



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Newport City Council 2021 - 2022

1. Introduction

From December 2019 until October 2021 Chris Humphrey acted as the Interim Director of Social Services. I would like to thank Chris for her work in the role during that period and wish her well in her retirement.

2021/2022 saw a period of structural change for Newport City Council and a rethinking of the previous senior management framework. These changes brought a shift in the role of the Directors. For Social Services the creation of a shared Director role for Adults and Children's Social Care with Prevention and Inclusion aligned a swathe of key services for the most vulnerable children, young people and adults. In November 2021 I was appointed as Strategic Director of Social Services, Prevention and Inclusion. Mary Ryan was appointed as Head of Adult Services in October 2021. In February 2022 Natalie Poyner took up the post of Head of Children's Services while Caroline Ryan-Phillips commenced as the Head of Prevention and Inclusion service. These changes led to further shifts for service manager posts across Social Services.

As with the previous year 2021/2022 was dominated by the response of Social Services and indeed the whole Local Authority to the covid pandemic. In the latter part of the year as we began to emerge from the darkest days of the pandemic the work shifted to recovery and how to rebuild. As we came to the end of the year the outbreak of war in Ukraine and the looming financial crisis began to impact on how we plan for 2022/2023 and beyond.

Despite the huge challenges and the unrelenting demands of the pandemic Social Services staff continued to work to deliver the best possible provisions against the backdrop of restrictions and losses of the two years of the pandemic. The continued resilience and positivity of the staff has remained steady against the backdrop of growing demands for services and as the year closed the beginning of further challenges in terms of resources. Working with the trials of the pandemic have impacted on all aspects of service delivery and staff wellbeing and yet we continue to see compliance with the regulations, codes of practice and statutory guidance and

have been able to promote and indeed develop best practice across a range of areas of our statutory social services functions.

In light of the senior management changes during 2020/2021 and the very particular impact of the pandemic this is a somewhat truncated Director's Report. Nonetheless it does provide a flavour of the positive work and achievements as well as the enduring and growing challenges for Social Services.

2. Director's Summary of Performance

The work of social services is fully described and supported within the service plans developed as part of the Newport City Council corporate requirements. For 2021/2022 the service plans reflected working within the Corporate Plan for 2019/2022. The well-being objectives tied closely to the Corporate Plan, notably

- To improve skills, educational outcomes and employment opportunities.
- To enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient.
- To build cohesive & sustainable communities.

The year end reports for both Adult and Children's Services were presented to Scrutiny on 26.07.2022. The service plans and the year end reports for 2021/2022 are appended to this report. The work on the plan going forward into 2022/23 and beyond has been completed and will be presented to Scrutiny on 29.11.2022 for Prevention and Inclusion and for Children's Services and Adults Services on 06.12.2022.

The performance of Social Services as described in the year end reports reflects the challenges of the pandemic and the work completed to address those challenges as well as to sustain core services across all areas of statutory functions

Across Childrens and Adults services 2021/2022 there has been a continued emphasis on Early Intervention and Prevention. The appointment of a Head of Service specifically for Prevention and Inclusion in January 2021 will further

enhance and develop this work initially for children and families but ultimately across all ages and with the potential to consider community based resources for well-being. Work in this area has initially focussed on the recommissioning of the Families First services, the further development of Flying Start provision and consideration of a remodelling of our youth and play services.

Work with stake holders and partners has been crucial throughout the pandemic with the strong working relationships with the other four Local Authorities within the Gwent footprint, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and Gwent Police of particular note. The desire to work effectively across professional boundaries will continue into 2022/23 with active and contributory engagement with both the Regional Partnership Board and the Public Service Board as well as the Safeguarding Boards.

The early days of covid saw an increased understanding of and willingness to utilise hybrid ways of working. While Social Services delivered the majority of services face to face the adoption of new ways of working to assist delivery and to facilitate engagement for citizens and professionals has continued at pace. The increased use of technology has been embraced as a means of ensuring effective and timely service delivery and utilisation of resources.

The numbers of referrals for Children and Adult services has risen throughout the year. Referrals are higher than at any point in the past 10 years. The continued growth in referrals has been accompanied by seemingly increased complexity and acuity. So safeguarding referrals and mental ill health referrals have both risen and with them an increase in the need for rapid interventions, consideration of judicial involvement and the need to work ever more closely with colleagues in the police and health services.

In May 2021 the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance Check was completed. CIW set out to answer two key questions

1. How well is the local authority discharging its statutory functions to keep people who need care and support and carers who need support, safe and promote their well-being during the pandemic.
2. What is the Local Authority doing to prevent the need for children to come into care and are children returning home to their families quickly enough where safe to do so

They sought to do this against the core principle stated as

“We considered the safety and well-being of people who use or may need to use services, the safety of services they access and the safety and well-being of people who work in services”

The findings identified a culture of improvement and mutual support and a recognition of positive leadership. It was noted that staff morale was generally good. “Partnerships were in the main working well at all levels and delivering an integrated sustainable approach to meeting need and promoting well-being”

Innovative responses to the Pandemic were noted in adult services and also that there was evidence that carers had been identified as requiring additional support and that efforts had been made to ensure that information and advice was available.

“Mostly evident at an individual level, we found support was underpinned by a relationship of openness and honesty about the options available for people who need care and support and carers who need support”

In Children’s Services the preventative interventions such as the Rapid Response service, Family Group Conferencing MyST and Baby & Me were identified as being effective at preventing needs escalating and it was noted that parents and carers were positive about the support they received.

“Many staff were exhausted with complex case work and high volume evident. Children’s services were experiencing unprecedented demand and increase in referrals. In adult services we found services working under significant pressure”

CIW identified the following as areas for improvement

- Supervision – need to improve recording to evidence shared thinking and rationale in decision making
- Timeliness needs to be improved in supporting the well-being of the workforce to manage demand and for those waiting for assessments and care and support
- It was acknowledged that the Pandemic had restricted the ability of preventative services to operate thereby creating additional demand.
- Inter-agency responses could be improved with better understanding

A full copy of the report can be found at:

<https://careinspectorate.wales/our-reports/local-authority-inspection-and-review-reports>

3. How are People Shaping our Services?

Newport City Council is committed to ensuring that people are able to have a say in how they receive care and support and how services will be developed and delivered in the future. The voice of those who access services is key to efficacy and development.

Some examples of how we do this are

- Co-production in the assessment process to enable citizens to express their preferences around how support will be delivered.
- Contract monitoring processes where the views of citizens who receive services are sought and providers are contractually required to gather feedback and comments to inform service development.
- Citizen engagement/involvement in the commissioning process
- Complaints and compliments.
- Consultation events and citizen forums

- Provider Forums and engagement processes
- Feedback from inspections and engagement with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
- Focussed reviews and deep dives of key areas of work with critical challenge
- Active promotion of voice of the child through direct individual and group work

The work of particular teams notably Community Connectors and Carers and the Disabled Children's Team are excellent examples of recent positive engagement using activities and different methods of collating the views of those involved,

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

In the Director's Report of 2020/2021 the details of the teams across Social Services who support the delivery of statutory functions was described in detail. Over 2021/2022 while there have been developments in specific elements of work the core structures have remained. The 2020/2021 report is attached for reference as to structures across Social Services. In 2020/2021 priorities were identified for each of the quality standards and this section of the report returns to those priorities and identifies how they have been supported during the year.

Quality Standard 1

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

Priorities for 2021/22

- To further develop the **First Contact** team into an **Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) hub** consisting of co-located Social Care, Health and partner organisations

The restrictions of the pandemic have delayed working on increased colocation. The active engagement and presence of Gwent Police for both adults and children's safeguarding has been completed with a full complement of police working alongside social services staff. However, wider colocation for example

with health colleagues still requires greater work. We do of course support and indeed take a lead role with the regional Home First provision with location of Social Services staff in hospital settings.

- To engage and support more **adult unpaid carers**

Work was completed during 2021/22 to apply for Carer Friendly Advanced Accreditation with the presentation of the award taking place in August 2022. A comprehensive portfolio of evidence outlining the service we provide for unpaid carers was assessed by an independent panel, who stated that there is 'a lot on offer' for unpaid carers in Newport. They commented that the NCC Carers Handbook and Carers Network Bulletins are a great resource for unpaid carers to access information in one place. They also expressed appreciation that staff have the opportunity to improve their understanding of unpaid carers through training workshops.

- To continue to expand and improve the **Telecare** service

Telecare has indeed continued to expand with a wider range of service and greater numbers taking up the offers of telecare support. The team successfully presented their work at events throughout the year and increased the understanding of building the possibilities of both care and independence using "ordinary" technology.

- To continue to proactively **manage demand and reduce waiting times** as the community starts to recover from the Pandemic

Demand has in fact risen across both Children's and Adults services with the consequences of the covid losses and the restrictions becoming ever more apparent in the types of presentations in referrals. In Adult services there has been an emphasis on reducing the waiting time for assessment and while this has resulted in now very short assessment waiting times the challenges in accessing care grew throughout 2021/22 with the workforce shortages being of particular concern in all areas of care. In Children's Services the scope to work with all but safeguarding issue in families has increased and is likely to continue to pose a significant challenge in 2022/23.

- To **improve digital access** to the information and advice service by developing the website

Considerable work has been completed to improve digital access with provision of appropriate devices to a range of citizens of all ages. Staff have worked with the digital team to look at how we ensure positive access to digital services for example for foster carers. The provision of equipment was a key focus during the pandemic and using grant monies we provided hundreds of households with the relevant tablets and laptops. In addition and again using grant funding we were also able to provide a range of equipment for vulnerable citizens and their carers including washing machines, cookers and microwaves.

There has been a concentrated and successful drive to more effectively use social media to promote the work of social services.

Work to improve website links will be considered during 2022/23.

- To launch a **Young Carers offer** in partnership with Barnardo's

The Young Carers offer has been improved and enhanced. Key aspects to note are the introduction and promotion of the Young Carers ID card, the development of regular support for young adult carers and the range of online and in person activities provided throughout the periods of covid restrictions.

- To develop a **single entry point for adult safeguarding** issues

A single entry for adult safeguarding issues is now in place and operating effectively.

Quality Standard 2

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

Priorities for 2021/22

- **Reablement** – to further develop the **specialist dementia service** with links to the memory clinic, older persons mental health teams, step down facilities, the dementia respite service and outreach support.

Work has started with a range of partner agencies to establish a Dementia Hub to pull together all the resources locally for those with dementia and their families. The dementia respite service has been established and is being well used with over 70 people each week accessing the provision.

- To establish **Windmill Farm** in accordance with planned timescale

Both the building and the work to develop the operating model for Windmill Farm continued throughout 2021/22. There were delays in the construction largely as a result of materials being in short supply and changing aspects of the build itself including unexpected challenges in the site. The operating model was fully completed and the staff team appointed and trained during the year. Windmill Farm will open early in 2023

- To continue to increase capacity within the **in-house foster care service**, improve training and support for carers and reduce pressure on external foster and/or residential placements

Newport foster carers and staff were fully involved throughout 2021/22 in the development and launch of Maethu Cymru/Foster Wales. Extensive work was put in place during the periods of pandemic restriction to support foster carers including a wide programme of on line activities with children and carers. One of our carers took part in a Radio Wales documentary specifically focussed on how different sorts of families managed during covid. Another foster family was part of the Maethu Cymru/Foster Wales launch advertising while another took part in the launch at the Senedd. Two of our carers delivered training for foster carers across Wales about looking after Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. The training for foster carers is a full and varied programme with a clear emphasis on a trauma informed approach.

- To continue to realise the benefits of the **MyST** service to support children with complex needs and their Foster carers and prevent placement breakdown.

MYST has become a fully integrated part of the offer of support for children, families and carers. MYST staff have worked across teams to prevent placement

breakdown. Most notably one of the first children MYST supported was a young man leaving secure accommodation after protracted periods of engagement with the youth justice system and as significant risk of ongoing exploitation. MYST and the specialist exploitation worker helped this young man not only return to live with his parents but to rebuild a healthy and safe relationship with them while engaging in positive activities.

- To continue to provide the **Rapid Response** service to families in crisis

The Rapid Response service in partnership with Barnardo's has continued to offer support to families on the cusp of breakdown. The staffing was expanded using covid recovery monies. The service is currently being evaluated.

- To progress the new **accommodation projects** for disabled children in transition to adulthood

In the Disabled Children's Team covid recovery grant monies were used to support older disabled children and begin the process of working towards adulthood. With staff from Childrens and Adult services as well as a wide group of partner agencies a portfolio of activities has been developed including cookery, confidence building, work skills, outdoor activities, animal care, bushcraft, driving, sensory support, music, sport, sexual health to enhance transition. This work was presented to Scrutiny and has been showcased regionally as modelling best practice.

The delivery of accommodation to support young people from childhood into adulthood has continued as a model of supporting children with the most complex needs to be placed in their long term homes before 18th birthdays. While this is small numbers it has been hugely successful in terms of continuity and the quality of placement.

- To develop the **outreach and day service for disabled children** and young people

As with transition for disabled children covid recovery monies were used to support outreach and day service developments as well as domiciliary care for children. The workforce issues have been an issue in these developments and

we anticipate they will continue into the coming year and beyond. However, as a model both day care and outreach do have merit.

- To continue to identify and support **young carers** in partnership with Barnardo's

As in Quality Standard 1 the Young Carers offer has been improved and enhanced. Key aspects to note are the introduction and promotion of the Young Carers ID card, the development of regular support for young adult carers and the range of online and in person activities provided throughout the periods of covid restrictions.

- To ensure our staff are sufficiently trained and prepared for the introduction of the **Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019** by implementing the new **Code of Practice** ready for implementation in April 2022

Staff across Social Services have taken part in sessions to prepare for the changes in legislation. All senior managers have been engaged in the proposed changes. Given the delay to the introduction of the changes from Government this rollout to the whole workforce has been slower than anticipated and further work will be carried out in 2022/23.

- To work with our **mental health partners** in both the statutory and independent sector to establish a **clear pathway into preventative services**.

Our Adult Mental Health Services have taken part in an internal audit to assist in reviewing the work of the service. The pressures on these services because of the pandemic have led to a curtailment of the development of some the work to drive preventative services. This is one of the areas of focus for 2022/23

Quality Standard 3

Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

In light of the changes in in house personnel and anticipated changes in requirements from Welsh Government the Annual Report from the Head of Corporate Safeguarding for 2021/22 was presented as an Interim Report to

Scrutiny on 30.09.2022 and will be presented to Cabinet on 16.11.2022 followed by Council on 22.11.2022

A copy of the report presented to Scrutiny is available in the appendices

Priorities for 2021/22

- To work with each service on the outcome of **the safeguarding self-assessment audit** for continual development.

As part of the Annual Report the safeguarding self-assessment audit tool was used in all service areas across the Council. In some key areas staff from the safeguarding team supported the completion of the audit. The tool developed in Newport is now being held up Wales wide as a model of good practice. The self-assessments have helped to identify gaps and pick up training needs.

- **Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)**

Newport staff have been involved throughout the Policy and Process part of the Welsh Government and Home Office project to align all case reviews for children, adults and domestic homicides under Safeguarding Boards. This work continued during 2021/22 and draft guidance is currently being reviewed prior to implementation across Wales.

- Embed the change in legislation from Deprivation of Liberty to **Liberty Protection Safeguards (Mental Capacity Act)** and ensure a robust process is introduced for Newport citizens here this is applicable.

As in Quality Standard 2 staff across Social Services have taken part in sessions to prepare for the changes in legislation. All senior managers have been engaged in the proposed changes. Given the delay to the introduction of the changes from Government this rollout to the whole workforce has been slower than anticipated and further work will be carried out in 2022/23.

- Tender of the **regional IDVA service** and develop the service to ensure all citizens with protected characteristics access services.

The regional IDVA tender process has been progressed jointly between the Council and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner with additional support for funding from all the Gwent LAs. The tender process was delayed by ensuring robust agreements were in place for the full funding. The tender process will be completed early in 2023. Throughout this period the delivery of the IDVA service has continued and has included the very welcome development of additional support in the Emergency Department and a specialist IDVA supporting older people.

Quality Standard 4

Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

Priorities for 2021/22

- To continue to identify and source **additional educational support** for children who are looked after to improve choices for work experience, training, apprenticeships and wider employment options

During the year we expanded the small team who provide educational support to children who are looked after. Historically we have had limited resource with a shared management post and two members of staff equating to 1.7 FTE. The addition of 2 FT support workers has made a significant difference in the capacity to both directly support the education of children in care as well as ensure they are receiving the right sort of education.

The work experience programme for young people who are looked after has been on hold during the pandemic but is now being re-established.

As part of wider changes in our youth service we are able to offer the Duke of Edinburgh programme to young people who are looked after.

- To develop the **Parent Mentoring and Advocacy Programme** and establish the **Young Persons Participation Board**

The Parent Mentoring and Advocacy Programme is being offered to parents involved in child protection procedures. Initial take up has been low but as the offer becomes embedded we are confident this will grow.

We completed a review of all our child protection processes with a series of interviews of families and staff conducted by Barnardo's staff. This gave some very strong messages about improvements needed in the way we operate Child Protection Conferences and Core Groups. This learning has been a driver for change in all these areas of work.

We have adopted a hybrid approach to most Child Protection Conferences. This has been a very beneficial move in ensuring full and consistent engagement from all professional agencies while giving families the time, attention and space they require.

The Young People's Participation Board has been established and they have met regularly throughout the year including sessions with a local film maker to create a short work about their views of life within care.

- To continue to support the health and social care sector through the **Career College Consortium**

Newport is part of the Gwent Regional workforce Board working with the other four Gwent LAs and the health board to drive social care and health recruitment and retention. The Career College Consortium work is being completed as part of the Workforce Board. The development is to enhance social care and health roles and careers for young learners across the college and sixth form networks.

- To further develop the **volunteer service** and establish a sustainable model.

Work to develop active volunteering during the pandemic focussed on specific elements for example support at particular times of the year for festive holiday and celebrations, support from volunteers with some activities and some engagement with unpaid carers. However, the restrictions of the pandemic did delay a drive for a coherent volunteer strategy. This will continue to be a piece of work for consideration in 2022/23.

Quality Standard 5

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

Priorities for 2021/22

- To further develop the **preventions work** in Children's Services to support families, placements and develop sustainable alternatives to care

The restructure of the senior management team and the services within directorates rest in a determination to enhance prevention and early intervention in all areas of the work of the Council. In Children's Services the broad range of services for family support now all sit together and thus are better placed to identify gaps in support as well as ensure the quality of services. The work of the Families and Friends teams became fully embedded in Children's Services during 2021/22 and have established a model of care for children with their wider families. This work will in line with the Programme of Government continue to focus on establishing parity for all children regardless of their care setting or legal status.

- To develop the **Later Life Links** Model for children in care Care Leavers

With a grant from Welsh Government and aligning resources with Family Group Conferencing work has been completed with staff from the Barnardo's Partnership to access training from the Family Rights Group to develop the model of Later Life Links. The provision has been rolled out with work in our children's homes and for some children in foster care. The implementation will continue in 2022/23

- To develop the **domiciliary care service for children with disabilities;**

The domiciliary care service for children is sited alongside our provision for short breaks at Oaklands. As with all forms of care for children and adults workforce has throughout this period proved immensely challenging and has limited some of the developments particularly around the use of direct payments. Nonetheless building the right care will now include domiciliary care as well as the extensive

developments within the Disabled Children's Team focussing on direct support and activities for children and young people.

- To monitor and review the new arrangements for **day services provision** for mental health, learning disabilities and older people to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the community

The new day services provision at Spring Gardens is supporting 70 people all of whom are living with some form of dementia. The service provides a short break while at the same time ensuring there is a nurturing, happy setting with activities which give purpose and support.

- To continue to educate and inform people about the dangers of **unsafe relationships** and support those at risk of harm.

The work of all of the safeguarding teams is continued to explore how we work not just reactively but how we provide proactive support. The development of the child exploitation tool was completed in 2021/22 and subsequently rolled out across Gwent and shared across Wales. The Annual Safeguarding report in the appendices details the work of the safeguarding teams. Staff have welcomed the changes for example in Duty to Report and while the number of referrals in both adult and children safeguarding continue to rise the rapid rate of response has not diminished.

Quality Standard 6

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

Priorities for 2021/22

- Continue to work with the RSL's to develop **sustainable accommodation** options for all client groups

The changes in the structures within the Council has shifted this element of the work to Communities and Housing. Work with the RSLs for specific schemes

notably learning disabled adults and young people aged 17+ continues with key developments to support these groups.

- To continue to develop innovative services for people with **dementia**

The services developed in Spring Gardens for day opportunities as well as the ongoing work in our three residential homes are examples of some of the work for those with dementia while our support of carers evidences the wider work to assist those living in our communities.

- To improve the support available to **care leavers** in order to address homelessness and assist in the transition to education, training and employment;
- Increase the range of accommodation and support options available for **young people leaving care**

The work to support the education and training opportunities for children who are looked after and for those leaving care can be seen under Quality Standard 4. The range of housing options has been increased in partnership with local providers and with funding from Welsh Government. Staff in Children's Services and Housing have come together to increase the options and to consider the needs of particular groups from example UASC. The decisions for a focussed post to work on When I'm Ready has also increased the number of young people taking up this route. There is still a need to expand the offers for young people leaving care particularly with the continued requirement to support UASC.

5. How We Do What We Do

a) Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

Under Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, regional finance, governance and workforce priorities for action are agreed through the Regional Workforce Development Board and reflect alignment to Social Care Wales' National Priorities in partnership with transformation and health services.

The past two years has seen significant shifts in the social care workforce with the introduction of the real living wage for all in social care, the challenges and risks of the pandemic, a reduction in the numbers of individuals applying to train as social workers, a reassessment by many of their personal priorities and changes in the societal nature of employment. Newport Children's and Adults services in common with all LAs is working to support our existing workforce while working locally, regionally and nationally to improve our recruitment. The workforce in social care is absolutely key to safe and effective service delivery. The majority of the tasks required in social care are predicated on face to face delivery. Relationships form the basis of social care so the workforce as a whole is the cornerstone of services.

In 2021/22 we reviewed the support we offer to social care staff who wish to train as social workers and moved to a model of supporting staff to access gateway courses followed by the Open University route as a way to maximise the resources available for "growing our own". The support for students on placement continued as did a strong crossover of students with us on placement to full time posts. Staff link with the Universities and regularly work with the academic institutions to contribute to training. Staff have also take part in events with the FE colleges to work with younger people and have participated in Jobs Fairs for all ages to promote social care.

In residential care we promote "value based" recruitment and have worked extensively across all our posts to maximise social media in advertising and in the way we "sell" working in social care in Newport City Council.

Our workforce development team has seen a number of changes and this has led to a positive rethink in terms of how we deliver learning and development. We have moved away from a one off course based approach and rather are looking to develop rounded training pathways. Training for core qualifications linked to registration and post qualification has continued. Staff continue to access Social Care Wales supported management training opportunities (TMDP and MMDP) as well as regional safeguarding events.

With our corporate colleagues in human resources we continued to consider how we best ensure the offer for social care staff in line with the offers of neighbouring LAs.

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

The revenue outturn across the authority underspent against budget by £18.404m, after core budget contributions to and from reserves, which represents a 6% variance against budget. This variance against budget has arisen, in the main, due to the following:

- Receipt of significant one-off Welsh Government (WG) funds over and above that received from the 'Hardship Fund' for Covid specific expenditure and lost income.
- Underspends across all service areas due to changes in service provision and working practices caused by Covid, and;
- Underspends against the general revenue contingency budget, capital financing, council tax reduction scheme and council tax income – all of which are non-service budgets.

Across Social Services, the overall outturn was a £6.4m underspend for both areas. £1.8m underspend in Children services and £4.6m underspend in adult services. £5.1m was received through covid hardship claims.

Service area budgets

	£'000
Children's – (£1,788k) overall underspend	
Areas of overspending	
Covid Recovery Grant:	120

A £1.5m grant was received late in the year which was required to be spent in full during 2021/22. Service overspent against the grant allocation.	
Pathways additional support (Looked after Children family support): A Mother and baby placement directed by the court resulted in an overspend against budget.	149
Areas of underspending	
Out of area residential placements: The budget of £3,155k can afford 20 placements. Numbers throughout the year were lower than what the budget could afford due to providers not accepting placements plus £393k of unbudgeted income from Education and ABUHB towards placements costs.	(689)
Independent fostering agencies: The budget of £2,462k can afford 58 placements. Although the total number of placements increased to 63 at the end of March 2022 compared to 60 at the end of January 2022, 9 placements were claimed from the Hardship fund in 2021/22 at a cost of £319k.	(305)
External legal fees: The budget of £930k has underspent due to a reduced number of care proceeding cases this year.	(226)
Youth offending team/ Child protection: Savings from restructuring and staff vacancies.	(510)
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC): This is a cost neutral budget, however; the Home Office have confirmed that funding is provided on the number of UASCs as opposed to the costs incurred and that this funding is not repayable. The number of UASC's have increased significantly over the year, 76 in March 2022 compared to 48 in March 2021.	(246)
Adults - (£5,088k) overall underspend	

Areas of underspending	
Community care: Combined budget more than £38m across community care. Underspend has arisen due to one off grant funding to cover winter pressures (£2.5m), the demand for services reduced during 2020 and the numbers have not yet increased to pre covid levels. Although there is a back log of requests for assessments/placements, staff shortages are causing delays. Furthermore, user contributions and £820k property sale income has further increased the underspend against this budget. Whilst the context for this is known, the continuation of this underspend is not certain given the temporary nature of the fluctuations in demand. These budgets require continued close monitoring to gauge the continued impact of the pandemic.	(3,754)
Hospital Team: £284k annual budget - One off grant contributions from Integrated Care Fund (ICF) and Home First.	(198)
In-house Adult residential homes: Annual budget £3,774k exc. fee payer's contribution. Non covid related costs reduced during the pandemic.	(375)

The global pandemic, which lasted throughout 2020/21, had an unprecedented financial impact which continued into 2021/22.

Whilst Adult Services was expecting pressures due to increased demand from adults living longer with complex needs, COVID-19 caused a decrease in numbers which started to increase throughout 2021/22, but still not back to pre-covid levels. The service also received £2.538m of winter pressures funding.

The council continues to work collaboratively with regional partners to maximise the use of regional resources to develop services within Newport.

The annual budget in 2021/22 for social services was £78.2m. There is a well-developed financial management process in place across service areas that supports the medium term financial plan and enables the identification and management of budget risks.

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

The features of partnership working are deeply embedded in the activities of both Children's and Adults with Heads of Service, the Strategic Director and Cabinet Member regularly engaged in a large number of regional and national groupings.

Within the Council Scrutiny took an active part in providing critical challenge particularly in relation to the planning, performance and review mechanisms. The reporting using MI Hub, the data collected as part of the covid checkpoint, the data for Welsh Government and the submission of information for the Safeguarding Boards, Foster Wales, the National Adoption Service, the Integrated Care Fund, the Health Board for the pathways for people leaving hospital to name but a few constitutes oversight and wider Scrutiny. The Cabinet Member reports on Social Services matters to Cabinet and then to Council.

Heads of Service regularly brief the Corporate Management Team (CMT) on social services matters with safeguarding and Domestic Homicide, Child Practice and Adult Practice Reviews standard items on the CMT agenda. There are monthly reviews of the service finances involving the Senior Finance Partner with the Heads of Service and again with the Strategic Director. Budget proposals and annual budget determination follow the NCC budget setting process with Heads of Service discussing these in detail with the Executive team before the proposals are considered by the Cabinet Member and then by the Cabinet. Complementing the above there are clear lines of decision making and accountability to the Heads of Service and onward to the statutory Director of Social Services, with the Cabinet Member providing the strategic direction.

Councillor Paul Cockeram as Cabinet Member for Social Services carried out the role of Chair of the Regional Partnership Board. All in the Council are immensely grateful for his passionate and diligent service over many years to social care.

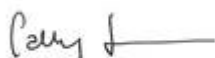
Working with the Regional Partnership Board with the capital and revenue streams of the WG Transformation Fund and the Regional Integrated Fund (formerly the Integrated Care Fund) requires close interagency working. The Newport Integrated Partnership (NIP), incorporating the third sector, ABUHB, Housing Associations and NCC continues to be the group that determines and drives the practical implementation of any regional approach to integration when considering primary care. The NCC Strategic Director is joint Chair of the NIP.

The Heads of Adults and Children's Services undertake a full role with the regional structures as well as participating in the National groupings for Social Services. Likewise the Director is an active member of the appropriate regional and National groups.

6. Conclusion

2021/22 saw considerable change within the management arrangements for Social Services in Newport. Over 2022/23 these changes will be embedded.

As 2021/22 came to a close the impact of the covid pandemic and the looming cost of living crisis was evident in every aspect of Social Services delivery. The challenges for staff of continuing to provide safe and effective care and support against this backdrop have been immense and yet staff have continued to do their very best to deliver safe, thoughtful and effective services. I would like to thank our staff for their continued unstinting, professional and caring work to support the most vulnerable people in our communities.



22.11.2022

7. Appendices

1. Adult Services Plan 2021/22
2. Adult Services Year End Report 2021/22
3. Children's Services Plan 2021/22
4. Children's Services Year End Report 2021/22
5. Safeguarding Report 2021/22
6. Annual Director's Report 2020/21