

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 18 November 2019
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support 2019-23
Purpose of Report:	To agree the Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support 2019-23
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health
Responsible Officer:	Director of Social Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Corporate Parenting Panel Corporate Strategy Management Group Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee All relevant stakeholders as part of the completed consultation
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision
<p>Executive Summary: This Strategy attached at Appendix 1 is the second Vale of Glamorgan Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support.</p> <p>First endorsed by Cabinet in October 2016, the initial three year Strategy marked a significant change in recognising the responsibilities of the whole Council in enabling children in need of care and support to receive the right help at the right time to improve their well-being and protect them from harm, and in aligning the roles of each Directorate in delivering the associated Action Plan.</p> <p>The Strategy has provided a shared direction over the last three years and the work achieved has helped to inform the direction going forward. The four year Strategy has been developed in partnership with our external partners in Health and the Third Sector and very positively reflects these relationships in the structure of the Strategy itself and the actions that support it.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies how the needs of children, young people and their families will be met within the resources available to the Council and its partners during the period 2019 to 2023 utilising an integrated model of services to children and young people.</p>	

The Strategy has been subject to extensive consultation with stakeholders and has been considered by the Healthy Living and Social Care Committee before being presented to Cabinet.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet endorses a new four year Corporate Strategy and Action Plan for Children who need Care and Support to replace the current Corporate Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To support the collaborative delivery of services to meet the assessed needs of children who need care and support.

1. Background

- 1.1 Children and young people who need care and support, including those looked after by the local authority and not by their parents, or within their wider families, have often been subject to multiple adverse childhood experiences and are amongst the most vulnerable in society.
- 1.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 focuses on the importance of identifying and assessing children who need care and support as early as possible, helping them to use the strengths within their families and resources in their communities to provide help and support, and intervening at a stage which prevents their needs becoming critical. In addition, as corporate parents of children who do become looked after, where it hasn't been possible to support them to live safely within their own families, it is our responsibility to keep them safe, to make sure their experiences in care are positive, and to improve the access they have to opportunities for them to succeed in life.
- 1.3 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. This Strategy recognises the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working; long-term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention.
- 1.4 The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 places an emphasis on meeting the needs of learners from 0-25 years. It also places emphasis on increasing the participation of children and young people, transition and workforce development. There are some specific arrangements in relation to children who are looked after which ensure their educational needs are coordinated effectively, including but not limited to, a requirement of the local authority to appoint a Looked After Children (LACE) Coordinator and the integration of Personal Education Plans and Individual Development Plans in order to provide a holistic approach addressing the additional learning needs of Children who are looked after.
- 1.5 A Healthier Wales published in June 2018 sets out the vision of a whole system approach to health and social care which is focused on health and well-being, and on preventing physical and mental illness. The Cardiff and Vale University Health Board Strategy is "Shaping our Future Well-Being" and is based on the

premise of care closer to home which supports the principles of A Healthier Wales.

- 1.6** This proposed Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support 2019-23 sets out how the whole Council is going to work collaboratively with its partners to improve the general well-being of children and young people who, for whatever reason, need care and support. It aligns to the Council's Corporate Plan, the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the trauma informed Well-being Strategy currently under development.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** The Strategy describes the central importance of working in partnership with families as early as possible to co-produce effective plans that seek to prevent the escalation of needs and recognise that opportunities for prevention take place at a number of key milestones within a child's journey, and that our focus should always be on enabling families to care for their children where it is safe to do so. This requires the provision of support and services, resourced sufficiently to respond to need.
- 2.2** The Strategy also considers the level of care and placements we want to provide and commission for our children who are looked after. It focuses on all stages of the care journey, articulating how we will support children in need of care and support and their families to stay together whenever it is safe to do so and, as a result, both minimise the need for children to become looked after and increase the opportunities for reunification. Where children do need to be looked after, achieving permanency is the primary goal.
- 2.3** The Strategy identifies how the needs of children, young people and their families will be met within the resources available to the Council and its partners during the period 2019 to 2023 utilising an integrated model of services to children and young people.
- 2.4** This involves children and families having, for example:
- access to quality early years nursery and education provision, which continues through school age and beyond;
 - secure and stable housing and living in safe communities;
 - access to emotional well-being services;
 - access to play, leisure and youth support services; and
 - access to targeted help when needed such as direct family support, parenting support, or services designed to prevent offending.
- 2.5** It is recognised by all those contributing to the Strategy and its associated Action Plan that it will remain an evolving document. For that reason, very positively, the Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by bringing partners together. This will enable additional actions to be added and maintain the commitment to and momentum of the Strategy.

- 2.6** All Council and partner agencies are experiencing reductions in resources and face considerable challenges in being able to protect frontline services. In the context of increasing demand and diminishing resources, we need to:
- better manage resources and reduce costs where possible;
 - reshape services to divert demand;
 - integrate and regionalise services where it makes sense to do so.
- 2.7** The Council and its partners have recognised the need to reshape to change the pattern of services and the way in which we deliver them. This is involving working together with families to reduce dependence wherever possible and focus services on prevention, using the strengths within families, communities, universal services and the Third Sector.
- 2.8** We are striving to make best use of the fact that the Council is an integral part of local government, and maximising the services delivered within the four poverty strands and the opportunities presented within the new flexible funding arrangements. We are working together to align the resources available within the wider local authority and within our external partners to meet statutory obligations and provide sustainable, flexible and innovative services. Doing this together, we are:
- developing a competent and confident workforce which is skilled, responsive and professional; and well supported by organisational frameworks;
 - working collaboratively across the whole Council and with statutory and Third Sector partners to deliver better integrated services;
 - securing better value in the use of scarce resources through efficient and effective delivery of services, promoting independence and reducing demand for intensive support services by focusing on prevention.
- 2.9** The Strategy has been subject to extensive consultation with stakeholders which has further informed the Strategy and has included the development of a 'Corporate Strategy on a Page', attached at Appendix 2 as a direct consequence of consultation with children and families. The Strategy has also been considered by the Healthy Living and Social Care Scrutiny Committee who commended its content and readability and unanimously recommended the Strategy for progression to Cabinet.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

Long Term

- 3.1** It is essential we recognise the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard our ability to also meet long-term needs.

- 3.2** The needs of some families within the Vale of Glamorgan are increasing, with a consequent increase in demand for services. The range of responsibilities under care and support include those for whom early intervention services will provide the necessary support, through to those in need of statutory support, protection or care. The level of resource available to the Council and its partners has to be allocated effectively to meet this range of need and crucially to support the provision of the right services at the right time. Universal services, such as Education and Health, have a crucial role to play in providing core services across the population. The Third Sector equally play a central role in assisting to identify and meet local need.

Integration

- 3.3** The Strategy recognises the need for its objectives and goals to be aligned. At its inception, the Strategy introduced four objectives linked to the achievement of a primary set of goals. These are outlined below and remain relevant to the continued intentions of the proposed Strategy going forward:

- **To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising across all provision.
- **To manage risk confidently and provide support at the ‘edge of care’** by making sure that need is accurately assessed, resulting in the right children being accommodated at the right time. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by supporting sustainable family arrangements within their wider family networks.
- **To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** which meet the diverse range of children’s needs.
- **To develop effective plans in partnership with children and their families** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable reunification with family and friends where possible, achieve stable placements and support children to exit care positively.

Involvement

- 3.4** The Council and its partners are committed to involving those in receipt of its services and recognising protected characteristics. In the context of children and young people, this means involving children, young people, their families, their carers and their support networks in co-producing plans that can effectively meet identified needs. It means taking a strength based approach that recognises the resources that exist within families themselves and empowering families to support themselves and to achieve change where this is necessary. It also means involving children and families in decision making, including the need to transparently articulate risks that may prevent the achievement of goals that the child or family are hoping for, and where possible managing risks confidently.

Collaboration

- 3.5** The Strategy evidences the commitment to collaboration in meeting the needs of children who need care and support. The Strategy endorsed in 2016 marked a Council-wide commitment to the shared responsibility upon Council Directorates to align services to meet need, and the Management Group has overseen the effective implementation of the action plan. The proposed Strategy has been prepared in consultation with our external partners and reflects the strength of collaborative working in the Vale of Glamorgan. The objectives of the Strategy have been accepted as common to all and provide a framework for collaboration in the interests of children who need care and support.

Prevention

- 3.6** Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse is central to the proposed Strategy in recognising the significance of us being able to collectively provide the right services at the right time and prevent escalation of need. The Information, Advice and Assistance Service delivered under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act brings together the services operating at and before the 'front door', informing effective signposting where possible and identifying the primary agent to provide information, advice and assistance. Co-located under a single Operational Manager, the Advice and Assistance elements are able to evidence de-escalation through effective working protocols that seek to offer support at the lowest tariff appropriate to meet need.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The new Corporate Strategy focuses on:
- Preventing the need for statutory interventions and provision of care and accommodation;
 - Managing the increasing expectations and demand for help and support;
 - Managing the ongoing reductions in budgets and the need to prioritise service delivery to those most in need.
- 4.2** Demand for children and young people to be looked after and for appropriate placements to be found creates pressure in this Council's budgets, most significantly in Children and Young People Services and Learning and Skills. Recognising the financial benefit to the Council as a whole and the opportunities to improve the outcomes for children, the proposed Strategy aligns the responsibilities across Directorates and our external partners and offers a shared commitment to achieving the agreed objectives.

Employment

- 4.3** There are no employment implications associated with this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** As set out in the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and other related legislation and guidance, safeguarding vulnerable children and young people in need of care and support is a key statutory responsibility of the Council.
- 4.5** The Strategy operates on the principle that all children in need of care and support should be given the opportunity to achieve their potential, to be the best that they can be. This shared commitment across all Council directorates enhances the Council's ability to meet its statutory responsibilities and the expectations which arise from our role as corporate parents.
- 4.6** Children and young people have been directly consulted on the proposed Strategy and its associated Action Plan and received it well. The 'Strategy on a Page' attached at Appendix 2 is a direct consequence of this consultation and is a positive means of communicating the intentions of the proposed Strategy to children and young people.

5. Background Papers

Proposed Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support 2019-23 – Appendix 1

Corporate Strategy on a Page – Appendix 2



VALE OF GLAMORGAN CORPORATE STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN WHO NEED CARE AND SUPPORT

2019 – 2023

‘Delivering our ambitions together’



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board



Credwch
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HOW
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INTRODUCTION

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is pleased to introduce its second Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support.

First endorsed by Cabinet in October 2016, the initial three year Strategy marked a significant change in recognising the responsibilities of the whole Council in enabling children in need of care and support to receive the right help at the right time to improve their well-being and protect them from harm, and in aligning the roles of each Directorate in delivering the associated Action Plan.

This new four year Strategy has been developed in partnership with our external partners in Health and the Third Sector and very positively reflects these relationships in the structure of the Strategy itself and the actions that support it.

Children and young people who need care and support, including those looked after by the local authority and not by their parents, or within their wider families, have often been subject to multiple adverse childhood experiences and are amongst the most vulnerable in society.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 focuses on the importance of identifying and assessing children who need care and support as early as possible, helping them to use the strengths within their families and resources in their communities to provide help and support, and intervening at a stage which prevents needs becoming critical. In addition, as corporate parents of children who do become looked after, where it hasn't been possible to support them to live safely within their own families, it is our responsibility to keep them safe, to make sure their experiences in care are positive, and to improve the access they have to opportunities for them to succeed in life.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires public bodies in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. This Strategy recognises the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working; long-term, integration, involvement, collaboration and prevention.

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 places an emphasis on meeting the needs of learners from 0-25 years. It also places emphasis on increasing the participation of children and young people, transition and workforce development. There are some more specific arrangements for children who are looked after.

A Healthier Wales published in June 2018 sets out the vision of a whole system approach to health and social care which is focused on health and well-being, and on preventing physical and mental illness. The Cardiff and

Vale University Health Board Strategy is called Shaping our Future Well-Being and is based on the premise of care closer to home which supports the principles of A Healthier Wales.

This Corporate Strategy for Children who need Care and Support sets out how the whole Council is going to work collaboratively with its partners to improve the general well-being of children and young people who, for whatever reason, need care and support. It aligns to the Council's Corporate Plan, the Homelessness Prevention Strategy and the trauma informed Well-being Strategy currently under development.

The Strategy describes the central importance of working in partnership with families as early as possible to co-produce effective plans that seek to prevent the escalation of needs and recognise that opportunities for prevention take place at a number of key milestones within a child's journey, and that our focus should always be on enabling families to care for their children where it is safe to do so. This requires the provision of support and services, resourced sufficiently to respond to need.

The Strategy also considers the level of care and placements we want to provide and commission for our children looked after. It focuses on all stages of the care journey, articulating how we will support children in need of care and support and their families to stay together whenever it is safe to do so and, as a result, both minimise the need for children to become looked after and increase the opportunities for reunification. Where children do need to be looked after, achieving permanency is the primary goal.

The Strategy identifies how the needs of children, young people and their families will be met within the resources available to the Council and its partners during the period 2019 to 2023 utilising an integrated model of services to children and young people.

This involves children and families having, for example:

- access to quality early years nursery and education provision, which continues through school age and beyond;
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- access to targeted help when needed such as direct family support, parenting support, or services designed to prevent offending.

It is recognised by all those contributing to this Strategy and its associated Action Plan that it will remain an evolving document. For that reason, very positively, the Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by bringing partners together. This will enable additional actions to be added and maintain the commitment to and momentum of the Strategy.

CONTEXT

All Council and partner agencies are experiencing reductions in resources and face considerable challenges in being able to protect frontline services. In the context of increasing demand and diminishing resources, we need to:

- better manage resources and reduce costs where possible;
- reshape services to divert demand;
- integrate and regionalise services where it makes sense to do so.

The Council and its partners have recognised the need to reshape to change the pattern of services and the way in which we deliver them. This is involving working together with families to reduce dependence wherever possible and focus services on prevention, using the strengths within families, communities, universal services and the Third Sector.

We are striving to make best use of the fact that the Council is an integral part of local government, and maximising the services delivered within the four poverty strands and the opportunities presented within the new flexible funding arrangements. We are working together to align the resources available within the wider local authority and within our external partners to meet statutory obligations and provide sustainable, flexible and innovative services. Doing this together, we are:

- developing a competent and confident workforce which is skilled, responsive and professional; and well supported by organisational frameworks;
- working collaboratively across the whole Council and with statutory and Third Sector partners to deliver better integrated services;
- securing better value in the use of scarce resources through efficient and effective delivery of services, promoting independence and reducing demand for intensive support services by focusing on prevention.

Long term

It is essential we recognise the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard our ability to also meet long-term needs.

The needs of some families within the Vale of Glamorgan are increasing, with a consequent increase in demand for services. The range of responsibilities include those for whom early intervention services will provide the necessary support, through to those in need of statutory support, protection or care. The level of resource available to the Council and its partners has to be allocated effectively to meet this range of need and crucially to support the provision of the right services at the right time. Universal services, such as Education and Health, have a crucial role to play in providing core services across the population. The Third Sector equally play a central role in assisting to identify and meet local need.

Integration

The Strategy recognises the need for its objectives and goals to be aligned. At its inception, the Strategy introduced four objectives linked to the achievement of a primary set of goals. These are outlined below and remain relevant to the continued intentions of the Strategy going forward:

- 1. To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising across all provision.
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- 3. To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** which meet the diverse range of children's needs.
- 4. To develop effective plans in partnership with children and their families** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable reunification with family and friends where possible, achieve stable placements and support children to exit care positively.

Involvement

The Council and its partners are committed to involving those in receipt of its services and recognising protected characteristics. In the context of children and young people, this means involving children, young people, their families, their carers and their support networks in co-producing plans that can effectively meet identified needs. It means taking a strength based approach that recognises the resources that exist within families themselves and empowering families to support themselves and to achieve change where this is necessary. It also means involving children and families in decision making, including the need to transparently articulate risks that may prevent the achievement of goals that the child or family are hoping for, and where possible managing risks confidently.

Collaboration

The Strategy evidences the commitment to collaboration in meeting the needs of children who need care and support. It has been prepared in consultation with our external partners and reflects the strength of collaborative working in the Vale of Glamorgan. The objectives of the Strategy have been accepted as common to all and provide a framework for collaboration in the interests of children who need care and support.

Prevention

Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse is central to the Strategy in recognising the significance of us being able to collectively provide the right services at the right time and prevent escalation of need. The Information, Advice and Assistance Service delivered under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act brings together the services operating at and before the 'front door', informing effective signposting where possible and identifying the primary agent to provide information, advice and assistance. The Advice and Assistance elements are able to evidence de-escalation through effective working protocols that seek to offer support at the lowest tariff appropriate to meet need.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

The Vale of Glamorgan is both a prosperous and a deprived Council with areas of high need. There are approximately 28,596 children and young people aged 0 to 18 living within the Council's boundary.

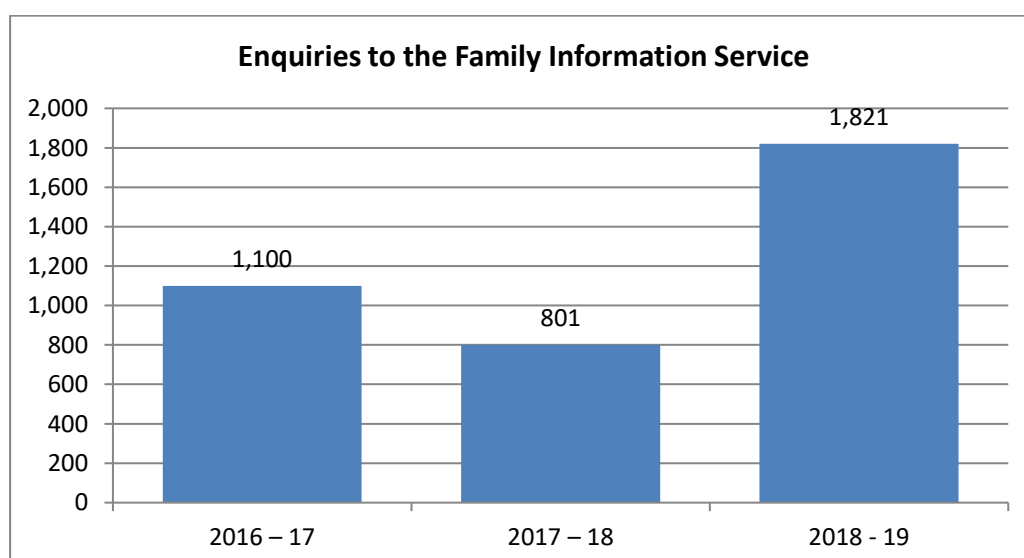
Based on the most recent census (2011), the population of the Vale of Glamorgan is 127,685. This number is expected to rise by 0.76% each year to 2023. The age profile of the Vale of Glamorgan's population is also expected to change; the number of children (age 0 - 14) is forecast to rise to almost 25,000 by 2023.

In understanding the level of need, it is important to understand this across key areas of involvement with children and their families. The data provided below is not mutually exclusive and there will be areas of duplication where a child is for example subject of a child protection plan and pre proceedings, or subject of care proceedings and looked after. What the data does illustrate is an increase in demand, the complexity that exists when working with children and their families, and the importance of a system that is able to respond across a range of support interventions.

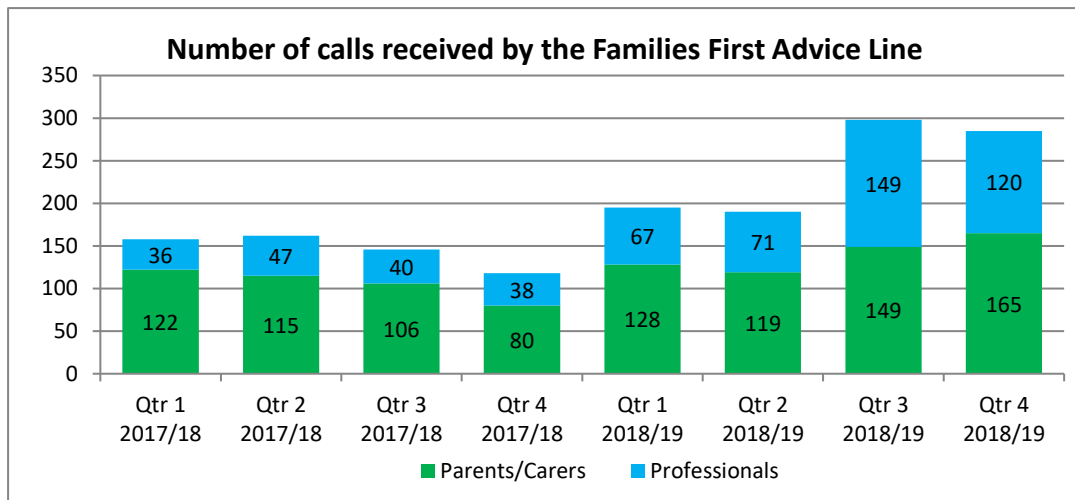
Information, Advice and Assistance

In line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, the Vale of Glamorgan provides an Information, Advice and Assistance Service. The data below illustrates an increase in the number of contacts received by each element of that Service; the Family Information Service, the Families First Advice Line and the Duty function of the Intake and Family Support Team.

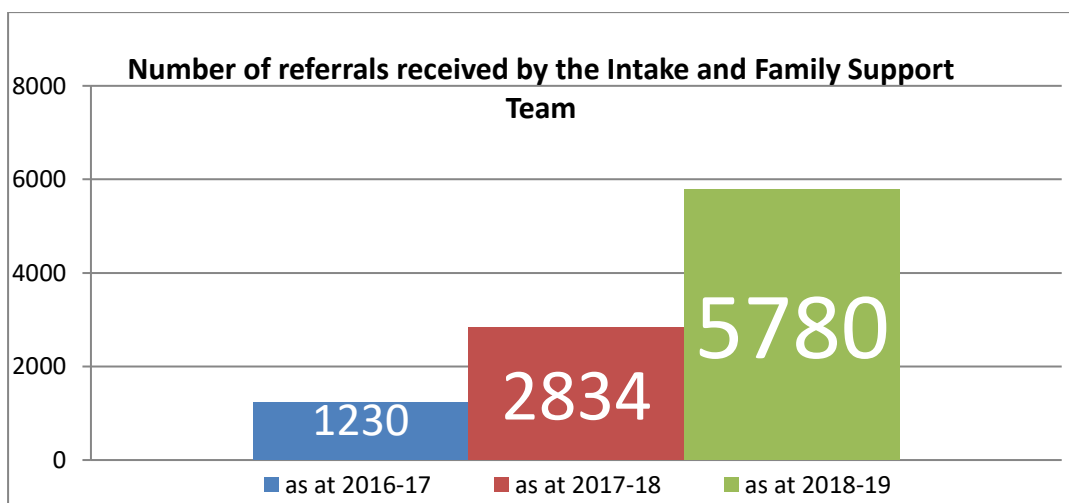
The Family Information Service provides an information service, with the greatest number of enquiries generated online and through outreach activities. Childcare related enquiries are the most frequent, however there is a steady stream with regard to health, well-being and leisure enquiries.



The Families First Advice Line is the central point of contact for parents, carers and professionals in the Vale of Glamorgan seeking information, advice and guidance in improving families' well-being, relationships and resilience. In addition to providing advice and signposting, the Advice Line acts as a single point of access to a number of Families First projects. Calls to the Advice Line have increased considerably with anticipated growth of 100% over the next 12 months.



The Duty function of the Intake and Family Support Team receive referrals into Children and Young People Services. Although the data below is impacted by the change in the way contacts received have been recorded since 2018 (now all recorded as referrals, rather than as contacts and referrals) it illustrates a year on year increase. The previous system counted referrals as those contacts requiring social work involvement hence the significant increase in referrals in 2018/19. Since 2018 not all referrals will require social work involvement; some will require no further action, signposting or advice, and others will go on to require a proportionate assessment.



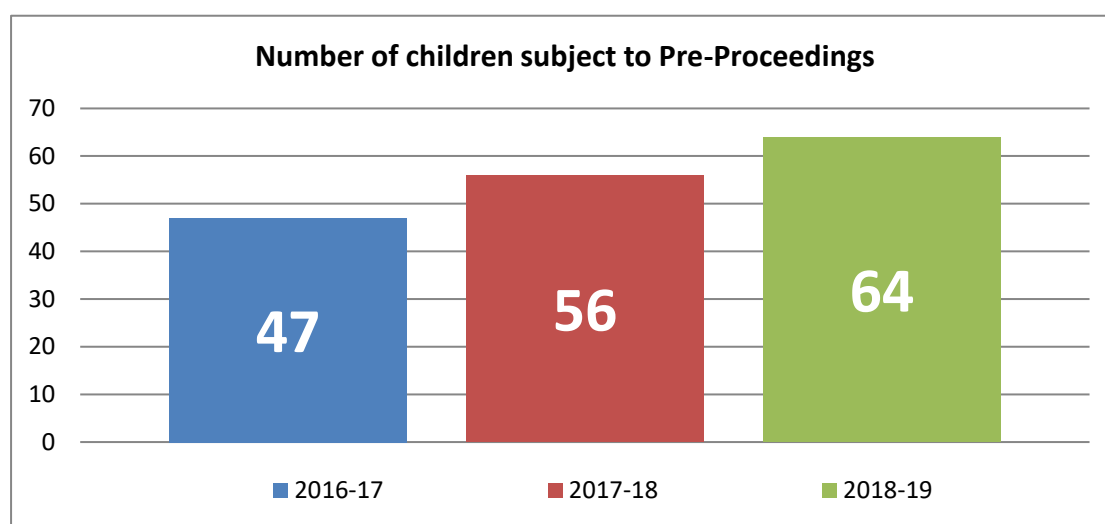
Care and Support

As at 31.3.19, the Vale of Glamorgan were supporting 678 children and young people who were assessed as requiring Care and Support.

This includes 64 children who were subject to a Child Protection Plan and 281 Children Looked After.

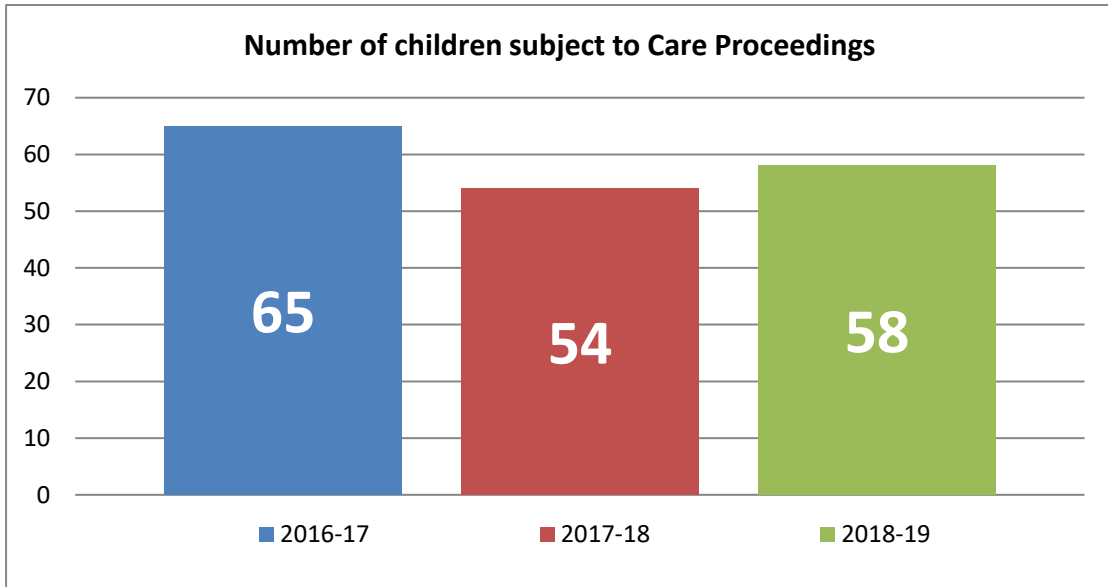
It also includes children subject to pre-proceedings where the Council has identified significant concerns and has not been able to make progress under a Child Protection or Care and Support Plan and is working with the family to prevent the initiation of care proceedings, and care proceedings where this level of intervention has been initiated and planning for the child is taking place under the oversight of the Court.

The number of children and young people subject to pre-proceedings has increased over the last three years.



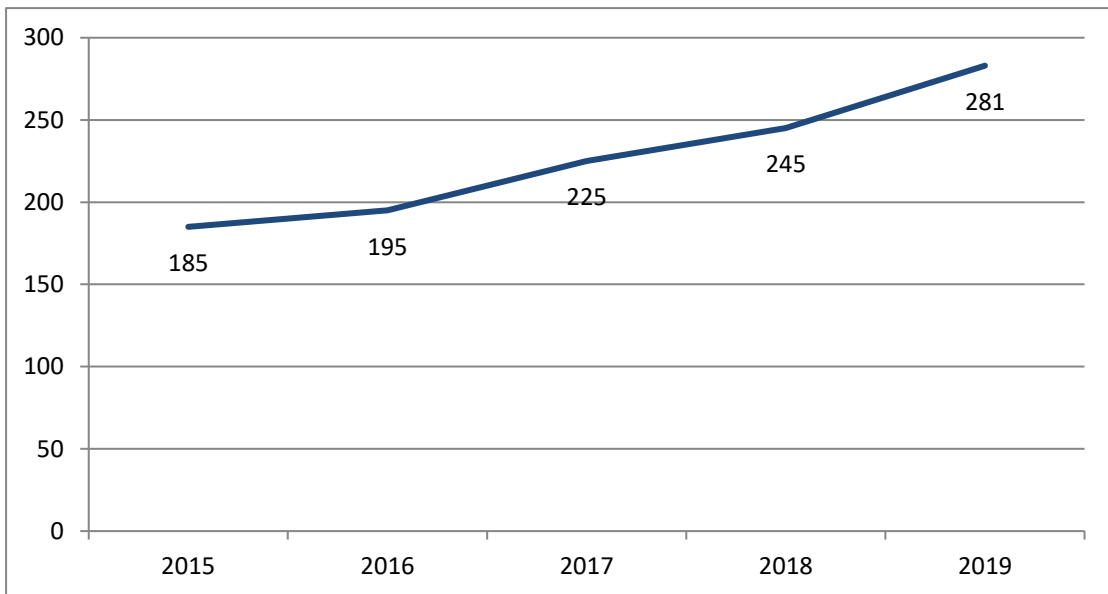
Although the figures below suggest an overall decrease in the number of children subject to care proceedings over the last three years, figures for 2016/17 were slightly higher than 2017/18 due to a number of large families.

As at 31.3.19 the Council looked after 200 children and young people subject to Care Orders, 37 subject to Interim Care Orders, 18 children subject to Placement Orders and 2 children subject to Secure Orders.

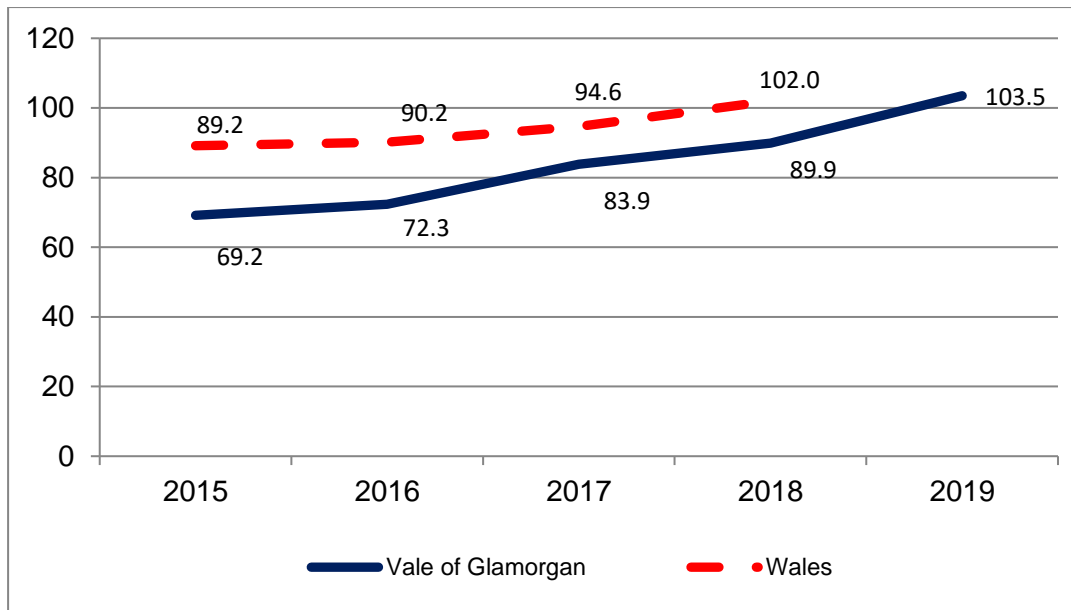


Children Looked After

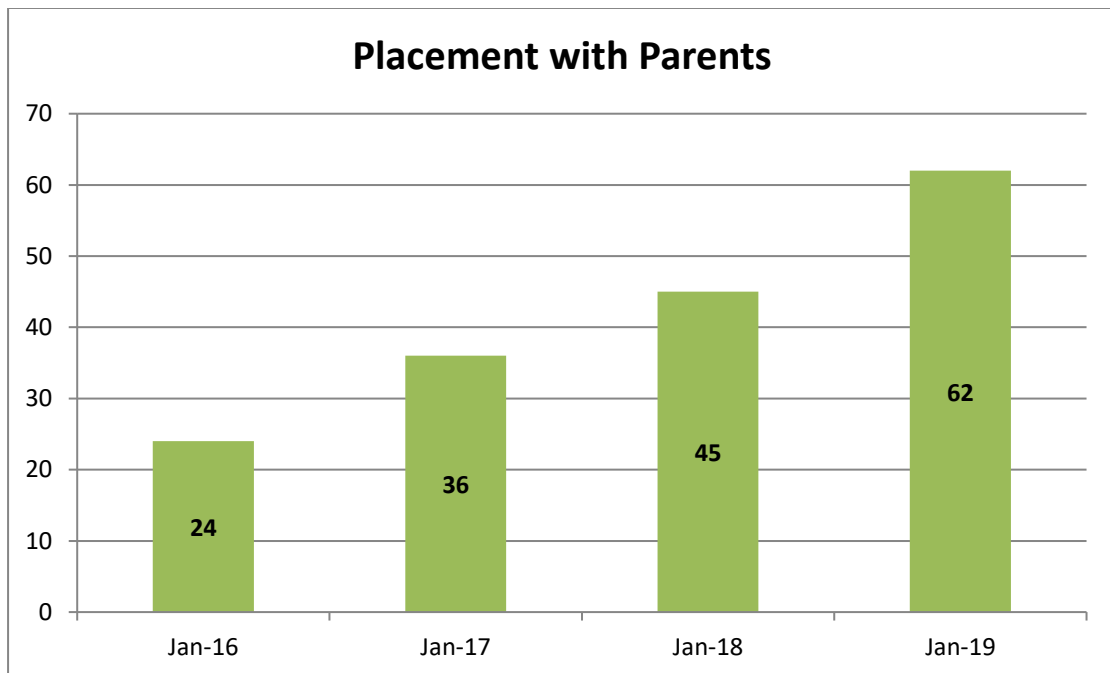
The number of Children Looked After by the Council has increased over the last four years, from 185 on 31.3.15. to 281 on 31.3.19.

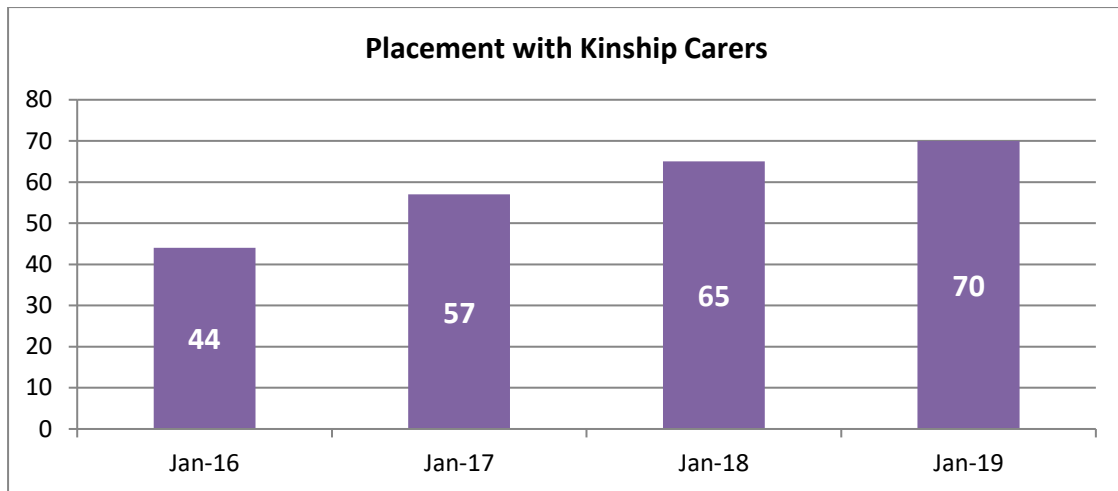


The rate per 10,000 of the population has similarly increased.

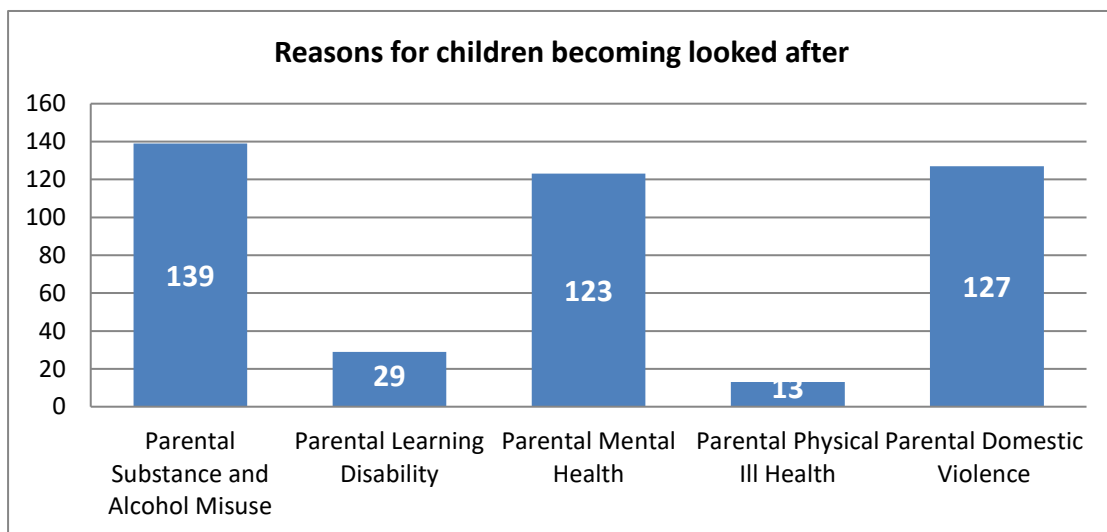


A breakdown of these figures shows the largest increase is in children placed within their own families; either with their own parents or wider family (kinship). These children are subject to Care Orders granted by the Court where the care plan for the child has endorsed placement within their own families but where the Council shares parental responsibility.

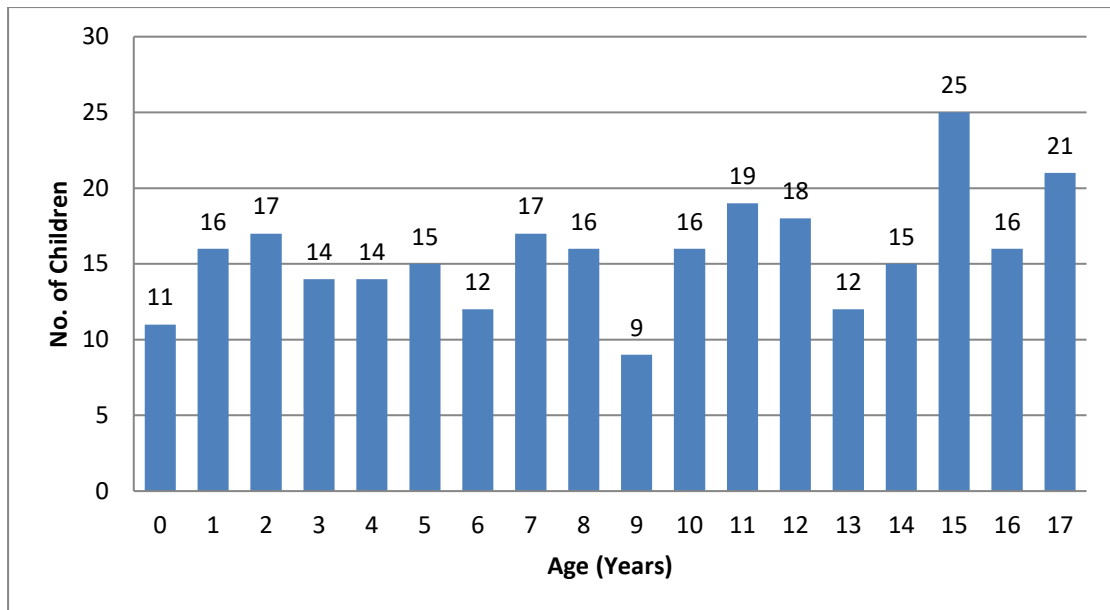




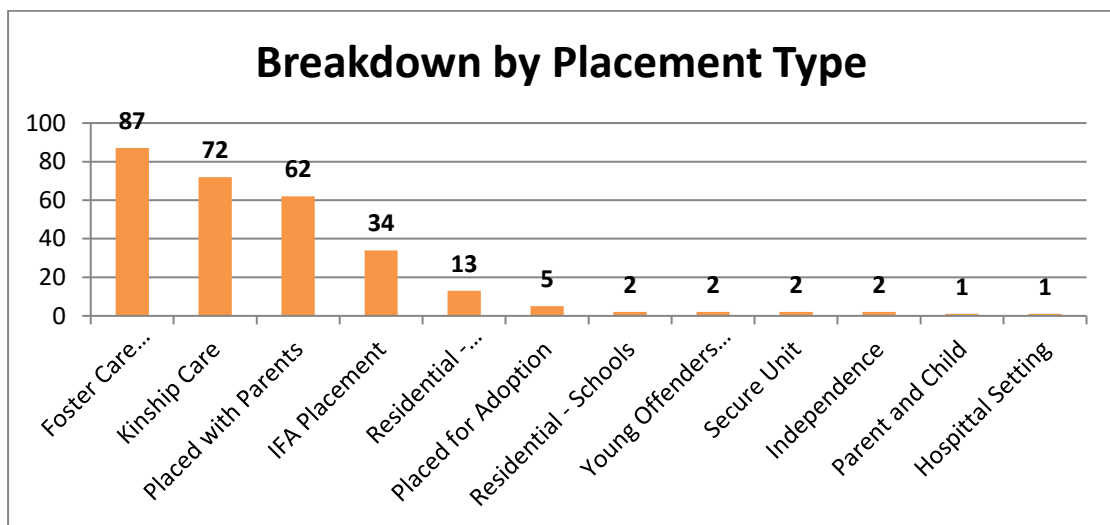
There are a number of reasons why children become looked after, and it is rarely a single reason that requires this level of intervention. The figures below illustrate the primary reasons for children becoming looked after in the Vale of Glamorgan as parental substance and alcohol misuse, parental mental health and parental domestic violence.



As at 31.3.19 the ages of our children looked after are greatest in number for those aged 15 but are across all age groups. In 2019/20 19 children currently looked after will turn 18.



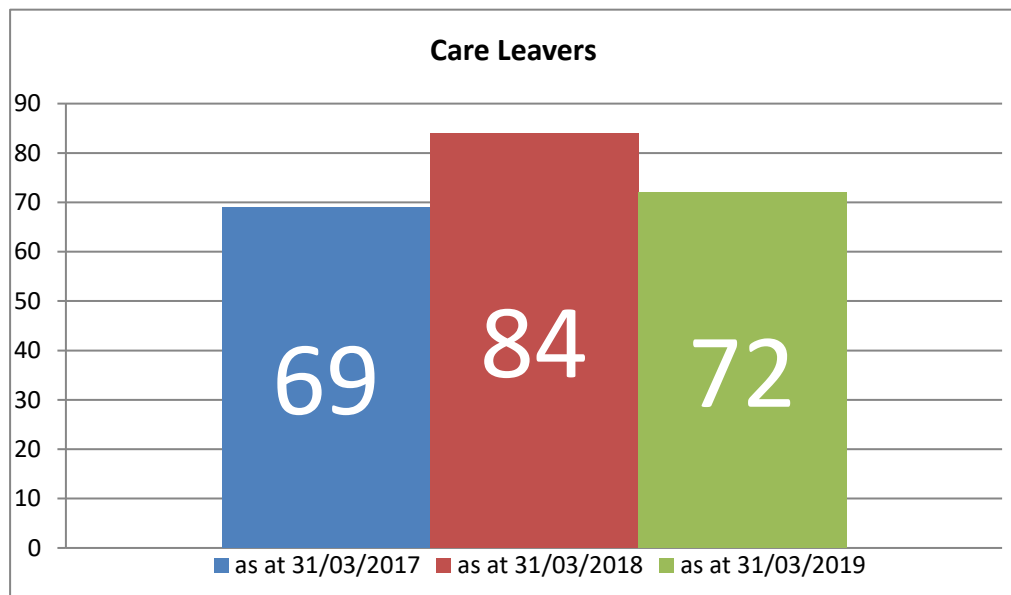
As at 31.3.19, the highest number of our children looked after are placed with mainstream foster carers approved by the Council (87). A smaller number are placed with independent foster carers - IFA (34). 13 children are placed in residential care, 2 in residential schools and 2 in secure accommodation. Although these numbers are low in comparison to foster care, they are the placements of highest cost and have the greatest impact on the budget.



The Council's spend on external residential and fostering placements (those commissioned from the independent sector) has increased from £3.226 million in 2016/17 to £4.839 million in 2018/19; an increase of £1.6 million. The individual costs of these placements have increased over the last three years, with the average cost of an independent fostering agency placement now at £730 per week and the average cost of a residential placement now at £4200 per week.

Care Leavers

The Council also has a responsibility to support those over 18 years of age who have left care. As of April 2018 the Welsh Government extended the age Care Leavers are entitled to receive support from their Local Authorities from 21 years to 25 years of age. Therefore, over the coming years the number of Care Leavers supported will increase. In addition there are currently 79 children looked after aged between 14 -17 years who will become Care Leavers over the next three years.

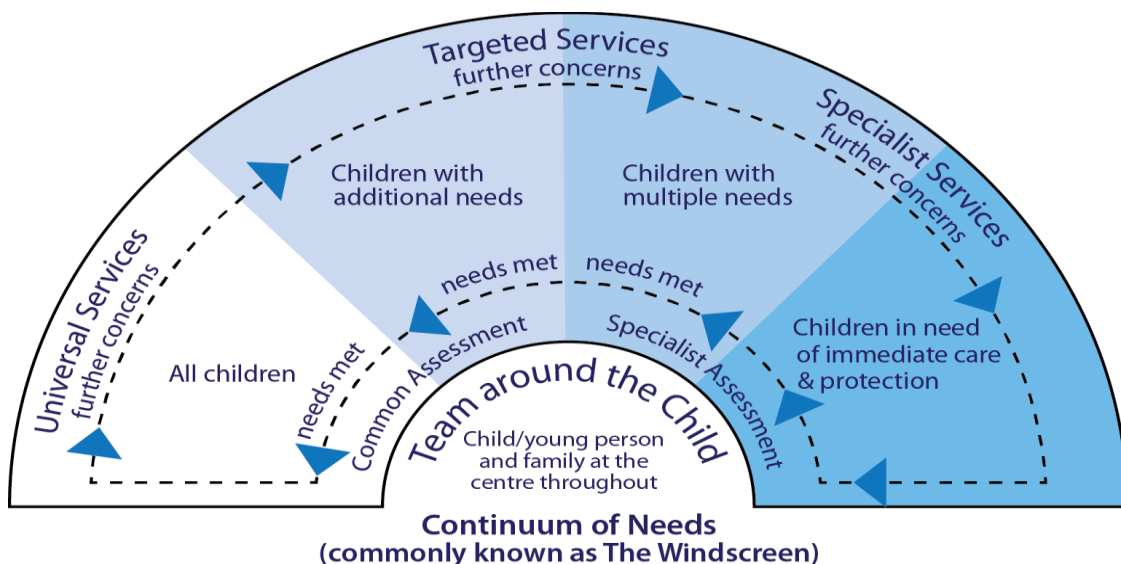


CONTINUUM OF NEEDS

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act requires us to work in a new way with children, young people and their families, identifying with them what matters most to them, and assisting them to find services and support within their families and communities that will make a positive difference to their well-being.

Children and families eligible for care and support need good, responsive universal and targeted services that help at the earliest point when families are experiencing challenges and are focused towards preventing their needs for support becoming long-term. The Strategy recognises how services across the Council and those provided by partners can contribute to this approach. The Strategy also recognises that situations are dynamic and the needs of children, young people and their families can increase and decrease over time and services be revisited at different stages.

The work of the Strategy thus far has demonstrated how we can effectively work together across all tiers of need and provision to enable our most vulnerable children and young people who do have needs for care and support and are eligible for help from statutory services, to have the best chance to stay safely with their own families or to have the best possible alternative care if this is not possible, or for the period of time alternative care is required.



KEY OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

1. **To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to become looked after, by focusing on services which intervene early and prevent greater need arising across all provision.
2. **To manage risk confidently and provide support at the edge of care** by making sure that need is accurately assessed, resulting in the right children being accommodated at the right time. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by supporting sustainable family arrangements within their wider family networks.
3. **To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements** which meet the diverse range of children's needs.
4. **To develop effective plans in partnership with children and their families** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable reunification with family and friends where possible, achieve stable placements and support children to exit care positively.

These objectives and goals are underpinned by the following principles:

- i) The responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people looked after or at risk of becoming looked after rests across all services for children, including statutory and Third Sector partners, and is always exercised in partnership with children and their families.
- ii) The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
- iii) Preventative services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided to empower families to stay together.
- iv) Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, families will be supported to achieve sustainable family arrangements within their wider family and friendship networks and, where necessary, to make these arrangements permanent through the use of Child Arrangement Orders.
- v) Formal kinship fostering arrangements will be explored in partnership with children and their families as the preferred alternative arrangement where it is necessary for the local authority to share parental responsibility or intervene in managing risk and protecting children, but with clear step down plans to alternative Orders.
- vi) Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements described in goals iv) and v), consideration will be given to the needs of the child and how they can be met in a substitute family,

preferably with in-house foster carers and, if not, with independent fostering agency carers, wherever possible living within the Vale of Glamorgan.

- vii) Residential care placements will be made only where the complexity and challenge of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting, or where a young person is subject to a Court ordered secure remand. Efforts will always be focused on stepping down from residential care wherever possible.
- viii) Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.
- ix) Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs. It is the role of the multi-agency Placement Panel to agree that a child should become looked after and consider the most appropriate type of placement to meet these needs, with due consideration given to the views of the child and the available resources.
- x) All children looked after of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school. Providing appropriate support to enable engagement in education is just as important as finding suitable care placements for children looked after.
- xi) Placements should support a positive transition to independence, adulthood, education, employment, and training and, where applicable, resettlement back into the community from custodial settings.

OBJECTIVE 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER

Principles

- i) The responsibility for meeting the needs of children and young people looked after or at risk of becoming looked after rests across all service provision for children including statutory and third sector partners.
- ii) The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
- iii) Preventative services and early intervention to support children in need and their families should be provided to empower families to stay together.

Children and young people's needs are best met in their own families wherever this can be safely supported. Helping families stay together is a key objective of this Strategy and the commitment to inclusive and co-ordinated approaches in responding to families in need. The Council and its partners are signed up to identifying where children and families are struggling as early as possible and being able to work in partnership with children and their families to offer good advice, information, assessment and interventions at the right level at the right time.

OBJECTIVE 2: TO MANAGE RISK CONFIDENTLY AND SUPPORT FAMILIES AT THE EDGE OF CARE

Principles

- i) The majority of children are most likely to thrive and achieve good outcomes if they are cared for within their own families.
- ii) Where children cannot be supported within their immediate family, families will be supported to make private arrangements within their wider family and friendship networks and, where necessary, to make these permanent via Child Arrangement Orders (formerly Residence Orders and Special Guardianship Orders).

It is essential we are able to ensure the right children are accommodated at the right time. To do this, we need to be able to manage risk safely with families who are approaching the threshold for care proceedings to be issued. We will carry out timely and proportionate assessments, co-produce a plan of action, and directly deliver and/or commission interventions which support families to make changes, always ensuring that children and young people are kept safe.

We need to support staff to make safe risk assessments and be confident about planning for and managing risk to a child across all settings. It will need other family members, nursery staff, teachers, housing officers, play and youth leaders and out of hours services to be clear about their role in helping to manage risk to a child, to be observant through their daily contact with children and families, and responsive to any welfare concerns they see. For children whose names are placed on the Child Protection Register, staff across the Council and agencies involved will work together under the Wales Safeguarding Procedures to protect children and safeguard them from harm.

When a family is experiencing difficulties or has reached a point of crisis which impacts on their ability to provide care, we will support them to explore whether there are people within their wider family and friendship network who can safely care for the child or young person, either temporarily or on a permanent basis, by supporting sustainable family arrangements.

For children who cannot remain living with parents and for whom the family are making arrangements for permanency, this can be achieved via a Child Arrangement Order and we will work with the family to achieve this. Ratification of the plan and future support needs based on assessment will take place at the Permanency Panel.

Families sometimes need respite from caring or time and space to resolve stressful, chaotic situations and achieve change. Short break care and respite can be provided for disabled children and young people and to children and young people on the edge of care, reducing the need for them to come into

longer term or permanent care. Use of other forms of non-staying respite can assist families to access the most appropriate level of support when they need it.

A small number of children and young people may require immediate accommodation as a result of an emergency, a Court Order or because of their involvement in the Criminal Justice System. It is important to review these arrangements as early as possible to ensure that children accommodated in emergency situations have co-produced, time limited plans in place that focus on rehabilitation to family and friends where it is safe to do so.

The continuing involvement of other agencies in working alongside families and in placement decision making and review is critical. This helps to ensure that a holistic approach to meeting the child's needs is taken, for example minimising disruption to school attendance because of placement location.

The ability to continue to provide a range of accommodation options for 16 and 17 year olds that both prevent homelessness and support step down from care placements where this is appropriate to the young person's needs.

OBJECTIVE 3: TO PROVIDE AND COMMISSION A FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE RANGE OF HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS

Principles

- i) Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.
- ii) Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs. It is the role of the Placement Panel to agree that a child should become looked after and consider the most appropriate type of placement to meet these needs with due consideration given to the available resources.
- iii) Formal kinship fostering arrangements will be explored as the preferred alternative arrangement where it is necessary for the local authority to share parental responsibility or intervene in managing risk and protect children.
- iv) Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements described in principles iv) and v), the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family provided preferably by in-house foster carers and if not with independent fostering agency carers, wherever possible within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- v) Residential placements will only be made where the complexity and challenge of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting or where a young person is subject of a Court ordered secure remand. Efforts will always be focused on stepping down from residential care wherever possible.

Placement provision is recognised within the Strategy as a significant area of challenge and one that remains unresolved. In keeping with the situation nationally, placement demand is outstripping supply and there are considerable challenges in being able to match children to placements effectively. We will continue to try to provide or commission the right range of placements which provide positive experiences for children and young people who are looked after. We do not have sufficient placements available in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet both demand and the diverse range/complexity of needs. We have an increasing number of children and young people placed out of the area and a small number placed outside of Wales.

Continued efforts are needed in a range of areas if we are to effectively secure the necessary range of local placement provision for those children who need to be looked after:

- Increasing the number and capacity of Vale of Glamorgan in-house fostering placements.
- Being able to recruit foster carers to meet the breadth and scale of need.
- To reduce the use made of independent fostering agency placements so that placements in this sector are complementing our in-house provision through targeted commissioning of more specialist provisions, rather than being used when an in-house foster placement is not available.
- Managing demand for mainstream and specialist residential placements.
- Make fewer mainstream residential placements and make them closer to home.
- Finding specialist placements which support older disabled children and young people in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Jointly commission accommodation for young people between the ages of 16 and 21 years.

OBJECTIVE 4: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Principles

- i) Placement requests should be defined in terms of the child/young person's needs. It is the role of the Placement Panel to agree that child should become looked after and consider the most appropriate type of placement to meet these needs with due consideration given to the available resources.
- ii) All children looked after of statutory school age should receive appropriate education provision regardless of their placement and ability to access school. Providing appropriate support to enable engagement in education is just as important as finding suitable care placements for children looked after.
- iii) Placements should support positive transitions to independence, adulthood, education, employment and training enabling young people to succeed.
- iv) Where a child's needs cannot be adequately met through the arrangements described in iv) and v) above, the majority will have their needs met best in a substitute family provided preferably by in-house foster carers and, if not, with Independent Fostering Agency carers, wherever possible within the Vale of Glamorgan.
- v) Residential placements will only be made where the complexity and challenge of a child or young person's needs mean they are unable to live within a family setting or where a young person is subject of a Court ordered secure remand. Efforts will always be focused on stepping down from residential care wherever possible.
- vi) Placements should be local to enable children and young people to remain in their communities, maintain their networks and minimise disruption in their lives.

We are committed to working jointly with children to develop their plans which allow them to be re-united with family and friends wherever possible, or have stable placements with carers or in care homes, and to leave the care system positively when they are ready to do so.

Being able to achieve this requires the following:

- An ability to find the right placements based on detailed information that supports effective matching of children to the most appropriate placements to meet their needs. A wide range of high quality placements supported by integrated assessment and effective planning.

- Giving children stability and permanence as quickly as possible through:
 - reunification with their birth family
 - living with other family and friends
 - long-term fostering
 - adoption
- Monitoring drift in care planning through effective independent reviewing arrangements.
- Working with children and families and colleagues in the child care legal team and CAFCASS to review the legal status of all long term placements to consider the revocation of Care Orders, or the granting of Child Arrangement Orders when this is appropriate for the child.
- Ensuring all children looked after have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which is matched to their educational needs.
- Helping young people prepare for adulthood and independence.
- Ensuring professional involvement across a range of agencies is purposeful and clearly explained.

CONCLUSION

This Strategy presents an exciting and real opportunity to build on the achievements in the first Strategy.

By setting out how the Vale of Glamorgan Council will deliver corporately on our commitment to children and young people who need care and support, the Strategy outlines the central importance of working with partners to co-produce plans with families that focus on what matters to them and seeks to build on strengths that enable wherever possible children to be brought up within their families.

The Council's political arrangements in relation to corporate parenting are a vital part of how the Council demonstrates its commitment to corporate parenting. The Council's Corporate Parenting Panel appropriately recognised by Cabinet is key to promoting the ability of the Panel to deliver its responsibilities and to ensuring the wider responsibilities of all elected members are acknowledged and acted upon.

This Strategy describes a continuing journey. Delivering the objectives set out here will make a difference to the quality of life and the outcomes achieved for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in our county. To continue to make this happen will require the ongoing coordinated effort across the Council and its partners.

The Cross Directorate Corporate Strategy Management Group will continue to oversee delivery of the Strategy, reporting progress to the Corporate Parenting Panel, to monitor the impact on children and their families who are better supported to remain together, and driving forward the focus on reducing admissions to care and increasing reunification to family and friends as a key priority.

The Strategy includes an Action Plan to demonstrate the commitment of each of the Council's Directorates and its partners in working towards these shared goals. The Action Plan should be regarded as a live document, supported by an intention to bring all partners together annually in order that the Action Plan can be reviewed with the opportunity to agree additional actions within the life of the Strategy that both maintain momentum and support our ambitions for continuous service improvement and delivery.

ACTION PLAN

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER				
Families receive access to prompt and coordinated support.	Annually review the effective operation of the Information, Advice and Assistance Service.	Social Services	Annual	
	Further the current single point of entry via the Families First Advice Line working closely with Health's development of a single point of access for mental health referrals.	Social Services and Cardiff and Vale UHB	March 2020	
	Develop a mental health consultation service working within a locality model with schools and local services.	Cardiff and Vale UHB	September 2020	
	Increase capacity within the Families Achieving Change Together (Families First) Team through effective restructuring.	Social Services	March 2020	
	Increase the number of proportionate assessments early in the system to effectively target and respond to need.	Social Services	December 2020	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER				
	<p>The benefits of partnership working between the Police and Social Services under Early Action Together is maximised in the Vale of Glamorgan.</p> <p>Review the community hubs pilot with a view to developing further community hubs throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.</p> <p>Annually review success in maximising the opportunities available through the new Flexible Funding arrangements to effectively align services to families.</p> <p>Prioritise in policy, housing related support for vulnerable families to keep their accommodation and to learn life skills.</p>	<p>Police and Social Services</p> <p>Social Services and Learning and Skills</p> <p>All Directorates</p> <p>Environment and Housing</p>	<p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>Annual</p> <p>November 2019</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER				
<p>Services traditionally offered later in the system are re-focussed to enable earlier intervention that prevents the escalation of need.</p>	<p>Scope opportunities to use existing resources to offer after school provision for respite and flexing existing arrangements to reflect and respond to need, e.g. Headlands and Ty Robin.</p>	<p>Action for Children</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	
	<p>Develop a Regional Adolescent Service able to work with families as soon as difficulties are identified.</p>	<p>Social Services</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	
	<p>Explore resource opportunities available through Welsh Government to support integrated working across partners to promote join up in delivering services to CYP with additional needs</p>	<p>Social Services</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	
	<p>Develop a Youth Homelessness and Early Homelessness Prevention/Intervention Service.</p>	<p>Environment and Housing, Social Services and Llamau</p>	<p>December 2020</p>	
	<p>Review the success of the Emphasis Project in working with schools to identify and prevent youth homelessness.</p>	<p>Environment and Housing and Llamau</p>	<p>December 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER				
	<p>Monitor the overall trends in children's well-being at a school level.</p> <p>Increase participation and decision making of children and young people in education using their Children Looked After Reviews.</p> <p>Support schools to develop a well-being curriculum based on developing resilience and positive mental health.</p> <p>Provide training to school leaders and staff on developing trauma informed and mental health informed settings.</p>	<p>Learning and Skills</p> <p>Learning and Skills</p> <p>Learning and Skills</p> <p>Learning and Skills</p>	<p>January 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p> <p>September 2021</p> <p>September 2021</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 1: TO SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER				
Families receive advice based on a consistent approach and responsive to need.	<p>Develop a common trauma informed approach to behaviour support that addresses the increased demand for targeted provision for young people with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).</p> <p>The work of all partners has at its core an accurate understanding of the child's lived experience, and their voice is heard.</p>	<p>Social Services, Learning and Skills and Cardiff and Vale UHB</p> <p>All</p>	<p>March 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 2: TO MANAGE RISK CONFIDENTLY AND SUPPORT FAMILIES AT THE EDGE OF CARE				
Agencies communicate on the basis of a common language of risk.	<p>Develop a common risk assessment for those children and young people crossing the boundary of more than Council Directorate, e.g. Children and Young People Services, Education and Housing.</p> <p>Explore the potential to expand a common Council risk assessment to external partners.</p> <p>Implement a cross Directorate monitoring framework. This will enable effective review and improved outcomes for children and young people looked after by the local authority.</p> <p>Finalise the Community Safety Strategy based on agreed priorities.</p>	<p>Social Services, Learning and Skills and Environment and Housing</p> <p>Social Services, Learning and Skills and Environment and Housing</p> <p>Social Services and Learning and Skills</p> <p>Environment and Housing</p>	<p>September 2020</p> <p>June 2021</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>	
The availability of services that can be effectively mobilised to respond positively when families are in difficulties.	<p>Develop a Regional Therapeutic Intervention Service.</p> <p>Develop a Regional Adolescent Service for children aged 11 plus.</p>	<p>Cardiff and Vale UHB</p> <p>Social Services</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 2: TO MANAGE RISK CONFIDENTLY AND SUPPORT FAMILIES AT THE EDGE OF CARE				
	Establish Family Support Worker posts within core Social Work teams able to work practically with families in achieving change.	Social Services	March 2020	
	Develop a comprehensive 'respite' support offer.	Social Services	March 2020	
	Through the Integrated Care Fund pilot the presence of a Social Worker within the Intake and Family Support Team to coordinate care and support plans to promote positive outcomes without escalation to further statutory intervention for families with specific focus where considered children have additional learning needs but no medical diagnosis.	Social Services	March 2021	
A strength based approach in working with families that supports the management of risk confidently.	Explore a common model able to shape and reinforce strength based practice within Children and Young People Services and with partners.	Social Services	September 2020	
	Commission a Regional Family Group Conferencing Service.	Social Services	March 2020	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 2: TO MANAGE RISK CONFIDENTLY AND SUPPORT FAMILIES AT THE EDGE OF CARE				
	Implement a clear and consistent approach to supporting children to remain within their families, and not become looked after, that effectively engages all partners.	Social Services	June 2020	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 3: TO PROVIDE AND COMMISSION A FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE RANGE OF HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS				
Increase the number of locally recruited and supported foster carers including those with skills and competence in disability, challenging behaviour and parent and child placements.	Update the current Recruitment Strategy utilising the expertise of the newly appointed Marketing and Recruitment Officer.	Social Services	March 2020	
	Consolidate the regional work with Cardiff to agree a focussed regional development plan that responds effectively to the Vale of Glamorgan's recruitment tasks.	Social Services	March 2020	
	Consider re-branding of our marketing focussing on our target audience and target needs.	Social Services	March 2020	
	Review the use of existing placements and identify opportunities to further develop foster carers or where placements could be more effectively used.	Social Services	June 2020	
	Develop a Placement Strategy with the support of 4Cs.	Social Services	July 2020	
	Explore the need for targeted parent and child support services / accommodation.	Environment and Housing and Social Services	December 2020	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 3: TO PROVIDE AND COMMISSION A FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE RANGE OF HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS				
Provide Council-wide support to the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.	<p>Undertake a business case for the enhancement of allowances paid to foster carers.</p> <p>Explore the potential for Vale of Glamorgan foster carers to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exempt from or pay reduced council tax. <p>In partnership with the Communications Team, survey Vale of Glamorgan staff addressing myth busting and then surveying obstacles to staff potentially considering becoming foster carers.</p> <p>Survey existing foster carers to inform further approaches to achieving retention.</p> <p>Raise awareness of community services to foster carers, including Flying Start.</p>	<p>Social Services</p> <p>Managing Director and Resources</p> <p>Social Services and Managing Director and Resources</p> <p>Social Services and Managing Director and Resources</p> <p>Social Services</p>	<p>May 2020</p> <p>April 2020</p> <p>July 2020</p> <p>July 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 3: TO PROVIDE AND COMMISSION A FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE RANGE OF HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS				
Reduce the use made of independent fostering agency placements unless for a very specific reason linked to child's needs.	<p>Placement Panel and its associated mechanisms to continue to monitor the use made of independent fostering agency placements and plans for short term use closely.</p> <p>Increase the number of mainstream carers to enhance capacity for matching and placement in house.</p>	<p>Social Services</p> <p>Social Services</p>	<p>Ongoing and via Annual Review</p> <p>Ongoing and via Annual Review</p>	
Minimise the use made of residential placements, within area as far as possible, and where the complexity of a child's needs makes it necessary.	<p>Ensure robust decision making via Placement Panel.</p> <p>Ensure monitoring of residential placements to achieve step-down at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Ensure the implementation of a clear contract of expectations in meeting the child's needs and the achievement of outcomes.</p> <p>Conclude the regional scoping exercise with regard to the potential for commissioning of a specialist residential resource for those at the edge of or stepping</p>	<p>Social Services and Learning and Skills</p> <p>Social Services and Learning and Skills</p> <p>Social Services</p> <p>Social Services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing and via Annual Review</p> <p>At the point of placement</p> <p>March 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 3: TO PROVIDE AND COMMISSION A FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE RANGE OF HIGH QUALITY PLACEMENTS				
	down from secure accommodation.			
Increase the availability of local placement resources that respond to identified needs.	<p>Scope the opportunities to develop a local, small residential resource for 15-18 year olds that effectively transitions young people to an independence project and reduces youth homelessness.</p> <p>Develop a child centred local residential provision for children aged 8 – 12 years.</p> <p>Develop specialist trauma informed resource bases in schools to enhance local provision for pupils experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties.</p>	<p>Llana, Social Services and Environment and Housing</p> <p>Action for Children</p> <p>Learning and Skills</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>April 2020</p> <p>September 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 4: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES				
The voice of the child is heard at all times.	<p>Monitor the making of an active offer of advocacy to ensure this happens consistently.</p> <p>The IRO Service operates effectively in ensuring the engagement of the child in their review meetings.</p> <p>Social Workers and Social Care Officers effectively utilise their skills to work with children and families in ensuring a coherent understanding of their life journey.</p> <p>All Directorates and external partners to ensure their interaction with children prioritises an understanding of the child's lived experience.</p> <p>Scope the possibilities for a care experienced buddy system where care leavers are involved in providing buddy support to those in care.</p>	<p>Social Services</p> <p>Social Services</p> <p>Social Services</p> <p>All</p> <p>Care Leavers Forum</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>December 2020</p> <p>December 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 4: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES				
Children and young people are well matched with placements able to meet their needs, alongside relevant support services.	<p>A matching framework is used consistently by the Placements Team.</p> <p>Recruitment and retention activity is prioritised through the actions identified under objective 3.</p> <p>Fully implement a therapeutic arm to our Fostering Service.</p> <p>Develop a Regional Therapeutic Intervention Service.</p> <p>Develop a pilot to engage children looked after in education and training using a Children Looked After Mentor.</p> <p>Refine the model of referral and decision making for young people in education.</p>	<p>Social Services</p> <p>Social Services</p> <p>Social Services and Cardiff and Vale UHB</p> <p>Cardiff and Vale UHB</p> <p>Learning and Skills</p> <p>Learning and Skills</p>	<p>December 2019</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p>	
Reunification remains a live consideration taking account of evolving family circumstances and the best interests of the child.	Annually review the dedicated activity undertaken by the Children Looked After Team to review the potential to discharge Care Orders for children placed at home over 12 months.	Social Services	Annual	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 4: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES				
	<p>All plans developed within care proceedings have a clear rationale for the consideration of Placement with Parents under a Care Order and are subject to robust scrutiny by Legal Gateway.</p>	Social Services	March 2020	
	<p>All opportunities for informal care in the wider family are fully explored and plans developed to place children within their wider family consider firstly the application and support for a Child Arrangement Order.</p>	Social Services	March 2020	
	<p>Stakeholders are engaged consistently in supporting sustainable family arrangements that enable children to be cared for within their families without the need for a Care Order where it is safe to do so.</p>	Social Services	June 2020	
	<p>The Independent Reviewing Officer Service operates effectively in reviewing care plans and in challenging agencies.</p>	Social Services	March 2020	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 4: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES				
<p>There is a focus on achieving permanency for children and young people where there is no potential for family rehabilitation.</p>	<p>Care plans that are agreed where the plan is adoption are effectively implemented in close working arrangements between the childcare and the adoption teams.</p> <p>Recruitment of adopters continues to be a priority activity for the Regional Adoption Collaborative, increasing the numbers of adopters to support the timely matching and placement of children.</p> <p>Establish Direct Work Practitioner posts within the Care Planning and Proceedings Team to support the completion of life journey work.</p>	<p>Social Services and the Regional Adoption Collaborative</p> <p>Regional Adoption Collaborative</p> <p>Social Services</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>Annual Review</p> <p>March 2020</p>	
<p>Preparation for independence is effective in the support of care leavers.</p>	<p>Business processes to be reviewed to enable the achievement of coordinated and timely activity to support the effective identification of needs and plans to support the achievement of independence.</p>	<p>Social Services, Environment and Housing and Llamau</p>	<p>March 2020</p>	

Outcome	Actions	Lead Directorate/Organisation	Timescale	Progress
OBJECTIVE 4: TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PLANS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILDREN AND FAMILIES				
<p>Young people in care or leaving care having access to training, learning, job skills and apprenticeship opportunities available in the Council or its partnership networks.</p>	<p>Further explore opportunities for developing and ring fencing apprenticeships for children looked after and care leavers in the context of the apprenticeship levy and allocated monies from Welsh Government.</p> <p>Establish through policy that care leavers are provided with the opportunity to apply to take part in targeted recruitment, training, apprenticeships and work experience on social housing developments.</p>	<p>Social Services and Managing Director and Resources</p> <p>Environment and Housing, Social Services and Registered Social Landlord partners</p>	<p>June 2020</p> <p>December 2019</p>	

CORPORATE STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN WHO NEED CARE AND SUPPORT



WHAT IS A CORPORATE STRATEGY AND WHY DOES IT AFFECT ME?

A strategy is a fancy word for a plan. Corporate means that the whole Council has committed to the plan. It also has the support of others we work with and means we will all work together with you. A plan makes it easier for everyone to understand our goals and the best way to achieve them. It might affect you if you are a child in need of care and support.



WHO ARE CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE AND SUPPORT?

This could be anyone under 18 who is having problems at home. Maybe the person or people who look after them are unwell, have problems with drugs or alcohol, or makes them feel unsafe. They might need some extra care or support from us. The corporate strategy (or plan!) outlines how we in the Council and others would help give this support.



GOAL 1 - SUPPORT FAMILIES TO STAY TOGETHER

We know that it's important for families to stay together. If we know you're having difficulties at home, our first priority will be to work together with you, whoever looks after you and your community (schools, youth clubs etc) to support you. It's important that you tell someone you trust if you're struggling.



GOAL 2 - PROVIDE SUPPORT AT THE 'EDGE OF CARE'

Sometimes, it isn't safe for children to stay with the people who are looking after them. In this case, we'll work with your wider family (uncles, aunties, or grandparents) to help them support you. This means that you'll be able to live with them and things like school, clubs and friends won't be affected by moving far away.



GOAL 3 - PROVIDE THE RIGHT KIND OF PLACEMENT FOR YOU

If you aren't able to stay with your family, then we will work hard to make sure you have an alternative place to go. This could be foster care, residential care or independent living. It will have your needs in mind and will be a place that you can feel safe and supported.



GOAL 4 - WORK WITH YOU TO MAKE A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Wherever you are safe living we will work with you to develop a plan for the next stages of your life. This means finding a stable and permanent home for you, keeping you in school or education, and supporting you to find work or training. The most important part of our plan is to make sure that every child is happy, safe and has the best opportunity at life.

If you or your family needs support, then you can call the Families First Advice Line: 0800 0327322

