding Board in 2022.

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

Health representation has been present at all of the partnership groups and have participated in the work of the Board. During the pandemic health worked closely with their strategic partners in preventing and protecting the community. The Bronze, Silver and Gold command meetings provided an excellent platform for partners to share learning and practice. In addition, to quickly devise plans to safeguard both children and adults at risk.

Health colleagues have taken on the role of panel members/reviewers for APR, CPR & DHR. The early learning identified at these reviews has been disseminated across agencies.

11. Managing our Resources

The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board uses the national funding formula to assess and identify annual financial contributions from statutory partner agencies.

This is calculated as follows:

Agency	% Split	% Split
Rhondda-Cynon-Taf CBC	60%	55%
Bridgend CBC		32%
Merthyr Tydfil CBC		13%
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB		25%
South Wales Police		10%
Probation Service		5%
Totals		100%

In 2020/2021 expenditure was as follows:

Staff	£228,928
Premises	£7,330
Other	£8,961

Training costs are not included as this sits outside the Board budget.

12. Other Board Activities

Adult Protection and Support Orders (APSOs)

The statutory guidance issued under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the arrangements for these civil orders to be used by a local authority to enable an authorised officer to speak in private with a person suspected of being an adult at risk.

The Board has ensured that there are 4 authorised officers in Cwm Taf Morgannwg who are appropriately trained and that a regional process has been put in place.

No orders were sought in Cwm Taf Morgannwg during 2020/2021.

Guidance and Advice received from the Welsh Ministers and/or the National Board

This year, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board has maintained stronger connections and worked very closely with Welsh Government and National Independent Safeguarding Board colleagues. This has involved responding quickly to guidance received from the Welsh Government and ensuring that this has been distributed and published promptly.

Throughout 2020/2021, the Board received regular updates from the designated link member of the NISB, which continues to be a standing agenda item at every Board meeting.

Section 137 requests for information

Section 137(1) of the Act provides a Safeguarding Board with the power to request specified information from a qualifying person or body provided that the purpose of the request is to enable or assist the Board to perform its functions under the Act.

In 2020/21 the Board did not use its Section 137 powers to access information.

Are You Concerned About Someone?

If you suspect that a **child or young person** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about children are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425006
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000
In Bridgend: 01656 642320

Opening Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

If you suspect that an **adult** is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed then you have a duty to report it immediately. All calls concerning worries about vulnerable adults at risk are treated seriously. Contact your local Safeguarding Team on the numbers provided below:

In Rhondda Cynon Taf: 01443 425003
In Merthyr Tydfil: 01685 725000
In Bridgend: 01656 642477

Opening Hours:

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 5.00pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.30pm

To contact Children or Adults Services outside office hours, at weekends and bank holidays, call:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg Emergency Duty Team on 01443 743665.

If you suspect that a child, young person or an adult is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police.

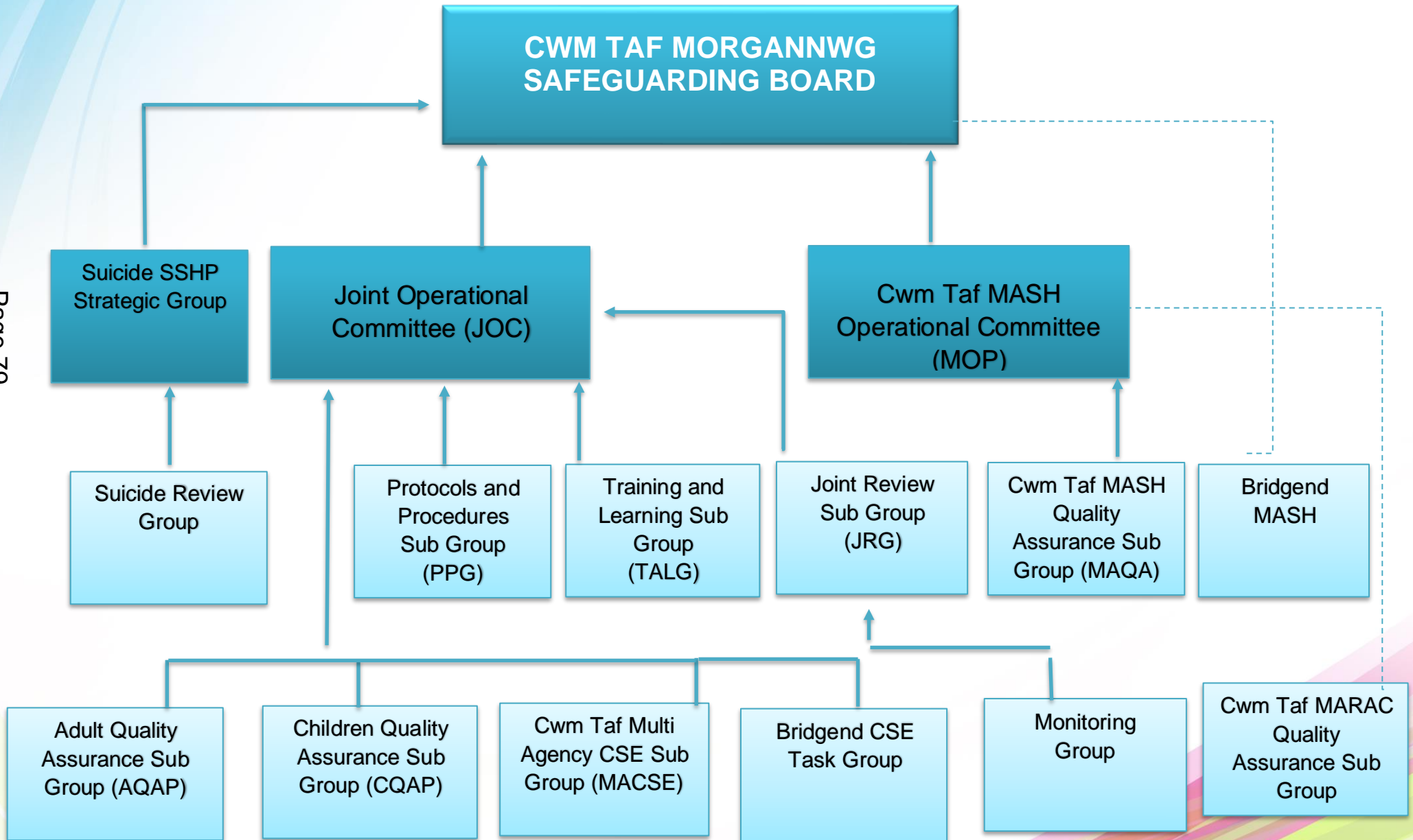
If you would like to report a non-urgent incident, or have a problem or general query, you can call 101, the 24 hour non-emergency number for the police. **Use 101 when the incident is less urgent than 999.**

APPENDIX 1 - BOARD MEMBERSHIP

NAME	TITLE	AGENCY
Paul Mee (Chair)	Director of Community and Children's Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Lisa Curtis-Jones (Vice Chair)	Chief Officer, Social Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Claire Marchant (Vice Chair)	Director of Social Services and Wellbeing	Bridgend County Borough Council
Cheryl Emery	Head of Public Protection	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jackie Neale	Adult Safeguarding Service Manager	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Neil Elliot	Service Director, Adult Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Julie Clark	Head of Safeguarding and Support (Children)	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Gaynor Davies	Director of Education and Lifelong Learning	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Annabel Lloyd	Service Director, Children Services	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cara Miles	Head of Legal - Community Care and Children	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Jon Eyre	Safeguarding Principal Manager	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Alyn Owen	Chief Officer, Community Regeneration	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Susan Walker	Chief Officer, Education	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Taryn Stephens	Head of Children Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Angela Edevane	Head of Adult Services	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Carys Kennedy	Head of Legal and Governance	Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Jacqueline Davies	Head of Adult Social Care	Bridgend County Borough Council
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care	Bridgend County Borough Council
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education and Family Services	Bridgend County Borough Council
Greg Dix	Director of Nursing, Midwifery & Patient Services	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Louise Mann	Assistant Director for Quality and Safety	Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Karen Thomas	Superintendent	South Wales Police
Sue Hurley/John Lane	Independent Protecting Vulnerable Person Manager	South Wales Police
Eirian Evans	Assistant Chief Officer	National Probation Service
Sharon Richards	Chief Officer	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Maria James	Third Sector Representative, Merthyr Tydfil	Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil
Lyndon Lewis	Head of Service	Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Virginia Hewitt	Designated Nurse	Public Health Wales
Lin Slater	NISB Representative	National Independent Safeguarding Board

APPENDIX 2 BOARD ORGANISATION CHART



Glossary of Terms

Adult Practice Review

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission an Adult Practice Review in cases where an adult at risk has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

Child Practice Review

The Regional Safeguarding Board must commission a Child Practice Review in cases where a child has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or sustained serious and permanent impairment of health.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Children Looked After

A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

Community Safety Partnership

Statutory partnership to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment.

County Lines

County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs.

Domestic Homicide Review

A Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) is a locally conducted multi-agency review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have,

resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by: a person to whom he or she was related, or with whom he or she was or had been in an intimate personal relationship; or, a member of the same household as himself or herself.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but there's no medical reason for this to be done.

Immediate Response Groups

A group which is convened to provide a rapid, multi-agency response to managing the consequences of a critical incidents, such as the unexpected death of an adult and is lead by the Police Superintendent (or a suitable deputy).

MARAC

A monthly risk management meeting where professionals share information on high risk cases of domestic violence and abuse and put in place a risk management plan.

Modern Slavery

The illegal exploitation of people for personal or commercial gain. It covers a wide range of abuse and exploitation including sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour, criminal exploitation and organ harvesting.

Monitoring Group

This group, in conjunction with the CTMSB's Joint Review Group, will ensure that the CTMSB discharges its functions in relation to Adult and Child Practice Reviews as set out in the statutory guidance.

Multi-Agency Practitioner Forum (MAPF)

Multi-agency professional forums are a mechanism for producing organisational learning, improving the quality of work with families and strengthening the ability of services to keep children safe. They utilise case information, findings from child protection audits, inspections and reviews to develop and disseminate learning to improve local knowledge and practice and to inform the Board's future audit and training priorities.

PPE

Personal Protective Equipment

Public Protection Notice (PPN)

The forms have two main purposes. One is for police officers to make referrals to partner agencies when they have concerns about vulnerable people. The PPN is also used as a risk assessment tool for victims of domestic abuse and stalking and harassment (DASH).

Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding and supporting those vulnerable to radicalisation

PRUDiC

This procedure sets a minimum standard for a response to unexpected deaths in infancy and childhood. It describes the process of communication, collaborative action and information sharing following the unexpected death of a child.

Public Service Board

Improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area by strengthening joint working across all public services in Wales www.ourcwmtaf.wales

Quality Assurance and Performance Groups

Two separate groups for adults and children whose objectives are to monitor the effectiveness of agencies' practice within the processes of safeguarding and encourage high standards of practice by all those involved in safeguarding work, promoting agency and individual accountability through the monitoring and evaluation of performance.

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act is the law for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support.

Strategy Meeting

A meeting for social workers and other professionals to plan what they are going to do next about a case.

Test, Trace, Protect

A government-funded service in Wales, first published on 13 May 2020 by the Welsh Government to track and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 focusses on the prevention of these issues, the protection of victims and support for those affected by such issues.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH OCTOBER 2021

REPRESENTATIONS, COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, CLLR HOPKINS and CLLR LEYSHON

**Author: Jayne Thomas, Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints
Manager. Tel. No. 01443 425449**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021.
- 1.2 The report contains information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for Adults & Children's Social Services, together with achievements for 2020/21 and future developments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree the contents of the Social Services Annual Complaints report (attached as Appendix 1).
- 2.2 Note the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is a requirement of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014 that the Local Authority produce an annual report and that the report is considered by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Social Services has a statutory requirement to operate a complaints procedure that follows the legislative requirements of the regulations specified above. The guidance requires an annual report to be produced relating to the operation of the complaints procedure.

4.2 The Social Services complaints procedure is available to:

- All service users or their representatives
- Any child with a care and support plan
- A parent of a child with a care and support plan.
- A local authority foster parent
- A person who the Authority consider to have sufficient interest in the child's/adult's welfare

It is based upon the principle that people have a right to complain; to have the complaint examined and resolved as quickly as possible.

4.3 The complaints process was amended in August 2014 in line with the new Complaints Regulations and Guidance issued by the Welsh Government and became a two stage process:

Stage One: Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage of the process is to resolve the complaint by means of discussion and problem solving, whilst adhering to the 15 working days response time that has been imposed under the Regulations.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by the investigating officer appointed to the case. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 25 working days.

4.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two Investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Report is available in Welsh

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 This report includes feedback from service users directly in the form of compliments and complaints.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report and the work of the Representation and Complaints Unit services is managed within the existing allocated budget

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The work of the Complaints and Representation Unit is underpinned by the requirements of the Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014. This report has been produced in line with the legislative requirements contained within with in those procedures

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

10.1 The function of the Complaints and Representations Team and the collation of service user feedback through both complaints and compliments provide a quality assurance mechanism by which Adults and Children's Services can measure their performance against the corporate priorities to:

- Improve the experience of those using health and social care services;
- Engage with and use Customer Feedback to redesign our services.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Social Services continue to provide a robust and effective complaints procedure in line with the statutory requirements. Complaints are seen as providing valuable customer feedback, with the information from complaints providing valuable lessons learnt when planning and improving services to meet the needs of our customers.

11.2 Further details and analysis about the number and nature of complaints and compliments for 2020/21 and the service areas where these have been made are provided in Appendix 1. The annual report also outlines some of the achievements and developments undertaken by the Complaints Team during the year.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4TH OCTOBER 2021

**REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES
ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, CLLR HOPKINS
and CLLR LEYSHON**

Background Papers

Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations Procedure 2014

[Social services complaints procedure | GOV.WALES](#)

**Officer to contact: Jayne Thomas, Customer Feedback, Engagement and
Improvement Manager. Tel. No. 01443 425449**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

SOCIAL SERVICES

REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

ANNUAL REPORT

2020/21



1. INTRODUCTION

It is a statutory requirement for local authorities to have in place a representations and complaints procedure for Social Services.

Each local authority is required to produce an annual report concerning the operation of its representation and complaints procedure.

This annual report provides information about the operation of the Social Services Representation and Complaints Procedure between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2021. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and also provides details of the activities undertaken by the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team during that period to develop the representation and complaints service.

2. BACKGROUND

Social Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf adopts a positive attitude towards complaints and views them as a valuable form of feedback, which assists in the development and improvement of services. Complaints also provide an opportunity to learn lessons where a service has fallen short of an expected standard.

The representation and complaints procedure is widely publicised generally and specifically to people who use our services and provides them with an opportunity to:

- ❖ Voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied in order that the issue can be rectified to their satisfaction, wherever possible
- ❖ Make compliments
- ❖ Suggest improvements
- ❖ Challenge decisions

The aim is for our representation and complaints procedure to secure a better service for all the people using social care services and is underpinned by the following key principles:

- ❖ Commitment to providing quality services
- ❖ Accessible and supportive to those with particular needs
- ❖ Prompt and responsive with resolution at the earliest possible opportunity
- ❖ Strong problem solving element
- ❖ Operated without prejudice or discrimination
- ❖ Adheres to the principle of equal opportunity

The representation and complaints procedure also provides an opportunity for service users to address concerns in relation to independent sector providers

where they remain dissatisfied following implementation of the agencies own internal complaints procedures.

The Social Services complaints process has two stages:

Stage One: Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage of the process is to resolve the complaint by means of discussion and problem solving. The complainant will be offered a discussion about the issues they have raised and this can either be done by telephone or face to face in an attempt to resolve the issues. This must be done within 10 working days of the receipt of the complaint. Following this discussion and any further investigation that is necessary, a written response will be provided within 5 working days.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by an independent investigating officer. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 25 working days.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

3. STAGE 1 'INFORMAL' COMPLAINTS

In 2020/21 there were a total of 54 recorded complaints during the year, compared with 112 in the previous year. This represents a significant decrease across both Adults and Children's Services and can be attributed to a variety of factors including the impact of the Covid pandemic, accessibility to the Council during changes to working arrangements and an increase in the number of low level contacts deemed not to be complaints.

The low level of complaints is consistent with the drop in overall contacts made to the Council for this period.

Adult Services received 25 Stage 1 complaints compared to 54 in 2019/20 and Children Services received 29 compared to 58 in 2019/20.

Of the Stage 1 complaints that were received, only 33% were responded to within statutory timescales which is a decrease from 42.5% in 2019/20. Again, this can be attributed to the disruption caused by Covid and the priorities for both service areas to continue providing direct care and support. From the outset complainants were made aware that complaint responses may be subject to delays and In some cases, with the agreement of the complainant, complaints were put on hold to relieve the pressure on managers.

Ongoing support to teams from the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team has been provided throughout this period and where possible the team have sought to resolve low level complaints and queries outside of the complaints process. This is reflected in the number of contacts recorded (143) with only 2 contacts progressing to a Stage 1 complaint.

Adult Services

25 complaints were received for Adult Services during the year. This represents an 54% decrease on the total amount received in 2019/20

Of the complaints made about Adult Services, 8% (2) were made by the service users themselves and 92% (23) were made by their representatives e.g. carers, family members and advocates. These figures highlight the reliance of many adults on their family and carers to raise issues on their behalf and is consistent with comments received as part of the Social Services Performance Measures Survey undertaken in September 2020

Details of complaints received recorded by Service Area are summarised in Table 1 and compares them with the previous year.

Table 1: Summary of complaints by Service Area

Service Area	2019/20	2020/21
Long Term Assessment - Locality Teams	18	10
Short Term Intervention Support @ Home	4	1
Short Term Intervention - SPA	1	1
Short Term Intervention ACE	2	0
Mental Health	2	2
Finance	1	2
Residential Care RCT	9	2
Independent Sector Residential Care	0	0
Independent Sector Domiciliary Care	5	4
Emergency Duty Team	1	0
Independent Living Service	1	0
Short Term Intervention – Short Term Care Management	1	0
Short Term Intervention – Stay Well@Home	1	0
Community Reviewing Team	1	1
Day Services	2	0
Safeguarding	1	1
Supported Living	2	0
Vision Products	1	0
Complex Learning Difficulty Team	0	1
Total	54	25

Table 2 sets out in more detail what the complaints were about and compares them with the previous year.

Table 2: Summary of what complaints were about

Nature of Complaint	2019/20	2020/21
Failure to provide a service	5	4
Financial issues	1	2
Lack of information/communication	4	5
Staff issues	16	5
Quality of care	16	3
Quality of service	12	6
Total	54	25

Complaints recorded have decreased with consistent figures across the range of complaint categories. Given the nature of the year, the low complaints figures and the challenges faced by frontline services there are no themes identified and both service areas should be recognized and applauded for quickly adapting the way they delivered and continued to provide necessary services through what has been an unprecedented time.

Of the 25 Stage 1 complaints received for Adults Services, 23 were resolved locally, 1 progressed to Stage 2, 1 complaint required no further action.

Children's Services

29 Complaints about Children's Services were received during the year. This represents a 50% decrease compared to 2019/20 when 58 complaints were received. Of the complaints made about Childrens Services, 86% (25) were made by Parents/Carers/Representatives and 14% (4) were made by a Children's advocate on behalf of a child/young person.

Table 3 sets out the complaints received recorded by service area and compares them with the previous year.

Table 3: Summary of complaints by Service Area

Service area	2019/2020	2020/2021
Resilient Families	1	0
Miskin Project	1	0
Intensive Intervention	53	27
Fostering	1	0
16+ Team	0	1
Safeguarding and Support	2	0
UKICS	0	1
Total	58	29

Of the 29 complaints received 1 progressed to Stage 2 Complaints, 1 was not resolved, 1 required No Further Action and 1 was withdrawn.

Representations

There were 4 representations received from children or advocates in this reporting period.

Table 4: Summary of children and young people's representations

Nature of complaint	2019/2020	2020/2021
Contact Issues	0	1
Quality of Care	0	1
Care and Support	0	1
Quality of Service	0	1
Total	0	4

The Council commissions an Independent Advocacy Provider for children and young people in line with the requirements of the Social Services Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 and the National Approach to Advocacy. This involves all children over the age of 5yrs being offered the support of an advocate when they become a Child Looked After or subject to Safeguarding arrangements.

The Advocacy Service supports children and young people to have their say and effectively supports children and young people to raise any concerns about their care and support. It is positive to see representations by children and young people and that the complaints procedure is accessible to them.

Table 5 sets out the detail of complaints made by parents/carers and compares them with the previous year.

Table 5: Summary of complaints from Parents/Carers

Nature of complaint	2019/2020	2020/2121
Failure to provide a service	1	1
Lack of information/communication	14	7
Quality of Care/Service	14	4
Staff issues	27	12
Care and Support	2	0
Information Governance	2	1
Total	58	25

Whilst complaints in all categories have reduced staff issues remain the highest category of complaint along with lack of information/communication.

It is often the case that complaints relation to lack of information are resolved following a discussion and an explanation of the situation/process. It is noted that advocacy can and does assist in help parents to work through and understand statutory interventions and it may be beneficial for Children's Services to consider the use of parental advocacy in these situations.

4. CONTACTS AND CONCERNS

This year the Customer Feedback Team has again focused on attempting to resolve issues at source where this is considered appropriate and have worked collaboratively with managers across both services resulting in a reduction in complaints being passed to front line services.

In 2020/21 the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team dealt with a total of 143 contacts 2 of which progressed to Stage 1 complaints and 3 were withdrawn. 83 contacts were for adults services with 60 contacts being received for Children's Services.

The Team also received 9 concerns where the subject specified that they did not wish to make a complaint but where action was identified as necessary. These were recorded and passed to the relevant service area where they were successfully resolved.

5. STAGE 2 'FORMAL' COMPLAINTS

Overall, there were 6 Stage 2 complaints made during 2020/21, 5 of which progressed from Informal Complaints. The number of complaints received is an increase compared with the number of Stage 2 complaints for 2019/20.

Adult Services

There were 4 stage 2 complaints received for Adult Services – 3 of which progressed from Stage 1 Informal Complaint process.

Table 7: Summary of complaints made at Stage 2

Nature of complaint	2019/20	2020/21
Staff Issues	1	0
Failure to Provide a Service	0	1
Quality of Service	0	3
Quality of Care	1	0
Issues Around Adaptations (Vision Products)	1	0
Total	3	4

Children's Services

There were 2 Stage 2 complaints received relating to Children's Services, both of which progressed from unresolved complaints at Stage 1.

Table 8: Summary of complaints made at Stage 2

Nature of complaint	2019/20	2020/21
Quality of Service/Care	2	1
Contact Issues	1	0
Staff Issues	1	1
Total	4	2

6. OMBUDSMAN Enquiries/Complaints

In 2020/21, 8 complaints were made to the Public Services Ombudsman, 4 for Children's Services and 4 for Adults.

7 enquiries required no further action, information provided for 1 enquiry and awaiting response from Ombudsman.

LEARNING THE LESSONS

A number of recommendations for improvements have been made following complaints made at Stage 2 of the Complaints process. These improvements will be actioned and monitored through similar complaints findings in the future. Some areas where improvements have been identified include.

- Reminding staff of the Complaints guidance requirements to offer complainants a face to face meeting or telephone call as part of the Stage 1 resolution process.
- Quality checking Stage 1 response letters to ensure they are written sensitively and are not defensive in tone.
- Ensuring information provided for the provision of packages of care is accurate and no important information is omitted.
- To provide kinship carers that reside out of county with information about what support and allowances they are entitled to prior to and during the assessment process.
- Improving communication and working together arrangements with other Local Authorities in relation to responsibilities for Safeguarding and CLA.
- Reminder to staff that key decisions **must** be recorded on case records.

7. COMPLIMENTS

Compliments provide valuable information regarding the quality of services that are provided and identify where they are working well. The number of compliments recorded in 2020/21 was 90 compared to the 83 received in 2019/20

Adult Services

In 2020/21 there were 90 compliments made within Adult Services

Table 8 sets out the number of compliments recorded by Service Area.

Table 8: Summary of compliments received

Service areas	Number	Percentage
ACE	2	2.2%
Contact Centre	1	1.1%
Long Term Assessment - Locality Teams	12	13.3%
Intermediate Care/Reablement	7	7.7%
Carers Support Project	18	20%
Complaints Team	1	1.1%
Mobile Responder Team	2	2.2%
Independent Residential Care	1	1.1%
Single Point of Access	5	5.5%
Sensory Impairment	1	1.1%
Short Term Care Management	5	5.5%
Reviewing Team	3	3.3%
Hospital Discharge Team	2	2.0%
Supported Living	1	1.1%
Support@ Home H/C	29	32.2%
	90	

The following are examples of some of the compliments received for Adult Services during 2020/21.

- *Just a quick message to say thank you very much for my Boredom Buster pack , it was a lovely surprise and brought a smile to us in such unpredictable times,*
- *In regards to the look lively event "Very enjoyable lovely to see people to join in with."*
- *Lifestyle with Lynds "I feel that the walking helped me make a speedier recovery even though sometimes I didn't really feel like going out in the cold and wet. I think setting my own personal challenge made it more achievable"*
- *"I would like to say a very big thank you to you and all your staff for a fabulous afternoon tea. My mother who is 91 and I enjoyed it very much. As my mother has been isolating since March she has been feeling very down (haven't we all!), but your afternoon tea raised our spirits."*
- *"Thank - you for this morning we really enjoyed ourselves talking to people we don't know. If you get any cancellations to your groups let me know.*
- *Chatterbox - " Thanks again really enjoyed chatterbox again so nice to chat with you all".*
- *"I have been attending these for about 20 years . You get the chance to meet people who are going through the same as yourself, I have made a lot of friends during this time. Even through this pandemic via Zoom."*
- *"I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at the Carers Support Project for the amazing work they do, from organising fun family events to providing free counselling to carers. I have been lucky enough to benefit from many of these opportunities whilst caring for my Dad and will be forever grateful."*
- *Team Members, received compliment for efforts going through a case a really large case file and wanted to show her appreciation "I really do appreciate it Thank you so much, even In times like this you still managed to get into the office and get them for me and I am really grateful "*
- *"The son of the lifeline client could not praise them and thank them enough for the service and care they gave to his mother."*
- *"all staff were very good at their role, kind and helpful. NAME particularly liked Ross Mantle and Kathleen wanted his superiors to know, Mr Wiltshire and family will be sad to end"*
- *"All staff are very good" "absolutely wonderful excellent workers.*
- *"You were like an angel floating from the sky calling me at that time,, you are a natural at your job".*
- *"We as a family were very glad for your visit which was very helpful and informative".*
- *Son on SU emailed in and wanted to thank Staff member and comment on how "lovely , kind and sympathetic".*
- *Email from son and daughter of SU (dec) giving compliment to SW for her sympathy, empathy and sensitivity during her involvement with father. Emma*

was always efficient and accessible in carrying out her role and never let us down

- *Representative of SU giving thanks and praise to SW who praises his efforts as having gone above and beyond the call of duty"*
- *"he is absolutely delighted with the attention he and his wife received, the prompt manner in which work was undertaken and arrangements were made, saying Rebecca got everything done in short order even though there was a lot to deal with and going on. Paul felt he would like to pass that message on to yourself as her manager."*
- *"I am just writing to say a big thank you once again for all you have done for me this year, it really is and was appreciated so much to have your help, support and friendship"*
- *Daughter wanted to give her thanks to SW as he expressed "empathy, understanding, care, concern and sensitivity".*
- *"I'll always be grateful and wanted to take this opportunity to thank you from the bottom of my heart . You make such a difference in what you do and I wish you all the very best in your new role . "*
- *Email received from SU in regards to his uncle. " I would like to express my thanks and gratitude for the extraordinary help and support we have received from one of your SW".*
- *Son of SU " We are sure that she died as she lived with deep faith, hope and courage, enveloped by the care that you magnificent people selflessly offered her. Thank you for all that you have done, you have done well. Our society must repay the debt of gratitude that we all owe to you who are selflessly providing such care"*
- *"Responders attended a call today with NAME. Family rang back to lifeline after staff left to say how professional the girls were and the response time was great. They wanted to say they thought the service was excellent."*
- *Two mobile responders have been thanked when life line was activated. Wife wanted to thank them for the professional care they had given.*
- *Letter of thanks from daughter of resident at Penrhos for the care and support provided to mother before her passing at home due to Covid 19*
- *In regards to ear buds "A huge thank you for whoever dropped these off for my mother... Very kind and we are very grateful. "*
- *Thank you for prompt response and reassurance given to SU. "A very nice man" called to see them and left telephone numbers he can contact for help*
- *letter received by email from wife. "On behalf of our family I would wish to take the opportunity to express our gratitude and commend members of the Home Support Team who helped me to care for my husband during the last months of his life."*
- *SU while on the phone with SPA wanted to pass on her thanks for being so quick and responsive.*
- *"The Council should be very proud to have such wonderful staff working for the authority, I feel it's very important these staff are recognised for the outstanding care they provide. Throughout this difficult time they've been here, with a smile on their faces, I can't thank them enough"*

- *Daughter of SU telephoned team to "I am telephoning to say how thank full and grateful I am to the service and to all the staff involved in supporting my mother to return home from hospital so quickly which is what we all wanted. All the staff were so professional and caring and I thank them for this. My mother has had a wonderful service and I wished they could have continued caring for my mother forever"*
- *"NAME would like to pass on her best wishes to all the staff and she would like them to know they are on her mind and to stay safe"*
- *Daughter of SU would like to say "We would be in a very different position if we weren't having the carers going in every morning – they are a godsend and are absolutely fantastic – I cannot praise the service and care they provide enough."*
- *Son and daughter in law would like to say "We are so pleased with the care and consideration we were shown and also the respect given to our Dad at all times .
I would also like to say what a lovely caring person Ali is , keeping us informed at all times "*
- *Son of SU is wanting to highly praise staff for being very clear in all her communications and for being commendable in all her efforts during this stressful time*
- *Daughter of SU "She wanted to express her thanks to Teri and Donna for yesterday she said she couldn't be more grateful for the amazing kindness and quick thinking on the assessment, she is sending flowers and chocolates and cannot thank you enough"*
- *"Mr & Mrs Jones to compliment staff, said they were wonderful and felt the staff visiting them was the only thing keeping them going.
Also said Mel Phillips was a born carer, is always pleasant "*
- *"I have received the most superb professional support they have all been amazing"*
- *"all the team are very good but that Lesley was absolutely brilliant. Just wanted to pass this on."*
- *"I can only say how very lucky we were to have such a good team, I can't fault them - they were fabulous".*
- *"Thank you to all the carers who visited me in the last 6 weeks you really made me feel special".*
- *"The demands on staff to support children, young people and adults within caring services has probably never been greater. I just wanted to send to you and your staff sincere thanks for your service and wishes for good health in 2021."*
- *"I don't know how to thank the care staff who helped with my mums care and support, to say they were outstanding is an understatement, they showed their caring natures by talking to my mum even though she was just lying in bed with her eyes closed, the staff were very caring and gentle"*
- *"wanted me to pass on his appreciation for all your hard work to yourselves and towards the care staff for their caring natures and quality support towards his mother but also for his father. "*

- *Daughter wanted to praise RCT Staff for their excellent care and "They are prompt, polite, engaging, and humanise my father rather than treat him like a number, all of which is a godsend for my mother, who herself has recently been discharged from hospital after undergoing major heart surgery."*
- *Wife of SU sent a "big thank you card to the carers" that looked after her late husband.*
- *Service User send a card to carers who has been looking after her and mentioned that they "are a spirit to your service".*
- *Daughter wanted to let know what a wonderful team we have at RCT, she said that the staff called to the property were outstanding.*
- *Wanted to pass on to managers and staff that he is very grateful for all we have done for his mother and his words were Your all amazing Thank You*
- *"wanted to thank the carers for their help – she said the girls were marvellous and she would not have coped without their support."*
- *"wanted to pass on thanks to IC staff who supported NAME through illness"*
- *SU gave team a thank you cards and biscuits as she has now gained more independence*
- *Many thanks for all your hard work in running our trip to see Calendar Girls It was thoroughly enjoyable and greatly appreciated.*
- *SU and wife rang to pass on praise to Karen O'Sullivan and to note that nothing had been too much trouble and that "couldn't have gone through the last few months without her assistance".*
- *Locum SW wanted to "commend you and your staff for the level of care and kindness shown to NAME, she looks 100% better than when she lived at home and her family are delighted".*
- *Family of SU said that "RCT SS are outstanding. I am very pleased with the service we have received and I couldn't have asked for better".*
- *SU and Daughter would like to say how very grateful for all the "fantastic help and support that you give us. We are very lucky to have you".*
- *Family of SU would like thank Laura for her "Patience and professional support" "Has been much appreciated" and looking for SU best interests*
- *Catherine Nursing Directorate would like to give praise to Kevin on how beneficial his input is in a particular case and how good work is being overlooked.*
- *SW giving thanks to all staff at Pentre House for helping SU reach her goals*
- *Daughter of SU is would like to give the opportunity to say thank you to the team for all the kindness you have shown the family.*
- *SU and family are saying that they are "forever grateful" and "would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for the support, love and care you have given".*
- *Giving thanks to Ceri for her "professionalism and humanity" and for explaining the purpose of intermediate care "She demonstrated and she provided an excellent service".*

- *Daughter of SU phoned SPA and said that she was "so grateful that you took the time to listen" to her and what mattered. "You were so empathetic and that you really understood where she was coming from"*
- *Feedback given by telephone from husband of SU. Husband wanted to personally thank staff "for the support provided to his wife throughout a very difficult period. His wife has made real good progress and increased confidence".*
- *Son of SU giving thanks for the help and support given to him and also pass thanks on to all staff. He praised our hard work and was very appreciative of everything*
- *SU giving thanks for carer saying "she was absolutely outstanding, she was calm, kind, helpful, very caring and treated me as if I was her grandmother"*
- *"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all and the wonderful nightmobile staff that have supported my father for past 2 years to maintain his independence in his own home"*
- *Wish to compliment the entire team of service provided and swift response and for the understanding of needs.*
- *Daughter of SU gave positive feedback saying that they are "experts in their field". "I really wish my mother could stay with the RCT girls".*
- *Daughter of SU wanted to pass on her thanks for all the support received from services before his passing.*
- *Family of Margaret Thomas would like to give thanks for the care and support given to mother during her last weeks*
- *SU given lots of praise to IC for their services.*
- *SU giving thanks for services saying "Thank you so much for all your help, it's meant so much to me and Den and we are truly thankful*
- *Son of SU would like to congratulate OT on work that she has done being so professional, caring, attention to detail and for having manners which are "first class" and genuine.*
- *Sister of SU wanted to give thanks to Keith saying "Your visit has opened up her life she is back to writing and colouring, thank you so much it has made such a difference".*

Children's Services

The number of compliments recorded in 2020/21 was 92 compared to 59 received in 2019/20

Table 9 sets out the number of compliments recorded by Service Area.

Table 9: Summary of compliments received

Service areas	Number	Percentage
Miskin Project	14	15.2%
Disabled Children's Team	1	1.08%
Intensive Intervention	31	33.69%
Complaints	1	1.08%
Enquiry & Assessment	3	3.26%
Carers Support	21	22.8%
Fostering Support	10	10.8%
Looked After Children	9	9.78%
Independent Reviewing Team	2	2.17%
Total	92	

The following are examples of some of the compliments received for Children's Services during 2019/20:

- *Service user would like to pass on their appreciation and thanks and wishing them safe during these uncertain times.*
- *"I really wanted to highlight this as I know Carol has worked really hard with this family at a very complex time to clearly good effect. She deserves this praise. They note how very helpful she has been with many aspects of care planning and how much they know they can rely upon her."*
- *Independent Trainer would like to pass on his genuine affection for the privilege of delivering training to Children Services. Wanting to convey his best wishes, hopes and wellness during lockdown and hopes this results in greater appreciation"*
- *Supervisor of fostering would like to praise and pass on some positive feedback in respect of IRO. She is excellent at managing cases and she's is extremely organised and thorough as we all know it is not easy.*
- *SU has sent an email with many positive comments about a support worker that has really helped her including putting her on a course, giving advice and feels she has a more senior role with al always warm welcoming, supportive voice.*
- *Father passing on his praise for SW who he feels has been fair and really listened to their side of the story*
- *Family giving praise and thanks to SW saying that they have felt fully supported and confident in working with her and also how at ease the children are with her.*
- *The children are really grateful for the continuous support provided to keep the placement stable with everything that is going on.*
- *"Grace was very surprised and happy with her pack. She says thank you and that you were obviously very nice people for surprising her with it"*

- *"extremely grateful for the support you have continuously provided to keep the placement stable – especially during this lockdown as it's been very intense with so much going on! "*
- *Judge passing on his thanks to SW in particular Meg for their assessments. He was impressed with their clarity in such a complex case*
- *"I can't thank you enough for the impact you have made on our little family. I will be forever grateful"*
- *A series of compliments received for the team in regards to Life Journey books.*
- *Spoke very complimentary of the work and support that Thomas Bush is providing to the placement. Gill described Thomas as "marvellous" which I thought I would just share with yourself.*
- *Dad sent letter to TM thanking "each and every one of you for all of your support and guidance throughout this awful time, I can honestly say that I doubt my children would be as happy, safe and thriving".*
- *Team member wanted to give positive feedback on Support Worker as she is a "fantastic role model" and provides advice and guidance and nurture "that you would expect from a caring parent".*
- *"Just thought I would share and acknowledge the hard work and effort. I feel those in the front line role need to be acknowledged and even more so in the current climate."*
- *"Parents were very keen to highlight how hard Hannah has already been working with them all as a family. They noted she has only been involved for a few weeks, and acknowledge the last worker's input has led to much work now coming to fruition, although have felt so very well and so speedily supported by Hannah, that they wanted this information passed on."*
- *"Thank you from both of us- just what we needed for a boost" loved mine cheered me up loads" - compliment received on SM the Carers Boredom Packs.*
- *"Thank you so much for all of your support with this one, I honestly could not have done it without you and I really hope we have another case together in the future as you definitely make my life easier!"*
- *"Mr Green described sitting in a silent capacity as a privilege because of the way Jolene chaired a meeting where by the end two parties who were facing a difficult subject matter couldn't praise Jolene highly enough by the end. He praised Jolene's communication skills, lack of verbiage and ability to express herself and manage others."*
- *"I am writing to express my gratitude for the excellent care I have received from RCT. " SW has been praised for working with the family and having a positive impact.*
- *"I strongly feel that recognition should be acknowledged for both James and Linda as to how well they have both coped and managed over the past few months" IRO wanted the team to know how well SU and foster carer have coped during these hard times.*
- *Child wanted to let the team know how brilliant her foster carers are "This family is amazing. I love Paul, Karen & Lexi so much - so mam and dad you*

- don't ever have to be worried about me. I have no worries and am really happy"*
- *"Lynette has worked exceptionally hard under really complex circumstances, both in and out of lockdown, using her passionate commitment to good standards and levels of care of our children to good effect in demanding and driving positive change. "*
 - *The Parent Anxiety Workshop - "Thank you so much for afternoon tea. It's so beautiful, feeling so spoiled, thank you".*
 - *Team has received several facebook compliments regarding the afternoon tea. Many of who wanted thank them for all their hard work and mentioning how "delicious " it was.*
 - *Card sent to SW " I am sad that you are no longer going to be his SW but delighted that he no longer needs you! Thank you so much for all you have done to help."*
 - *TM wanted to highlight good practice for a worker mentioning that he is "Proactive", "Meaningful ", and really feels his work is really benefiting the child circumstances.*
 - *Mother emailed us to pass on her sincere thanks to SW "Lately, we've had a challenging time but NAME has helped myself as a parent by putting me at ease / supporting both our welfares."*
 - *Compliment from IRO, who would like to praise her for the work done on NAME's CP Plan. She seems to have a clear idea of where she was going with plan and worked well with professionals.*
 - *Health Visitor wanted to praise SW on how professional and well organised she is and deserves recognition for the good work and her commitment*
 - *TM wants to highlight good practise from SW's skills and making the plans in LAC's much easier and putting workers at ease.*
 - *IRO wants to compliment SW on how impressive she has been and making sure that the family has all the help that they need.*
 - *"Chloe presented her report to conference today and received many compliments from other workers about it. Her report was concise though also comprehensive, and encapsulated a thoroughly multi-agency assessment. Both the Police and Education felt the report provided all evidence necessary to almost exclusively determine that threshold was met without any other contributions, and considered that Chloe had already done their job for them in bringing so much information to Conference"*
 - *IRO wants to send a positive review on how well SW has been managing a case. SW has "Excellent communication" and is "Prompt".*
 - *In regards to monthly Cwtch Carers Group "Absolutely loved tonight. Guttled I haven't joined sooner".*
 - *TM wants to mention excellent practise and mentioned that the student "I have every confidence that you are going to make an excellent SW."*
 - *In regards to Active Together Session "This session was fabulous, especially as I taught Massage and Indian Head Massage for ALW & RCT for 10 years, before my daughter had the breakdown - the 'Ayurveda' connection was very refreshing and the session extremely relaxing"*

- *"Seeing the problems Foster carers in other LA's have had getting the vaccination, I think we have been incredibly lucky and very well looked after".*
- *IRO has passed on positive feedback from previous meeting and wants to thank NAME for her support with there being a clear view of a positive outcome.*
- *Positive feedback from foster carers following vaccine roll out and carers being prioritised in RCT. " Thank you RCT including Foster Carers in the Health and Social Care".*
- *IRO passing on positive feedback from RCPC "It was a pleasure working with Chris and Portia".*
- *IRO wanted share positive feedback following a conference yesterday to a member of staff in regards to a child been taken of the CP register and to thank her for her support.*
- *Family wanted to raise good practise in an initial conference regarding a SW "She is always contactable" and been "brilliant" to work with.*

8. WORK PROGRAMME, PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ❖ **Over the last year the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team have focused on making improvements to the Corporate Customer Feedback Scheme whilst ensuring the Statutory Complaint's process remains responsive to users and continues to provide support to managers and staff.**
- ❖ **The Customer Feedback and Engagement Team held the first learning event following a Stage 2 complaint and this model of learning from complaints will be utilized going forward with opportunity for service user feedback to also be included where appropriate.**
- ❖ **The Customer Feedback and Engagement Manager has liaised with the Complaint's Standards Authority (CSA) which has been developed as part of the Public Services Ombudsman's new powers and this has resulted in free complaints training for Council staff including managers across social care which will take place in 2020/21.**
- ❖ **In line with new legislation the Customer Feedback Team has submitted complaints data on a quarterly basis to the CSA.**
- ❖ **Early intervention by the Complaints Officers has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of Stage 1 complaints across both Adults and Children's Social Care.**
- ❖ **The Customer Feedback and Engagement Team has continued to provide support and advice to managers on complaints resulting in clear improvements on response writing for individual managers. In 2020/21 further focus on written responses will include a quality assurance process to target individual training needs of managers in complaints handling as well as working to improve response timescales.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4th OCTOBER 2021

FRONTLINE SERVICES; HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND STRATEGIC PROJECTS SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, PROSPERITY, DEVELOPMENT & FRONTLINE SERVICES

**Author: Roger Waters, Service Director Frontline Services.
Tel 01443 494702**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Further to the 21st September 2021 Cabinet approval of an additional £1.5M of capital funding for highway maintenance in 2021/22, and subject to positive consideration by Council on 29th September; this report sets out the detailed capital programme for the additional funding allocated to maintaining our highways and transportation network.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within this report.
- 2.2 Note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital programme and delegate authority to the Group Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance and Digital Services, to extend activity to deliver additional projects during the financial year where capacity exists for accelerated delivery in accordance with the purpose of the wider programme, or to suspend programmes/projects and reallocate funding to optimise delivery.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report has been developed to identify commitments for the additional £1.5m RCT capital funding. The programme is impacted by a number of external factors that cannot be fully assessed at this time and this relates to both physical issues and funding.
- 3.2 COVID19 and Brexit will continue to impact on our ability to deliver projects and programmes. Construction activity has continued to be sanctioned by

Government and has evolved and adapted in the face of social distancing challenges. Supply chain issues and workforce availability are unpredictable. Despite these challenges, good progress has been made through 2021/22.

- 3.3 Projects will again be reviewed on a case-by-case basis around deliverability and risk; flexibility to suspend individual projects and commit resources to other projects within a programme will be key.
- 3.4 The 2021/22 programme included significant flexibility to switch resources and this has enabled the Council to continue to deliver significant infrastructure improvements against the backdrop of uncertainty. Continued flexibility within the envelope of pre-approved schemes enables resources to be re-aligned to maximise opportunities to deliver projects and draw down grants in the best interests of RCT.

This report considers the detail against the specific £1.5M capital allocations of in favour of Highways Technical Services to maintain the highways and transportation network. This investment will continue to assist the Council to safeguard the long-term integrity of the highways and transportation network and to enhance the network to deal with travel demands.

4. SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

4.1 Highways Improvements

- 4.1.1 The Highways Network represents the most significant asset of the Council, valued in excess of £3.4Bn and comprises of carriageways, footways, structures (bridges, retaining walls, culverts, etc.), street lighting, traffic signals and signs, safety barriers, highway drainage, etc.
- 4.1.2 The network has now benefitted from ten years of enhanced levels of investment and this critically important additional funding will continue into 2022/23, improving and protecting the fabric of the highways network and dealing with the impact of winter weather conditions.
- 4.1.3 **Carriageways;** A pool of schemes has been previously approved and a further £1.304M proposed schemes to be added to this pool are listed in Appendix 1. The actual schemes to be implemented in 2021/22 will be drawn from the approved pool based on officer prioritisation and deliverability constraints. These identified schemes will be supplemented by £0.100M to carry out drainage improvements to be identified by officers throughout the period.
- 4.1.4 **Footways;** A pool of schemes has been previously approved and a further £0.096M proposed schemes to be added to this pool are listed in Appendix 1. The actual schemes to be implemented in 2021/22 will be drawn from this pool based on officer prioritisation and deliverability constraints.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Equality and Diversity issues will be considered as part of determining the final detail of the proposed schemes.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 There are no consultation requirements relating directly to the report but the proposed schemes will (or have) involve varying degrees of consultation, some of which will relate to statutory processes (such as Traffic Regulation Orders).

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The funding allocation to support schemes contained within this report was approved by Cabinet on 21st September 2021. Council will consider this funding allocation on 29th September. Subject to approval by Council, this report will be considered by Cabinet on 4th October 2021. At the time of writing and publishing this report, the outcome of Council in confirming this allocation of funding is not known.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 There are no legal implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report.

9. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 9.1 This investment programme supports the Council's Corporate Plan Priority 'Places – Where people are proud to live, work and play'.
- 9.2 The programme deals with the maintenance of highways and transportation assets in order to meet travel demand for the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors to RCT.
- 9.3 The programme also seeks to reduce flood risk and insulate communities from the damaging impacts of climate change and more frequent extreme weather events.
- 9.4 The programme supports the Well-Being goals fostering prosperity and resilience with inclusive and sustainable transport options benefitting from improvements to the fabric of the transportation network, which in turn supports more cohesive and vibrant communities.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The above programme continues the enhanced levels of investment under the RCTInvest initiative, delivering sustained improvements to the resilience and

durability of our highways and transportation infrastructure, promoting sustainable transport opportunities and network efficiency.

10.2 Consequently, Frontline Services will coordinate and deliver significant investment in a number of important areas during 2021/22 and the proposed programme is accordingly recommended for approval.

10.3 RCT is one of the few Councils that has continues to make meaningful and significant investments in its highway network. The table below demonstrates the level of progress that has been made.

Indicator	2010/11 Indicator	2020/21 Indicator
THS011a – percentage of A class roads requiring maintenance	16.2%	4.6%
THS011b – percentage of B class roads requiring maintenance	15.2%	6.0%
THS011c – percentage of C class roads requiring maintenance	15.3%	3.4%
THS012 – percentage of all classified roads requiring maintenance	15.7%	4.7%

10.4 The Council, in common with all LAs across the UK faces significant challenges in maintaining this enormous and complex asset. It is encouraging that WG has recognised these challenges and continued to support the Local Government Public Highways Refurbishment Grant across Wales. The indicators above are directly impacted by the levels of funding available to maintain the asset. Whilst there is clearly a level of funding required in maintaining asset condition in a steady state, reducing funding below an optimum level creates greater challenges for the future. The ongoing level of investment respects that principle and should continue to see the highway network in RCT improving in comparison with other local authorities.

Appendix 1

Additional schemes for Inclusion in Carriageway Works Pool

Street Name	Town	Treatment	Budget (£)
Tregwylm	Cwmbach	Traditional	48,000
Llwydcoed Hill	Llwydcoed	Traditional	25,000
Arfryn	Penywaun	Traditional	43,000
Corbett Street	Treherbert	Traditional	26,000
Troedyrhiw Terrace	Treorchy	Traditional	18,000
Moyle Trip Terrace	Pentre	Traditional	33,000
Rhys Street	Trealaw	Traditional	45,000
James St	Penygraig	Traditional	19,000
Main Road	Clydach Vale	Traditional	43,000
Wern Street	Clydach Vale	Traditional	24,000
Smilog Lane	Talbot Green	Traditional	32,000
Brynna Road	Brynna	Traditional	46,000
New Road A473	Llanharan	Traditional	28,000
Heol y Mynach	Ynysybwl	Traditional	48,000
Ynysmaerdy R/A and link	Ynysmaerdy	Traditional	15,000
Fair View	Gilfach Goch	Traditional	61,000
A4119 Junction Gelli Road	Tonypandy	Traditional	39,000
Greenfield Avenue	Glyncoch	Traditional	33,000
Brynteg Lane	Beddau	Traditional	33,000
Crown Terrace	Ynyswen	Traditional	22,000
Egypt Street	Trealaw	Traditional	32,000
Brook Street	Cymmer	Traditional	33,000
Avondale Court	Cymmer	Traditional	31,000
Glasfryn	Cwmdare	Traditional	43,000
Tudor Terrace	Trecynon	Traditional	38,000
Dumfries Street	Aberdare	Traditional	44,000
Morgan Row	Cwmbach	Traditional	13,000
Aberffrwyd Road	Mountain Ash	Traditional	17,000
Campbell Terrace	Mountain Ash	Traditional	15,000
Park St	Abercynon	Traditional	21,000
Aberdare Road	Abercynon	Traditional	32,000
William St	Abercynon	Traditional	23,000
New St	Abercynon	Traditional	17,000
Cross Street	Cilfynydd	Traditional	38,000
Thurston Road	Trallwn	Traditional	36,000
Bryn Eirw	Trehafod	Traditional	17,000
Park St	Treforest	Traditional	17,000
Maes yr Awel	Rhydyfelin	Traditional	24,000

Street Name	Town	Treatment	Budget (£)
Brynfab Road	Rhydyfelin	Traditional	22,000
King St	Taffs Well	Traditional	21,000
Castle St	Taffs Well	Traditional	14,000
Fairmound Place	Tonteg	Traditional	23,000
Miskin Estate R/A's	Pontyclun	Traditional	36,000
Rhondda Terrace	Ferndale	Traditional	16,000
Emergency Repairs	various	As appropriate	50,000
Drainage improvements	various	Drainage works	50,000
Total			1,404,000

Additional schemes for Inclusion in Footway Works Pool

Street Name	Town	Treatment	Budget (£)
Tregwilym	Cwmbach	Footway Renewal	31,000
Penderyn	Penderyn	Footway Renewal	15,000
Gilfach Goch Access	Gilfach Goch	Footway Renewal	15,000
Heath Terrace	Ynyshir	Footway Renewal	35,000
Total			96,000



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

4th OCTOBER 2021

IMPROVING THE COUNCIL'S RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY.

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES RICHARD EVANS
& SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS
CHRISTIAN HANAGAN IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET'S ARMED
FORCES CHAMPION (COUNCILLOR MAUREEN WEBBER)**

Author(s): Peter Cushion & Chris Davies

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with a number of options that could improve the Council's recruitment process, so as to make it easier for the Armed Forces Community and veterans to overcome barriers to civilian employment.
- 1.2 The main proposal is the introduction of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Armed Forces service leavers, reservists and veterans if they meet the vacancy essential criteria.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note and agree to the implementation of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for service leavers, veterans and reservists.
- 2.2 Agree that the Council works with the Career Transition Partnership, a no cost recruitment service for organisations seeking highly motivated and experienced veterans, who are leaving the Armed Forces.
- 2.3 Agree that the Council works with Forces Families Jobs, a no cost recruitment service supporting members of the Armed Forces Community into employment.

- 2.4 Agree to include a strap line on job advertisements welcoming applications from the ex-forces community.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The scheme would benefit veterans and armed forces leavers by helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to reduce the potential health and wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment.
- 3.2 The Council would benefit from a wider selection of candidates who meet the essential criteria and who may have a large number of transferrable skills.
- 3.3 It would further demonstrate the Council's support for the Armed Forces Community and honour the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant to which RCTCBC is a signatory.
- 3.4 The Council would also be able to demonstrate its continuing commitment to the Armed Forces Community when reapplying for the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award in 2022. Though not an essential requirement, the implementation of the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for the Armed Forces Community is seen as an important supportive measure.
- 3.5 The other recruitment options proposed would ensure that Council jobs are promoted in the right places to encourage applications from the armed forces community and veterans.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Armed Forces Covenant was enshrined in law in the Armed Forces Act 2011 and ensures that members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged as a result of their service in accessing Government and commercial services. Special consideration is also appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and bereaved. The Covenant applies to serving and past Armed Forces community members and their families.
- 4.2 The Armed Forces community is defined, for the purposes of the Armed Forces Covenant, as including all those towards whom the Nation has a moral obligation due to service in HM Armed Forces i.e. serving Regular and Reserve personnel, veterans, and their families.

The Current position

- 4.3 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council was proud to be one of the first Local Authorities in Wales to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant in 2012. The Council has a proud record of valuing its armed services, both past and present, and the commitment to the Covenant significantly takes forward the Council's, and the County Borough's, objectives to support our Armed Forces Community. As a local authority we have used Covenant funding to establish a successful Veteran Advice Service.
- 4.4 The Veteran Advice service provides free, impartial, dedicated information, advice and support to members of the Armed Forces Community within Rhondda Cynon Taf. The service covers a range of areas, including Benefits, Adult Social Care, Finances, Employment and Housing and has provided advice and support to over 600 Veterans in the community.

Guaranteed Interview Scheme

- 4.5 The majority of Service leavers may settle back into civilian life effectively, using the wide variety of skills developed during their time in the Armed Forces to gain meaningful employment and contribute to their communities. However, there are those that will need extra support.
- 4.6 Veterans are typically resilient and possess many valuable transferable skills including effective communication and problem solving. A forces career promotes teamwork at all levels, and management and leadership potential is developed throughout. The Council could benefit from these skills in the future development of a suitably skilled workforce.
- 4.7 The introduction of a guaranteed interview scheme along with the other options identified below, may go some way to enabling veterans to overcome any barriers to finding civilian employment and help reduce any negative impacts of potential long-term unemployment.
- 4.8 A guaranteed interview scheme if implemented would provide the guarantee of an interview to those who meet the essential criteria set out in any job pack. It would not however, guarantee employment, as selection procedures would ensure the best candidate for the job is appointed.
- 4.9 Other employers are adopting the Guaranteed Interview Scheme across Wales, including Council local Authorities such as Torfaen County Borough Council and Newport City Council, who have adopted the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, with the Vale of Glamorgan in the

process of implementation. Many local authorities in England have successfully adopted the scheme including Buckinghamshire, Cumbria and Lancashire County Councils.

The Defence Employment Recognition Scheme

- 4.10 The Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) comprises of Bronze, Silver and Gold awards for employers (including local authorities) that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the Armed Forces Community, and inspire others to do the same. RCTCBC are currently holding the Gold Award.
- 4.11 Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is proud to hold the Gold Employer recognition award and have employed a dedicated Armed Forces Covenant Liaison officer to ensure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged in any way by their service. The Council provides Covenant awareness sessions to council staff, charities and external organisations and work closely with Armed Forces partners, neighbouring authorities, charities and Veteran groups.
- 4.12 A supportive measure of the Gold award, although not an essential requirement, is to implement the Guaranteed Interview Scheme for the Armed Forces Community. RCTCBC will submit a renewal application for the Gold Award in 2022.

Other Options

- 4.13 A number of additional actions can be implemented by the Council to help better publicise Council jobs to the armed forces community and veterans, with the following suggested options, also helping the council towards reapplying for the Employer Recognition Scheme Gold award in 2022.
- 4.14 The Council could work with the Career Transition Partnership www.ctp.org.uk a no cost recruitment service for organisations seeking highly motivated and experienced veterans, who are leaving the Armed Forces. Resettlement is a Service Leavers responsibility, but the CTP provides a framework and support to all service leavers. The CTP also have an extensive job board, RightJob with many Forces Friendly employers exclusively for use by Service leavers. To date, the CTP have assisted over 235,000 Service leavers with the transition to civilian life and supported thousands of organisations looking to employ ex-Service personnel.
- 4.15 In addition to the above it is recommended that the Council works with Forces Families Jobs www.forcesfamiliesjobs.co.uk a no cost recruitment service supporting members of the Armed Forces

Community into employment. Forces Families Jobs is the go-to place for training and employment for family members of currently serving UK military personnel. It allows people to find organisations who are forces family friendly and that employers have signed the Armed Forces Covenant or are able to demonstrate their commitment to the Armed Forces.

- 4.16 The final option for consideration is the addition of a strap line on job advertisements welcoming applications for those from the armed forces community. It is proposed that the following paragraph is inserted into a revised Recruitment and Selection Procedure

'In support of the Council's voluntary pledge to support the Armed Forces, the recruiter must always be prepared to ensure that applicants who have identified themselves as members of the Armed Forces including Service Leavers, Veterans and Reservists and who meet the essential criteria of the person specification, are offered an interview.'

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The Council as an equal opportunities employer positively encourages a diverse workforce from all sections of the community. A screening EIA has been developed and established some potential negative impacts of the proposal, however these can be mitigated against in the wider recruitment strategy.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows -

There would be a positive outcome as the proposal could increase the number of Welsh speaking Veterans employed by the Council leading to a more diverse workforce.

There would be a positive outcome as the proposal would allow an opportunity to promote the Welsh Language and the promotion of armed forces work in Welsh. The experience and knowledge Welsh speaking Veterans could bring, will allow us to develop our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant amongst Welsh speakers, whatever role they are employed in.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 Trade Unions will need to be engaged in the development of any policy.

- 7.2 The draft report has been shared with the Armed Forces Working Group and feedback from the group will be provided in advance of the meeting.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There would be the ability to advertise vacant positions through the Career Transition (CTP) and Forces Family Jobs websites at no extra cost

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 The success of the ERS will help improve well-being and will therefore help to make a positive contribution to armed forces employees'. Implementing the Guaranteed Interview Scheme will contribute to the following well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016:
- A prosperous Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities
 - A Healthier Wales

The scheme is consistent with the five ways of working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The introduction of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme and other recruitment options suggested will strengthen the Council's standing amongst the general public, particularly the Armed Forces Community. It should increase recognition amongst the public about the actions the Council is taking as a signatory of our Armed Forces Covenant.
- 11.2 The recommendations if agreed will benefit the Council as an employer through a potential wider selection of candidates who meet the essential criteria and have a large number of transferrable skills. They will also benefit veterans and armed forces leavers by helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to

reduce the potential health and wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment.

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Chris Davies

Service Director: Christian Hanagan

Service Area: Democratic Services and Communication

Date: 21/7/21

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

Improving the Council’s recruitment process for the Armed Forces Community.

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The introduction of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme and other recruitment options will strengthen the Council’s standing amongst the Armed Forces Community. It should also increase recognition amongst the public about the actions the Council is taking as a signatory of our Armed Forces Covenant.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

In applying a policy which gives preferential treatment to a group wider than those with a protected characteristic, the Council must ensure that it continues to meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)	Positive	It will provide Opportunities for Veterans of working age to apply for Council jobs. Veterans who meet criteria will be guaranteed an interview. The Council would benefit from a wider selection of candidates who meet the essential criteria and who may have a large number of transferrable skills.	In 2011 there were approximately 50,000 working age veterans in Wales. In 2017, this figure was estimated at 58,000. Therefore, an increase of 8,000 working age veterans over six years There were estimated to be 3548 working age veterans in RCT (2011)

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
			Regional_Report_2019_Wales.pdf (covenantfund.org.uk)
Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i>	Positive	The proposal will allow veterans who may have had health impacts from service to be guaranteed an interview if they meet the criteria. Helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to reduce the potential health and wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment.	<p>Veterans have a significantly higher level of disability and health problems compared to the general population. Of particular note is the proportion of mental health disorders;</p> <p>In 2015/16, a total of 2,332 Regular Service Personnel were medically discharged from the UK Armed Forces. Working age veterans were nearly twice as likely to report a long term illness than the general population (24% vs 13%) and within unemployed veterans, the numbers reporting a long term health condition rose to 52%.</p> <p>deployment-to-employment.pdf (britishlegion.org.uk)</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		Veterans with disabilities will already be covered by the Disability Confident scheme, so will already get an interview if they meet the essential criteria. The risk of discrimination is low, as disabled Veterans would be offered the same interview rights as other disabled applicants.	Disability Confident Scheme
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Negative	<p>Veterans are more likely to be white. There is therefore a potential that the policy may conflict with the Council's Diverse recruitment policy, which is an action in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and HR delivery plan priority</p> <p>However, it could be argued that the risk is not significantly different to that currently posed from a majority White workforce and local population.</p> <p>There could also be a positive impact in that the proposal could help increase the levels of BAME employment from those leaving service, as they have lower rates of</p>	<p>Veterans are estimated to be predominantly white (99%), male (89%) and/or aged 65 and over (60%). Non Veterans 92% White (2017) and 47% male. Annual Population Survey 2017 Strategic Equality Plan HR Delivery Plan</p> <p>In Career Transition Partnership data released by the Ministry of Defence on UK Regular Service personnel employment outcomes; black, Asian and minority ethnic Service leavers had a significantly lower estimated employment rate than white Service leavers (68%</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		employment than white service leavers	vs 87% in 2013/14). Within the BAME community there are likely to be further differences in outcomes and need profiles between cultural backgrounds, however this data is currently unavailable.
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristi
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Negative	Veterans are predominatley male, which could lead to indirect discrimination on women as MoD data indicates working age veterans are more likely to be male. In mitigation, qualifying veterans will be added to the shortlist rather than replacing others who may otherwise have been shortlisted. The scheme is not a guarantee of a job and the application of the recruitment and selection policy will ensure that the best candidate for the job is	Veterans are estimated to be predominantly, male (89%) Non Veterans 47% male. In RCT 88% of referrals to the Veterans Advice service were from Males.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>appointed based on objective criteria.</p> <p>RCT also has a significantly higher proportion of female employees, particularly in lower graded jobs. Male Veteran applicants could therefore help address the gender balance.</p> <p>There is also a potential positive impact in that female veterans will get more opportunities to find civilian work.</p> <p>The British Armed Forces have to adapted recruitment strategies so as to eliminate stereotypes and attract more women into the armed forces, including for military duties. Therefore in the future the gender</p>	<p>Nearly 75% of Council staff are female - Press release RCT Council is Celebrating International Women's Day March 2021</p> <p>Female veterans and non-veterans are significantly more likely to be economically inactive, and less likely to be employed, than males. This finding was expected since females within the general UK population are more likely to be economically inactive due to family commitments than males (Annual Population Survey)</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		balance of the armed forces may change.	
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristi

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Positive	Will benefit the Council as an employer through a potential wider selection of candidates who meet the essential criteria and have a large number of transferrable skills. They will also benefit veterans by helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to reduce the potential health and	There are approximately 140,000 veterans living in Wales as a whole, with a working age population of approx. 58,000 veterans in Wales. There were estimated to be 3548 working age veterans in RCT (2011), 2.3% of the total population.

		wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment.	
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

All Positive and involves an addition to an existing policy, not a new policy in itself.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name: Chris Davies

Position: Consultation Manager

Date: 21/7/21

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a ‘strategic nature’ is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty](#) Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Low Income/Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Positive	There is some data to suggest that veterans may suffer financial hardship and by taking the scheme forward it would benefit veterans and armed forces leavers by helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to reduce the potential health and wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment	https://covenantfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Regional_Report_2019_Wales.pdf - page 4 Maps of financial hardship in Wales 42.2% of Service users self declared mental health and financial stress as key concerns. (Armed Forces Welsh Govt Annual Report (2019)).
<u>Low and / or No Wealth</u> <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Neutral	.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i></p>	Positive	<p>RCT has one of the highest levels of Veterans in receipt of military pension and compensations as a result off injury, ill health and death as a result of service in the UK Armed Forces. The scheme would benefit veterans and armed forces leavers by helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to reduce the potential health and wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment.</p> <p>There is also evidence that suggests there is, therefore, considerable concern that veterans</p>	<p>As at 31 March 2019, there were 19,173 military pension and compensations attributable to veterans in Wales. Amongst the Local Authority areas the Vale of Glamorgan stands out with 1,557 (8%), followed by Rhondda Cynon Taf with 1,258 (7%) and Flintshire with 1,249 (7%).</p> <p>https://covenantfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Regional_Report_2019_Wales.pdf - page 2</p> <p>In 2015/16, a total of 2,332 Regular Service Personnel were medically discharged from the UK Armed Forces.²¹ The Legion's Household survey further found that working age veterans were nearly twice as likely to report a long term</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		with health conditions, which may or may not be related to their Service, face significant and complex barriers to employment	illness than the general population (24% vs 13%) and within unemployed veterans, the numbers reporting a long term health condition rose to 52%.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<u>Area Deprivation</u> <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport))</i>	Neutral		There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Positive	<p>The scheme would benefit veterans and armed forces leavers by helping them overcome the barriers to employment post service and helping to reduce the potential health and wellbeing impacts of long-term unemployment.</p> <p>The majority of working age veterans go on to have diverse and successful careers after leaving service. However this is not the case for all UK Service leavers. Research undertaken by the British Legion shows that working age veterans in the UK are nearly twice as likely to be unemployed as their civilian contemporaries despite an ever growing marketplace of employment support and opportunities</p>	<p>Working age veterans (4%) were significantly less likely than working age non-veterans (21%) to visit a job centre when looking for work</p> <p>The Royal British Legion's Household Survey of the exService community estimated that there are approximately 120,000 veterans unemployed in the UK.</p>

		<p>As a result of their service, Veterans are less likely to have experience of the recruitment market. They may find it difficult to translate their skills and experience into marketable recruitment qualities. Experience of attending interviews as a result of the Scheme will enhance their application and interview techniques</p> <p>The proposal to link to the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) will help veterans find employment.</p>	<p>It is estimated that 86% of service leavers who used the CTP in 2018/19 were employed within six months of leaving the Armed Forces, with a further 8% either in full-time education, training or not actively looking for work</p>
<p>Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i></p>	Positive	<p>One identified issue is low literacy and numeracy skills that may create a barrier to employment post service.</p> <p>The combination of lower formal educational qualifications and vocational training that does not systematically extend relevant accreditation beyond the military is likely to contribute to veterans failing to find fulfilling vocations where they can utilise their knowledge and skills</p> <p>Civilians applying for jobs can be seen as having an advantage and the proposals can help to balance this up.</p>	<p>The Department for Education commissioned 2011 Wolf Report on Vocational Education places significant emphasis on the need for “English and Maths GCSE (at grades A*-C) , they are fundamental to young people’s employment and education prospects.” Those in Service are able to study to obtain GCSE and A-Level qualifications, or their equivalents. Indeed, resources are put into encouraging learning to take place. Yet how many do so is unclear and the commitments of</p>

			<p>Service life can make this difficult to undertake in practice. Unlike their civilian counterparts, Armed Forces trainees are exempt from having to complete 280 guided learning hours towards accredited qualifications, the minimum standard that now defines the statutory “duty to participate” in education up to the age of 18. This gives civilians a distinct advantage in the civilian jobs market over those leaving the Armed Forces</p>
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. **Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

Veterans are more likely to be white. There is therefore a potential that the policy may conflict with the Council's Diverse recruitment policy, which is an action in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan and HR delivery plan priority. However, it could be argued that the risk is not significantly different to that currently posed from a majority White workforce and local population. There could also be a positive impact in that the proposal could help increase the levels of BAME employment from those leaving service, as they have lower rates of employment than white service leavers.

Veterans are predominately male, which could lead to indirect discrimination against women applying for positions. In mitigation, qualifying veterans will be added to the shortlist rather than replacing others who may otherwise have been shortlisted. The scheme is not a guarantee of a job and the application of the recruitment and selection policy will ensure that the best candidate for the job is appointed based on objective criteria.

RCT also has a significantly higher proportion of female employees, particularly in lower graded jobs. Male Veteran applicants could therefore help address the gender balance.

There is also a potential positive impact in that female veterans will get more opportunities to find civilian work.

The Scheme will apply criteria that will create a longer shortlist of candidates than might otherwise arise. No candidate will be displaced from a shortlist by the application of the Scheme. The Scheme is not a guaranteed job for veterans; selection procedures will still ensure the best candidate for the job is appointed based on objective criteria

- 4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

N/A

- 4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

All Data sources are mentioned in the main template above

4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

The Scheme will be reviewed annually, to allow for an appropriate level of recruitment and equalities data to be collected via recruitment processes.

Monitor uptake and impact of the scheme.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

1 year after introduction

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

Human Resources

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

n/a

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqlA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name:

Position:

Date:

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	Guaranteed Interview Scheme
Department	Research & Consultation
Service Director	Christian Hanagan
Officer Completing the WLIA	Chris Davies
Email	Christopher.s.davies@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	
Brief Description	The purpose of the report is to provide Cabinet with a number of options that could improve the Council's recruitment process, so as to make it easier for the Armed Forces Community and veterans to overcome barriers to civilian employment.
Date	22/7/21
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Armed Forces Community and Veterans

<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>The introduction of a Guaranteed Interview Scheme and other recruitment options will strengthen the Council's standing amongst the Armed Forces Community. It should also increase recognition amongst the public about the actions the Council is taking as a signatory of our Armed Forces Covenant. The proposal could increase the number of Welsh speaking Veterans employed by the Council leading to a more diverse workforce</p>
<p>Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.</p>	<p>Veterans who are Welsh speakers</p>
<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Other relevant data or research</p>	<p>In 2011 there were approximately 50,000 working age veterans in Wales. In 2017, this figure was estimated at 58,000. Therefore, an increase of 8,000 working age veterans over six years</p> <p>There were estimated to be 3548 working age veterans in RCT (2011)</p> <p>No Data is available on the number of Welsh speakers.</p>

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	<p>The transferable skills that may be brought by Veterans, will also include Welsh speaking veterans.</p> <p>By linking our recruitment process to work with the CTP and FFJ we will be encouraging Welsh speaking veterans to apply as well as the general population.</p> <p>Welsh would be allowed to be</p>	<p>There were estimated to be 3548 working age veterans in RCT (2011), 2.3% of the total population.</p> <p>It is estimated that 86% of service leavers who used the CTP in 2018/19 were employed within six months of leaving the Armed Forces, with a further 8% either in</p>	Press/promotion work to include reference to applications in Welsh being welcomed

		<p>used at interview if that is the applicants wish.</p> <p>Welsh language applications welcomed/encouraged/promoted.</p> <p>Promotion of the scheme to be bilingual in press coverage etc</p>	<p>full-time education, training or not actively looking for work</p>	
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Could increase the number of Welsh speaking Veterans employed by the Council leading to a more diverse workforce.</p>	<p>Figures unavailable of number of veterans in RCT, until Census 2021 results.</p>	<p>Need to understand data when available in 2022</p>
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Promotion of armed forces work in Welsh.</p> <p>The experience and knowledge Welsh speaking Veterans could bring, will allow us to develop our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant amongst Welsh speakers, whatever role they are employed in.</p>		<p>Support through training on the Covenant and potential membership of Armed Forces Staff network.</p> <p>Welsh speaking staff members to be encouraged to engage in council's Welsh Language buddy scheme to practice their Welsh</p>

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the Council’s Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g increasing or reducing the Council’s ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Neutral	<p>Links to existing HR Policy, which is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>Existing HR Policy reviewed in line with Welsh Language Standards. See guidance here for more information.</p>		
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	Neutral	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have any impact on this compliance point.</p>		

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
Encourage Welsh speaking Veterans to apply for jobs within the Council	Once Cabinet Report has been agreed	Human Resource Officer TBC. and Press Team AFLO using existing networks
Promote the Welsh language Buddy Scheme, which aims to provide opportunities for staff to practice their Welsh Language skills in an informal environment.	Ongoing	Welsh Language Compliance officer

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.

What was identified?	Why is it not possible?

Stage 4 – Review

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

The Scheme will be reviewed annually, to allow for an appropriate level of recruitment and equalities data to be collected via recruitment processes.

Monitor uptake and impact of the scheme.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows -

There would be a positive outcome as the proposal could increase the number of Welsh speaking Veterans employed by the Council leading to a more diverse workforce.

There would be a positive outcome as the proposal would allow an opportunity to promote the Welsh Language and the promotion of armed forces work in Welsh. The experience and knowledge Welsh speaking Veterans could bring, will allow us to develop our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant amongst Welsh speakers, whatever role they are employed in.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA		Service Director Name:	
Position		I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date		Date	

By virtue of paragraph(s) 14 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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