



Carmarthenshire Family Support Strategy 2018-23

*“How we support families
in Carmarthenshire”*

SPRING 2018

Contents

Introduction, Purpose & Aims	3
Guiding Principles	4
Family Support Services: How we support families in Carmarthenshire	13
Delivering for Families: How we will achieve our aims	22
Leadership, Governance and Accountability	24

Foreword

There is much to celebrate about family life in Carmarthenshire. In whatever form they take, families are Carmarthenshire's most valuable asset and are the most important factor in making sure that children and young people are happy, healthy and safe and supported to achieve their full potential.

Our vision for family support is for earlier support and stronger families. If a family cannot cope by themselves, we have a duty to help. We need to intervene and provide support to families as soon as possible. Without this support we know that problems can escalate and become much harder to resolve later.

A lot of work to support families is already happening.

We will continue to focus on prevention and earlier intervention, addressing root causes and not just the symptoms. We will work in collaboration with families themselves and support them in taking responsibility for their own situation, not foster greater dependence.

The financial resources available to deliver services is likely to reduce over the next few years. At the same time the needs and challenges faced by families could be increasing. This strategy has been prepared with this in mind and sets out the strategic direction in which we wish to travel. We hope that it will help us improve and maintain services in the years to come.



Cllr Glynog Davies
Executive Board Member for Education and Children

1 Introduction

Purpose

Carmarthenshire's Family Support Strategy sets out how we will develop and deliver early intervention services to support Carmarthenshire's children, families and young people. We will achieve this by providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the early years through to the teenage years.

It describes how we will develop joined-up approaches to supporting families across a range of needs.

Our Aims

We want to offer high quality, high value and easily accessible services that target the people who need them most.

We want a Carmarthenshire where:

- Children, young people and their families receive the services they need, when they need them and where they can best access them
- All service providers work together to make sure families receive the services they need when they need them most.
- Commissioners work together across services and across sectors to achieve the best value for money.

We aim to deliver Family Support Services for families, children and young people that are:

- **Intervening early to prevent problems escalating** - Providing early help, targeted family support and specialist services to build resilience in families and children, combat the impact of ACES and in the longer term - reduce the demand for specialist services.
- **Integrated** - working collaboratively to effectively deliver the right help, at the right time.
- **Family-focused: personalised, strength based and solution focused** - Addressing challenges by working with a family's strengths and working in partnership with the whole family to find solutions and deliver support that is personalised to their specific needs.
- **Accessible and Inclusive** - Easy to contact and use so that families can get support wherever their first point of contact is.
- **Enabling families to build their resilience rather than promote dependence** - Helping families to help themselves to improve their situations rather than create dependency.



2 Guiding Principles

Underpinning our approach is a commitment to children's rights.

Welsh Government has adopted the **United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** as the basis for their work with children and young people. This is expressed in the Welsh Government's seven core aims, that all children and young people:

- Have a flying start in life.
- Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities.
- Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.
- Have access to a range of play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
- Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised.
- Have a safe home and community which supports physical and emotional well-being.
- Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

Guidance on how we support children and families is set nationally by Welsh Government (WG). Key Acts and policies direct us include:

- Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015
- Social Services and Well-being Act 2014
- Child Poverty Strategy 2015
- Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021

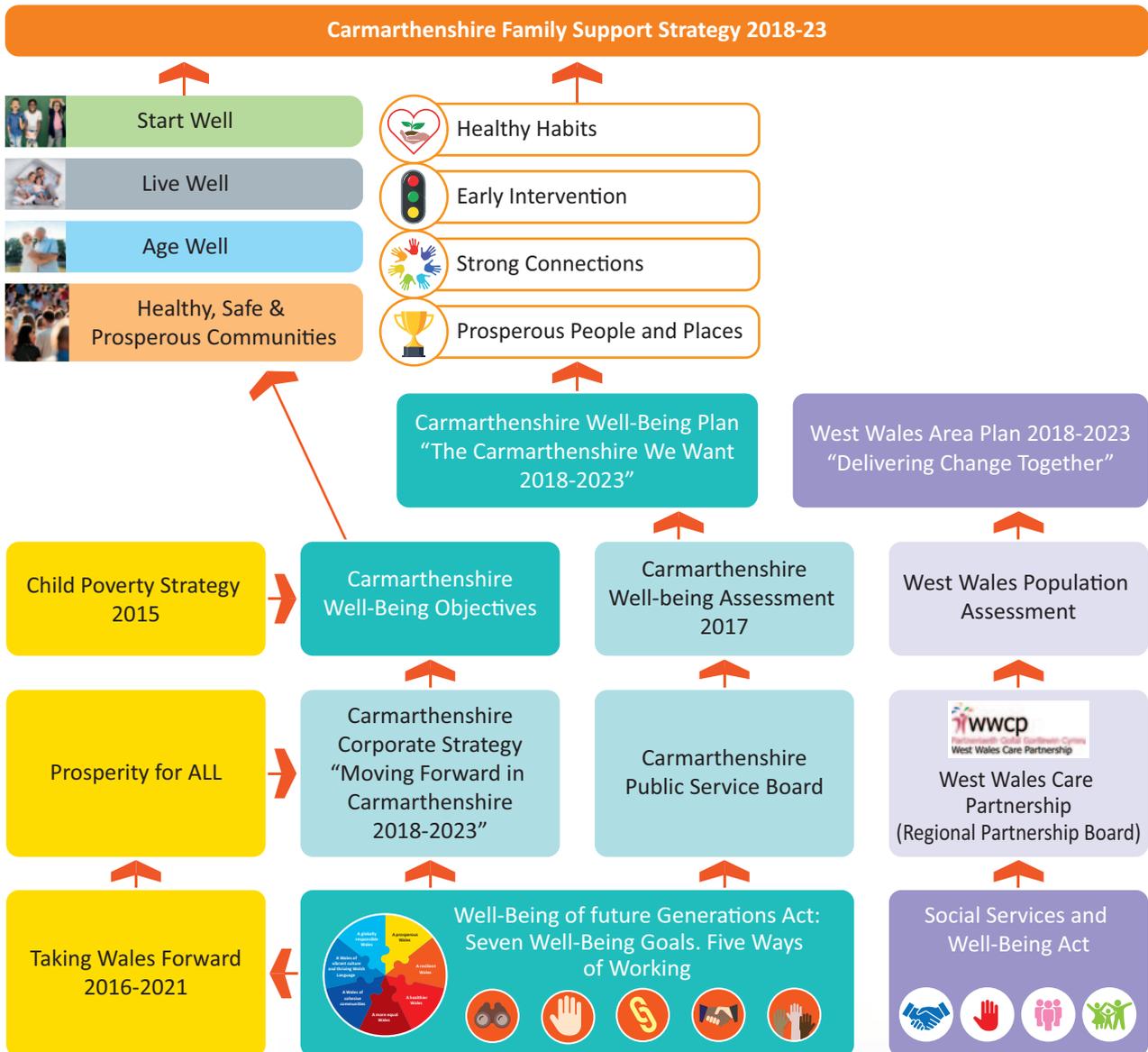
In addition, we follow WG priorities and frameworks as well as local strategies including:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences – Public Health Wales
- The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach
- Children First
- Carmarthenshire Corporate Strategy 2018-23

“Welsh Government has adopted the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) as the basis for their work with children and young people”



Key Welsh Government Acts & Policies, Local Strategies & Frameworks

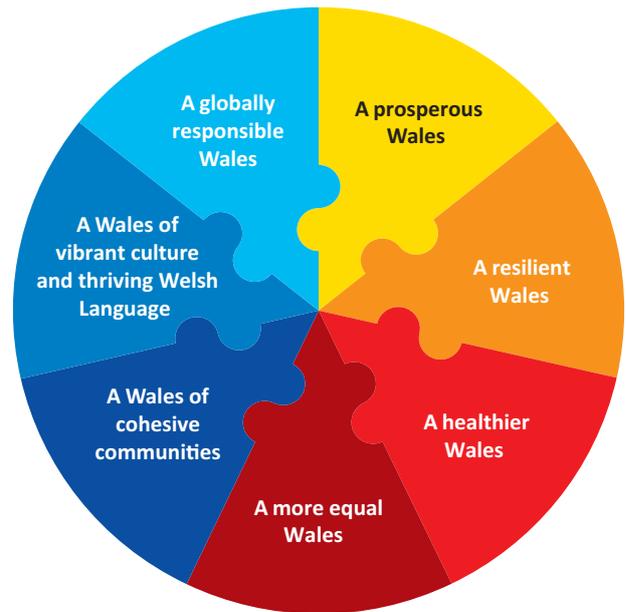


2.1 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The **Well-being of Future Generations Act** outlines seven legally binding well-being goals that are designed to support and deliver a public service that meets needs today, without compromising the well-being of future generations.

The goals are for a prosperous; resilient; healthier and more equal Wales; and a globally responsible Wales; with cohesive communities; a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

There are **five key ways of working** that all public bodies must demonstrate to help us work together better, avoid repeating past mistakes and tackle some of the long-term challenges we are facing:



Long term



The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.

Prevention



How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

Integration



Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

Collaboration



Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

Involvement



The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.

The Act is the foundation for the ambitions and objectives that we have for Carmarthenshire.



The Act also established a statutory board, known as a **Public Services Board (PSB)**, in each local authority that will set out a shared vision to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of its area.

The Carmarthenshire PSB was set up in May 2016 with the task of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Carmarthenshire.

To do this it must carry out an assessment of well-being in the County and prepare a Well-being Plan to outline its objectives, the steps it will take to meet them and how they contribute to the seven national well-being goals.

Carmarthenshire’s PSB has four statutory members:

- Carmarthenshire County Council,
- Hywel Dda University Health Board,
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service
- Natural Resources Wales.

Other partners are:

- Coleg Sir Gâr,
- University of Wales Trinity Saint David,
- Dyfed Powys Police, Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner,
- Department for Work & Pensions,
- Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services,
- Welsh Government,
- National Probation Service,
- Wales Community Rehabilitation Company
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

The **Carmarthenshire Well-being Assessment** was published in March 2017.

The findings of this assessment form the basis of the objectives and actions outlined in the first Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan **The Carmarthenshire We Want 2018-2023**.

Carmarthenshire’s Well-being Plan will focus of the delivery of four objectives:



Healthy Habits - People have a good quality of life and make healthy choices about their lives and environment.



Early Intervention - To make sure that people have the right help at the right time; as and when they need it.



Strong Connections - Strongly connected people, places and organisations that are able to adapt to change.



Prosperous People and Places - To maximise opportunities for people and places in both urban and rural parts of our county.

Four delivery groups have been established to focus on key areas of work to support the achievement of the PSB’s Well-Being Plan. These are the Healthy Environment Delivery Group, Early Intervention Delivery Group, Strong Connections Delivery Group and Prosperous People and Places Delivery Group.



2.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

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

The principles of the Act are that it:



Supports people who have care and support needs to achieve well-being.



People are at the heart of the new system by giving them an equal say in the support they receive.



Partnership and co-operation drives service delivery.



Services will promote the prevention of escalating need and the right help is available at the right time.

The Act requires local authorities to establish **Regional Partnership Boards (RPBs)** to ensure that the statutory requirements of the Act are met and that health and social care work well together for the benefit of those that need them, and their carers.



Carmarthenshire County Council, Ceredigion Council and Pembrokeshire County Council), Hywel Dda University Health Board and representatives of the third and independent sector form the **West Wales Care Partnership**.

All Partnerships are required to carry out a Population Assessment to assess needs, the effectiveness of current services and where further change and improvement is needed. In 2017 the first **West Wales Population Assessment** was published.

This was followed by the **West Wales Area Plan for 2018-23 'Delivering Change Together'** which sets out how we will work as a partnership over the next five years to transform and integrate care and support and address the issues identified in the Population Assessment.

2.3 Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021

Taking Wales Forward is WG's Programme for Government. It outlines the commitments WG will deliver over the next 5 years to build a Wales that is healthy and active, prosperous and secure, ambitious and learning, and united and connected.

Prosperity for All is a national strategy that takes those commitments and sets out how they will be delivered by the Welsh public sector.

The strategy highlights priority areas including Early Years and the importance of creating conditions that give every child the best start in life. The ambitions of this strategy are reflected in Carmarthenshire's Plan - Moving forward in Carmarthenshire.

2.4 Tackling Poverty: Child Poverty Strategy for Wales

The 2015 Child Poverty Strategy includes five key objectives for tackling child poverty and improving the outcomes of low income families in Wales to ensure no child is living in poverty by 2020.

Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy 2015

Carmarthenshire Council has identified Tackling and Preventing Poverty as one of its Key Well Being Objectives.

Well-Being Objective five; "Tackle poverty by doing all we can to prevent it, help people into work and improve the lives of those living in poverty" is based on the Welsh Government's three key priority areas for tackling poverty and includes a detailed action plan which details how we will achieve our objective for children, families and communities.

The action plan is overseen by the Tackling Poverty Advisory Panel, which is made up by Councillors who provide advice and support to Councillor Cefin Campbell as Executive Board member for Tackling Poverty.



2.5 Adverse Childhood Experiences: ACEs

The prevention of ACEs and early intervention to support families is at the centre of our work to support families in Carmarthenshire.

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future, and lifelong health and opportunity.

The term **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)** is used to describe a range of stressful or traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to whilst growing up.

ACEs range from experiences that directly harm a child, such as physical, verbal or sexual abuse and emotional neglect to those that affect the environment in which a child grows up including being raised in a household where domestic violence, alcohol abuse, parental separation or drug abuse is present.

Children and young people who are exposed to ACEs have increased – and sustained - levels of stress. This can negatively affect lifelong mental and physical health by disrupting brain and organ development and by damaging the body's system for defending against diseases.

The more ACEs a child experiences, the greater the chance of health and/or social problems in later life.

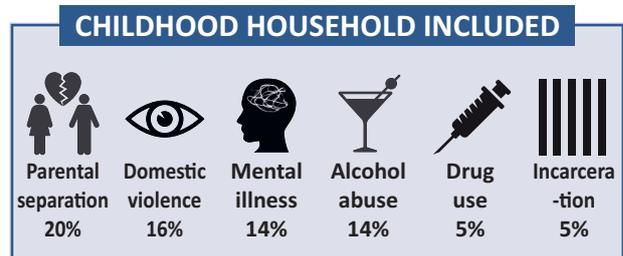
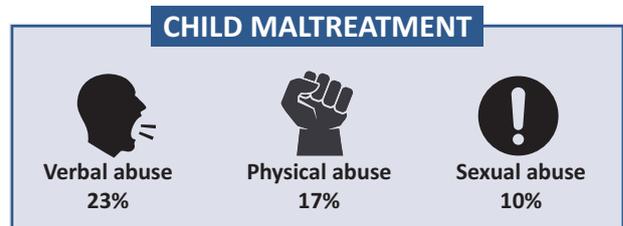
Results from the first Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences study by Public Health Wales revealed around one in every seven adults aged 18-69 years in Wales had experienced four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences during their childhood and just under half had experienced at least one.



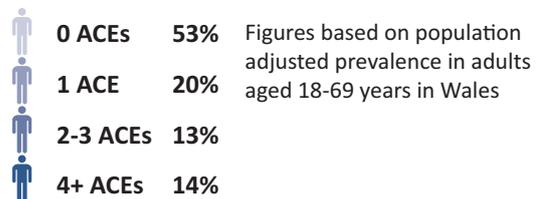
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in Wales

ACEs are stressful experiences occurring during childhood that directly harm a child (e.g. sexual or physical abuse) or affect the environment in which they live (e.g. growing up in a house with domestic violence).

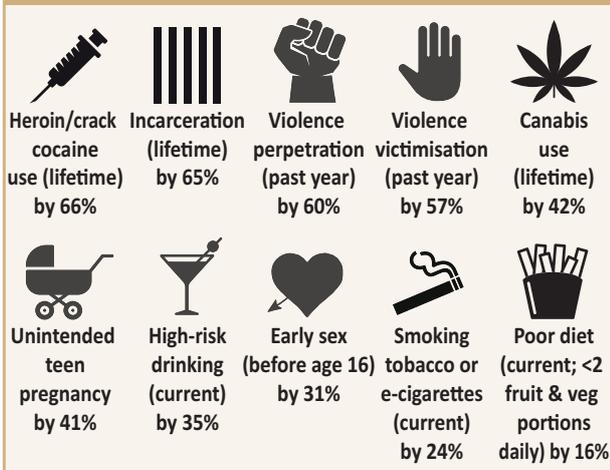
How many adults in Wales have been exposed to each ACE?



For every 100 adults in Wales 47 have suffered at least one ACE during their childhood and 14 have suffered 4 or more.



Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of:



2.6 The Right Way: A Children's Rights Approach

The **Children's Rights Approach** is a framework for working with children, grounded in the UNCRC, to help public bodies to integrate children's rights into every aspect of decision-making, policy and practice.

The principles of a Children's Rights Approach are:

- **Embedding children's rights** - organisations will prioritise children's rights in their work with children and families to improve children's lives;
- **Equality and non-discrimination** - all children are given opportunities are given the opportunities to make the most of their talents and potential;
- **Empowering children** - all children are given access to information and resources to enable them to take full advantage of their rights;
- **Participation** - children are provided meaningful opportunities to influence decisions about their lives;
- **Accountability** - authorities and individuals are accountable to children for decisions, and for outcomes that affect children's lives

2.7 Children First

Children First is the name given to children's zones in Wales. Is an approach to working collaboratively in a specific place for the benefit of children and young people.

Their purpose is to allow the local community and organisations to work together to address the needs of children and young people in the area and to reduce the inequalities some children and young people face compared with their peers in more socially advantaged places.

Carmarthenshire is one of five local authority areas from across Wales that has been accepted as a pioneer area for Children First.

Development of Children First is underway in the Glanymor and Tyisha ward, Llanelli as it is one of the most deprived areas within the county.



“Carmarthenshire is one of five local authority areas from across Wales that has been accepted as a pioneer area for Children First”

2.8 Carmarthenshire’s Corporate Strategy 2018-2023.

Welsh Governments direction is filtered through to Carmarthenshire local plans and strategies including **Carmarthenshire’s Corporate Strategy 2018-2023**.

In 2018 Carmarthenshire County Council’s presented its key aspirations for the next 5 years - **‘Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire: the next 5 years’**.

This plan identified a number of key projects and programmes that the Council will strive to deliver over the next five years and includes the need to deliver economic, environmental, social and cultural well-being in the County.

The plan includes the recognition of the need to respond to play and childcare requirements and to key issues contributing to poverty through early intervention programmes.

Responding to the Well-being of Future Generations Act, **Carmarthenshire’s Corporate Strategy 2018-2023** outlines the counties Well-being Objectives and Key Improvement priorities and includes the key projects and programmes set out in ‘Moving Forward in Carmarthenshire: the next 5 years’

There are fifteen Well-being Objectives under the headings of Start Well, Live Well, Age Well and Healthy, Safe and Prosperous Environment.

Carmarthenshire’s Corporate Strategy is the overarching strategy for children and families and recognises that we need to give every child the best start in life and support their development throughout early childhood through supporting families.

Performance in 2017/18 against our Well-being Objectives is available in the Local Authorities Annual Reports.

“Life is for living, let’s start, live and age well in a healthy, safe and prosperous environment”

 <p>Start Well</p>	 <p>Live Well</p>	 <p>Age Well</p>	 <p>Healthy, Safe & Prosperous Environment</p>
<p>Well-being Objectives</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Help to give every child the best start in life and improve their early life experiences. 2. Help children live healthy lifestyles. 3. Continue to improve learner attainment for all. 4. Reduce the number of young adults that are Not in Education, Employment or Training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Tackle poverty by doing all we can to prevent it, helping people into work & improving the lives of those living in poverty. 6. Creating more jobs and growth throughout the county. 7. Increase the availability of rented and affordable homes. 8. Help people live healthy lives (tackling risky behaviour & obesity). 9. Supporting good connections with friends, family and safer communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Support the growing numbers of older people to maintain dignity & independence in their later years. 11. A Council wide approach to supporting Ageing Well in Carmarthenshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Looking after the environment now and for the future. 13. Improving the highway and transport infrastructure and connectivity. 14. Promoting Welsh language and culture.
<p>15. Building a Better Council and Making Better Use of Resources</p>			

2.9 Statutory Duties

Information, Childcare and Play

Welsh Government have placed duties on local authorities around Childcare, Information and Play.

The **Childcare Act 2006** places statutory duty on Local Authorities to secure, as far as is reasonably practicable, provision of childcare to enable parents or carers to work or undertake education or training leading to work.

Local Authorities need to ensure there is sufficient childcare for children up to the September after the child turns 14 or the September after the child turns 18 for disabled children.

Every five years **Carmarthenshire Childcare Sufficiency Assessment** is carried out to identify gaps in childcare provision and make recommendations to help meet childcare needs.

Childcare is one of the biggest challenges facing working families in Wales. Supporting families with quality, flexible and affordable childcare supports economic regeneration, can reduce pressures on family income and help parents to participate in work

WG has committed through the **Childcare Offer for Wales** to providing 30 hours a week of funded early education and childcare for working parents of 3 and 4 year olds, for 48 weeks of the year. The Childcare Offer will be rolled out to eligible children in Carmarthenshire from January 2019.

Play

Play is an essential part of children and young people's lives. It contributes towards a child's personal and social development and their physical and mental health.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 requires local authorities to assess and secure, as far as is reasonably practical, sufficient play opportunities for children.



Family Information Service (FIS)



Gwasanaeth Gwybodaeth i Deuluoedd Family Information Service

Every Local Authority is required to establish and maintain Family Information Services (FIS).

Carmarthenshire Family Information Service is the first point of contact for local help and information for families, carers and professionals.

It provides free advice and guidance on a wide range of child and family issues including childcare options, health care, support groups, education and training, leisure activities for children and finances.



3 Family Support Services

How we support Families in Carmarthenshire

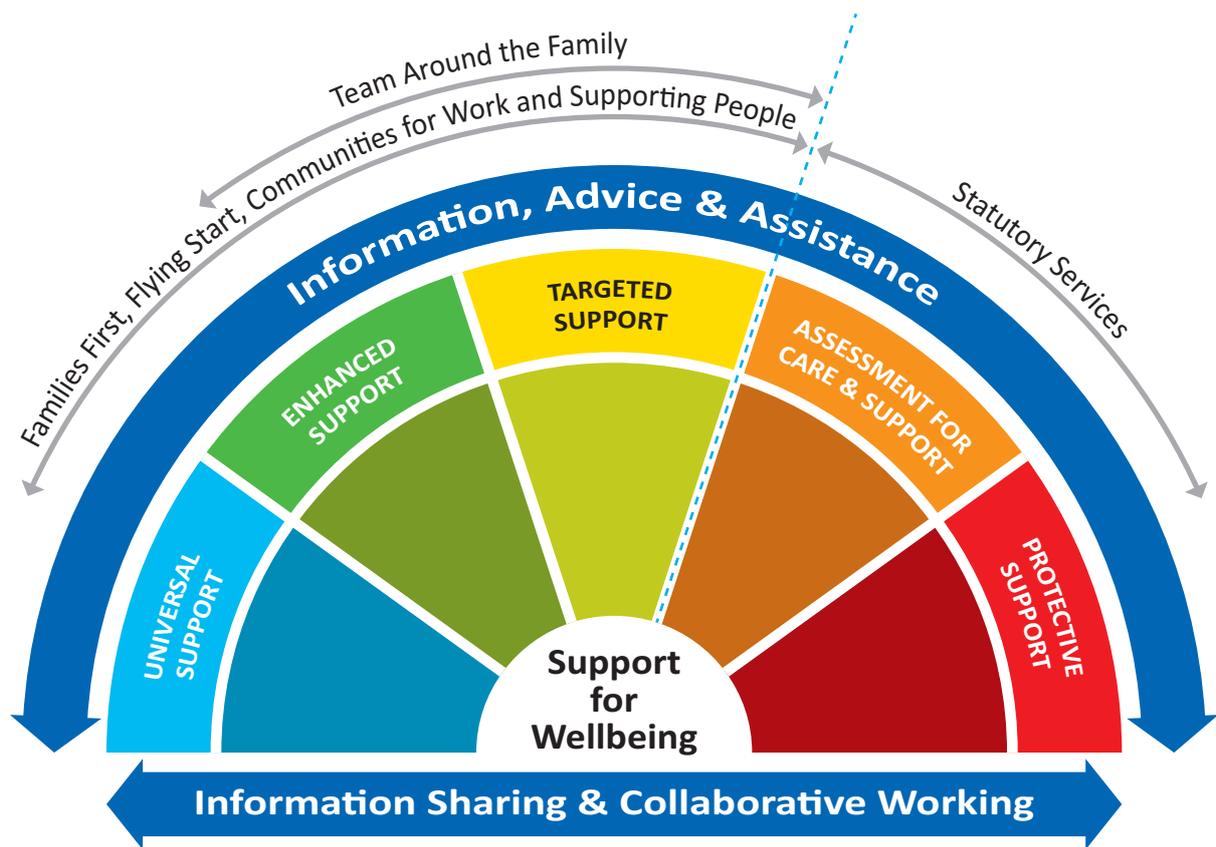
Children and family services are organised according to different levels of need and range from Universal Support to Protective Support.

The [Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Children Board \(CYSUR\)](#) has produced **"The Right Help at the Right Time"** framework to explain what services are available at the different levels to help practitioners to make appropriate referrals for children and families.

In practice there is some flexibility between the boundaries, with services working across levels and families moving in and out of the different levels depending on their changing needs.

Most children will have their needs met by their family and at universal level. Some families will have additional needs that cannot be met by universal services and will need more help. A smaller number will have complex needs and require a more extensive range of support.

Early Intervention and preventative work happens across the levels and is appropriate to what is required by an individual family or situation.



Non-Statutory Services

Universal Support

Children, young people and families whose needs are met by universal services

These include leisure centres, parks, libraries, police services, schools and nurseries as well as health services provided by GPs, dentists, midwives, school nurses and health visitors.

Universal Services are often the first contact with a child and play a vital role in supporting children, families and young people. They are a gateway to other services and can help prevent any difficulties from escalating. Usually needs are addressed at this early stage. When they cannot be, systems are put in place to tackle those needs.

Enhanced Support

Services for children, young people and families who have additional needs and may be in need of early support.

These are targeted services for children and families who are beginning to experience or are at risk of having difficulties. They support families who may need a little extra help e.g. through parenting programmes, family centres, housing support, disability services, advocacy or school based youth work Targeted services may also be used by children and young people who have an identified single need such as a health issues.

Targeted Support

Services for children, young people and families who are experiencing difficulties and need a coordinated targeted response

These services focus on children, young people and families who have multiple needs.

Services include intensive family support, substance misuse services, specialist child and adolescent mental health services, specialist safeguarding leads, safe accommodation and services for children with disabilities. Families will often have a Team around the Family Key Worker who will bring together practitioners from across different services who work together to co-ordinate support.

Statutory Services: Children's Services

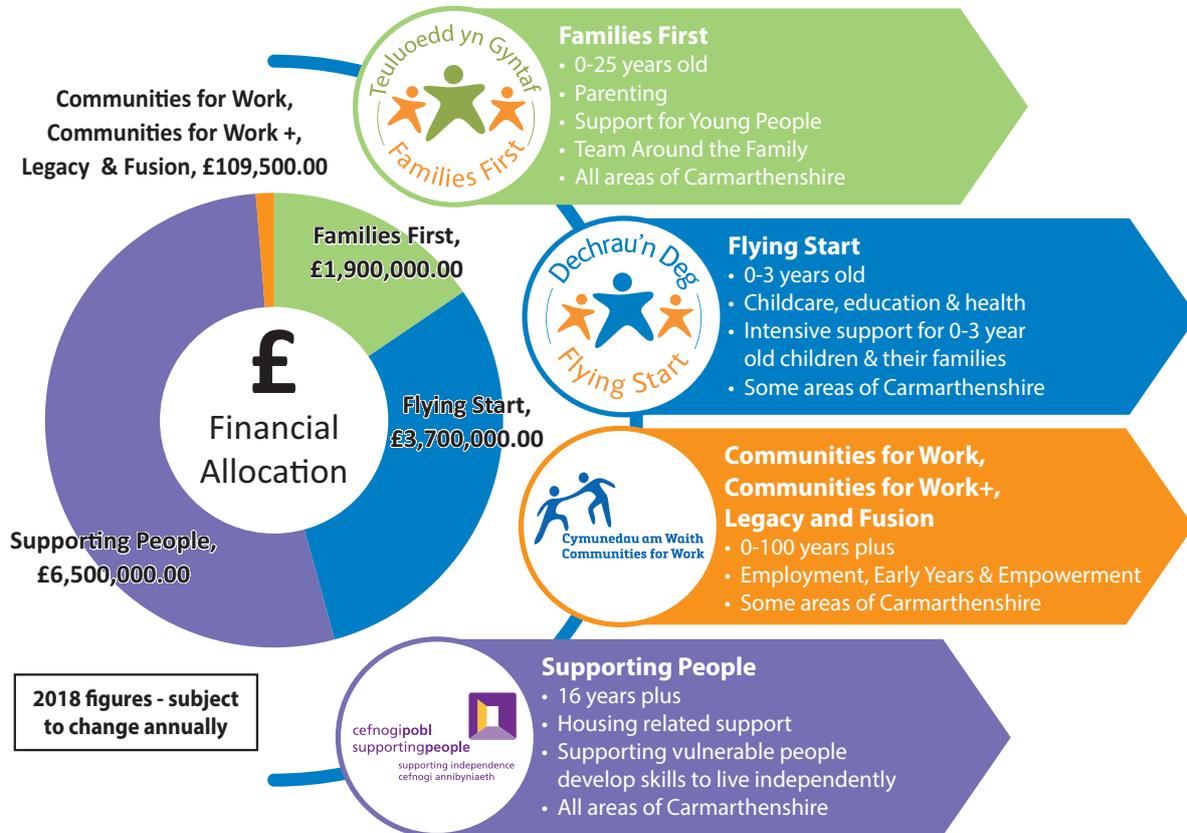
Assessment for Care and Support

Specialist support and prevention services for children, young people and families who need a Care and Support Assessment and may need a support plan.

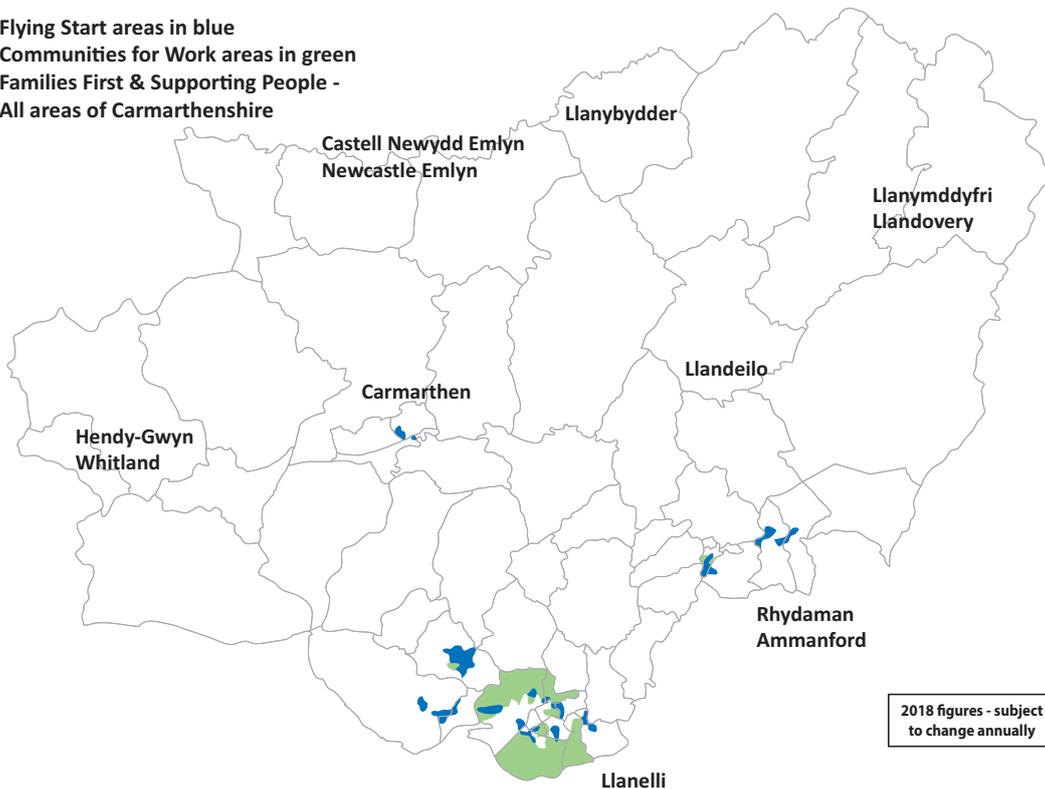
Protective Support

Services for children and young people in need of protection, protective action or urgent need of safeguarding.

Welsh Government programmes that provide non statutory support to families include Families First, Flying Start, Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, Legacy, Fusion and Supporting People.



Flying Start areas in blue
 Communities for Work areas in green
 Families First & Supporting People -
 All areas of Carmarthenshire





Families First

Families First is an early intervention project that offers guidance and support to families with children aged 0-25 years. The programme aims to help families become confident, nurturing and resilient.

Through Families First:

- Action for Children provides evidence based parenting programmes and parenting support for families. They offer practical tools, skills and information to support and guide parents as well as therapeutic support and play therapy for families with complex needs.
- Home-Start volunteers help families with children's routines & boundaries, play, reading, homework, budgeting & finances.
- Domestic Abuse Stops Here (DASH) supports children & young people affected by domestic abuse
- Local Authority Family Engagement Workers help with regular school attendance & punctuality and Family Support Workers offer intensive support for vulnerable families with complex needs to help difficult family relationships.
- Plant Dewi Family Centres offer families with children between the ages of 0-11 opportunities to socialise, build support networks and learn new skills.
- Local Authority Integrated Children's Centres provide after school play clubs, Healthy eating, cooking on a budget & parenting courses.
- The Youth Support Service supports vulnerable 10 - 18 year olds to help build resilience and develop skills to live, learn and achieve. Post 16 Youth Work support 16-25 year olds & promote education, employment, training & volunteering opportunities.
- The Youth Health Team offer specialist health and mental health support for young people and their families who have specific health needs.
- The Young Carers Service support young people who are caring for a parent (or sibling) due to illness, disability, mental health condition or substance misuse.
- Tim Camau Bach support parents with a disabled child aged 0-16 years to manage their child's needs as well as offering group based parenting, home based support and groups for young people aged 10-16 years with high functioning autism, Asperger's Syndrome, ADHD or social communication difficulties.



Team Around the Family (TAF)

The Team Around the Family (TAF) is a key element of Families First.

TAF is a collaborative way of working that brings a number of agencies together to deliver a plan of support and improve outcomes for a family, child or young person.

The **Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF)** is an assessment tool used with families to identify their strengths and plan what needs to happen to help families meet their identified needs.

If multi agency support is needed a TAF Key Worker will be identified and take the lead role in working with

families to ensure that services are coordinated and meet the family's needs.

Currently, the JAFF is predominantly used across Families First. In future, other programmes will be encouraged to contribute to the TAF and take on the key worker role.



Flying Start Carmarthenshire

The first few years in children's lives influences how well they do at school, their on-going health and wellbeing and their achievements later in life. Flying Start focuses on early identification of needs using a strengths based approach and ensures that all children develop their language and social skills and are emotionally and physically ready to begin school.

Flying Start currently operates in 18 areas of Carmarthenshire. These are:

Ammanford Town, Betws, Pantyffynnon, Garnant, Glanaman, Bigyn, Felinfoel, Morfa, Lakefield, Dafen, Llwynhendy, Carway, Pwll, Trimsaran, Burry Port, Pembrey, Richmond Park and Carmarthen Town North.

Strict postcode eligibility applies within these areas to ensure the most disadvantaged communities receive services.

There are **four key elements** that the Flying Start provides to families with children aged 0-3.

- Funded quality, part time childcare for 2-3 year olds for two and a half hours per day, Monday to Friday, for 42 weeks of the year through private, voluntary and local authority day nurseries.
- An Enhanced Health Visiting Service that supports families from the antenatal period onward.
- Parenting Programmes to help develop skills to positively parent children..

- Language Development Activities such as language & play and numbers & play to encourage parents to interact, talk, sing songs, play and enjoy craft activities with their children





Communities for Work, Communities for Work Plus, Legacy & Fusion



Following the phasing out of Communities First in 2017, four new programmes were established to support individuals across Carmarthenshire to improve their prosperity, learning and health.

Employability is the key priority across all of the programmes to tackle poverty and strengthen community resilience. Offering employability support to an individual will have a positive impact on the family unit as a whole, with outcomes extending to children and young people within the household

The programmes will focus on supporting adults who are the furthest away from the labour market into employment and on reducing the number of 16 – 24 year olds who are not in education through help with basic skills, vocational training support, work tasters and placements.

Projects covering health, prosperity, learning and community involvement activities have been designed to:

- **Reduce health inequalities through encouraging positive lifestyles**

One of the main barriers preventing individuals from accessing employment is poor health and wellbeing. There will be opportunities for individuals to participate in structured wellbeing initiatives. The levels of support that will be provided will vary and will depend on the individual's needs.

- **Increase the opportunities for individuals to upskill and enable them to access employment opportunities.**

Opportunities for adults to access training programmes by removing the barriers to training such as cost, childcare and transport.

- **Create opportunities for individuals to engage through empowerment and community involvement**

Engaging hard to reach groups and individuals will be a key priority. There will be specific projects deliver to encourage and empower individuals to actively participate in the programmes.

- **Creating opportunities through culture- Fusion:**

Opportunities to take part in arts, culture and heritage activities that promote employability and skills, build confidence, improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and support the early years through literacy and family learning programmes.



“Opportunities for adults to access training programmes by removing the barriers to training such as cost, childcare and transport”

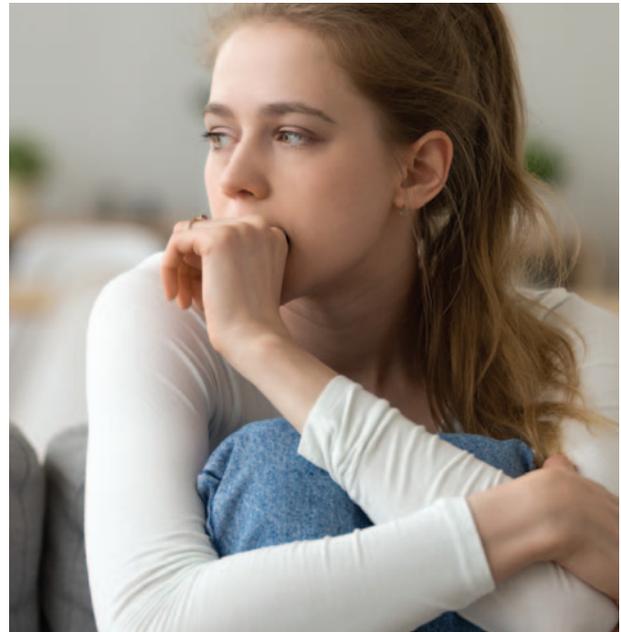


Supporting People

The Supporting People programme provides housing-related support to vulnerable people aged over 16 years who are at risk of homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, have mental health needs, substance misuse issues or learning disabilities to help them live as independently as possible.

Services include help to:

- live at own home - advice on managing personal budgets, maintaining support networks and managing relationships with neighbours;
- prevent problems from developing or providing help as early as possible to reduce demand on other services such as health and social services;
- prevent problems from developing or providing help as early as possible to reduce demand on other services such as health and social services;
- complement the personal or medical care that some people may need;
- maintain independence through support to develop skills to live independently, improving confidence and skills and enabling engagement with other programmes to access training and job opportunities.





Statutory Children's Services

Statutory Children's Services are responsible for supporting and protecting vulnerable children and families who have moved into the statutory threshold because they have additional needs beyond what health, education or community services can help with.

Children's Services have a duty to safeguard children who may be at risk of harm, whether from family members or others and promote the welfare of children and young people.

A Central Referral Team (CRT) covers the whole of Carmarthenshire and is usually the entry point for services that support and protect vulnerable children and young people.

Any safeguarding concerns about a child or family are referred to CRT. After a referral CRT will contact the parent or guardian to get their permission to speak to other agencies such as schools or health services, so that they can gather enough information to decide if the family needs support, whether support could be provided by a non-statutory or voluntary organisation or whether they need an Assessment for Care and Support.

Our aim is always to enable the family to function without statutory intervention so they will be encouraged and supported to work with non-statutory services when appropriate to do so.



Assessment for Care and Support

If necessary CRT can make a referral to the Assessment Team for an 'Assessment for Care and Support'. The Assessment Team will consider the care and support needs of a child, young person or family and investigate where there are concerns about a child's safety.

After the assessment a decision about the level of risk and the necessary action will be made. This could include signposting to a relevant service, identifying safeguarding measures within the family. There may be no further action if the child hasn't been harmed and isn't considered to be at risk of harm.

If the Care and Support Assessment identifies support needs, a Childcare Team may become involved. The Childcare Team works with the family and partner agencies to put a plan in place to meet the child's needs.

A case conference is held if the child is at risk of significant harm. At the case conference relevant professionals can work with the family, share information, identify risks, strengths and outline what needs to be done to protect the child.

If professionals at the initial case conference decide a child is at risk of significant harm they will add the child to the child protection register, and draw up a child protection plan.

Case conferences will continue at regular intervals until the child is no longer considered at risk of significant harm or until they are taken into care.

Supporting Families within Statutory Services

A number of services support families within statutory services including:

Edge of Care Team

'Edge of care' is used to describe children and young people who are at risk of becoming looked after. 'Edge of care' can also include children and young people who are returning home from care.

The Edge of Care Team provides intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple, complex problems, to find ways from stopping a child or children from

becoming looked after. Their aim is to support families address their problems and make positive changes that can reduce any risks and help their children to stay living within the family home safely.

Integrated Family Support Team (IFST)

The team work with children and families whose lives are being affected by parental drug or alcohol misuse. IFST are a multi-agency team with partners in health, education and youth offending who provide intensive support for vulnerable families where the child is at risk of harm to help keep families together and safe during difficult times in their lives.

Family Intervention Team

This team provides intensive support to parents in all aspects of raising children from birth to adulthood. The team aims to reduce the risks to and improve outcomes for children and young people throughout Carmarthenshire.

FIT provides a quality service in complex cases, working alongside the Assessment Teams and managing cases that have been stepped down from statutory services. They promote resilience and protective factors to reduce the need for ongoing statutory intervention.

Substance Misuse Services

Provides support across children's and adults services, working with children and family members affected by their own, or someone else's drug or alcohol use, to ensure that children receive the help and support they need and to prevent the need for them to come into care.

Protective Support

Services for children and young people in need of protection, protective action or urgent need of safeguarding.

If a child is in immediate danger Children's Services will seek to find a solution. The local authority can, through the court, gain an emergency protection order to immediately remove a child to a place of safety, an exclusion order to remove the abuser from the family home or as child assessment order to assess the child's needs without the parents' or carers' consent . Alternatively the police can remove a child to a place of safety for up to 72 hours without obtaining a court order.

4 Delivering for Families

How we will achieve our aims

4.1 Progress to date

In 2017 Carmarthenshire established an Alignment Group with representation from Families First, Flying Start, Supporting People and the Communities First Legacy programmes.

The Alignment Group is responsible for monitoring and agreeing priority areas for joint development and commitments and the use of budgets to support this work.

Bringing programmes closer together is not always straightforward - each has its own demands, priorities and grant requirements. Nevertheless over the last year we have jointly progressed:

- Investment from Supporting People funded Team Around the Family (Housing) Coordinator post.
- Four Families First projects received extra funding to provide housing related support.
- Transition arrangements for supporting families between Flying Start and Families First / TAF refined.
- £14k virement from Supporting People towards the delivery of Families First Disability Support services.
- New Family Information Service (FIS) website with information on all the Tackling Poverty programmes and DVDs developed for FIS, Play, Childcare, Families First, Flying Start.
- 35 practitioners received additional parenting training to develop the parenting workforce in Families First & Flying Start.
- Joint contracts between Families First and Flying Start for services in Family Centres and Integrated Children's Centres

4.2 Future Direction

Whilst Families First, Flying Start, the Communities First Legacy Funds and Supporting People each have a different focus, they all have a great deal in common aiming to encourage early intervention, provide support and to build resilience in individuals and communities.

WG wishes to encourage increased alignment and expects local authorities be able to work differently, with more opportunity to design services that support preventative, long-term approaches and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy.

Carmarthenshire is one of fifteen local authorities which has enhanced flexibility of 15% across programmes as part of WGs Flexible Funding project. This meant we had the ability to vire funds in a controlled manner between Supporting People, Flying Start, Families First and the Communities First Legacy Fund to plan more strategically, align programmes and deliver more responsive services to meet the needs of their citizens.

From 1 April 2019 two new grants will be established by Welsh Government:

- Children and Communities Grant
- Housing Support Grant

The Children and Communities grant will bring together seven grant streams under one grant, including:

- Flying Start,
- Families First,
- Legacy Fund,
- Communities for Work Plus,
- Childcare and Play,
- Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People
- St David's Day Fund.

Supporting People will sit within the Housing Support Grant.

WG have set clear expectations that the two grants should work in a seamless fashion, providing integrated services where appropriate. To ensure that we are working towards improving outcomes for all children, families and vulnerable people, a single Outcomes Framework will be developed with local authorities as part of WGs continuing co-production approach.

In Carmarthenshire we have already seen the benefits of closer working with partner programmes and are committed to continuing to align our work to benefit our families and communities.

4.3 Shared Priorities

Building on the earlier work, the Alignment Group will concentrate on five focus areas.

FOCUS AREA 1: Strengths Based Assessment, Collaboration and Smarter Planning

We will utilise a shared common needs assessment as a basis for collaborative planning and service development and look for opportunities for collaborative commissioning.

Three common priority areas for development have been identified:

- Parenting
- Income, Housing and Employment
- Emotional Health & Well-being.

We will progress work around these areas using the most appropriate mechanism eg community consultation, working group, service forums etc to ensure stronger operational planning to respond to needs and drive collaborative working and joint procurement

FOCUS AREA: 2 Information

We will continue to ensure that information is available through one central point and actively engage with service users.

We will continue to ensure that information is available through one central point, promoting the use of DEWIS and the FIS.

We will develop the FIS as a central point of contact for information about preventative services, providing people and professionals with advice and assistance. .

We will explore the potential for utilising social media and SMS text as a mechanism for promoting positive messages.

FOCUS AREA 3: Workforce Development

We will work across the range of services to develop mixed, collaborative training opportunities and look to establish a 'common' workforce.

We will further develop the workforce to work with a more co-ordinated, joined up approach to avoid duplication, utilising a TAF approach.

We will work across the range of services to further develop skill mix models, a core competency framework, collaborative training opportunities and explore opportunities for joint procurement,

FOCUS AREA 4: Referral Routes & Pathways between Projects

We will take collective responsibility for reviewing pathways and referrals between services to ensure that children, families and young people receive timely appropriate and streamlined support.

We will utilise the Cysur framework and take collective responsibility for arrangements to access services and actively work to develop a clear and accessible whole systems pathways.

We will offer training to ensure that wider teams are aware of each other's referral routes and promote our individual and collective responsibility for a family's or young person's experience of support.

FOCUS AREA 5: Engagement & Participation

We will look for opportunities and innovative ways to engage with families and communities to ensure they are listened to, treated with respect and have their race and cultural identity recognised.



5 Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Each programme has its own management and performance monitoring processes and we report to Welsh Government against key outcomes on a regular basis.

Within the Local Authority the Alignment Group will feed directly into Department Management Team. In addition, each programme develops a business plan with improvement objectives that feeds into the in house Performance Information Monitoring System. This is monitored and reported quarterly to Corporate Management Team, Scrutiny Committee and Executive Board to report our progress. If there is anything which isn't going well or not meeting our targets we have to justify and provide reasons why and what remedial action we will be taking.

At the end of the year we report on our progress during the year on the Council's annual report. It examines our progress against our plans for the year, and informs the public how we are performing and challenges we are facing. It is published in the Autumn of each year.

In addition, we will develop an annual action plan to accompany this strategy. It will be published online to highlight how we are taking our work forward.

