

# Wrexham Social Services: What we do and the difference it makes

**Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021 - 2022**

This document is available in Welsh



## Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Summary of performance	5
Background	5
Complaints and Compliments	5
3. What people tell us about our services	7
Unpaid Carers Survey – Summary of Responses	7
Friendship Hub	7
Working with the Third Sector	8
Wrexham Wellbeing Hub	8
Development Officers	8
4. Improving well-being (the six standards)	9
Standard 1: Helping people achieve the well-being outcomes they want	9
Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote physical, mental and emotional well-being	15
Standard 3: Safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm	21
Standard 4: Helping people to learn, develop and participate in society	25
Standard 5: Helping people maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships	30
Standard 6: Helping people achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs	34

<b>5. How We Deliver for Our Citizens</b>	<b>38</b>
A. Developing Our Workforce	38
B. Finances and Planning for the Future	38
C. Political leadership, governance and accountability	39
Partnership working	39
Safeguarding Arrangements	40
<b>6. Further information</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Performance Measurement Framework</b>	<b>44</b>
Standard 1: Helping people achieve the well-being outcomes they want	44
Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote physical, mental and emotional well-being	45
Standard 3: Safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm	46
Standard 4: Helping people to learn, develop and participate in society	47
Standard 5: Helping people maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships	48
Standard 6: Helping people achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs	49

## 1. Introduction

In 'normal' times, social services is not always the most visible of the council's services – until you need it of course. Then it makes a huge difference to your life and the lives of your loved ones.

Over the last year, again, the situation has not been 'normal' and the role of carers – professional and unpaid – has been vital and visible.

In last year's report, we told you that we wanted to focus on things that would help us to help people and families. This year we will let you know what happened to those things, but you'll also read a lot about the things we did differently as we continued to respond to the Covid pandemic.

It has been another busy year, but we have made positive progress to improve what we offer to children and adults. We have worked to improve children's services in line with an improvement action plan that is central to our progress, and in adults services have worked with the health board to support residential and domiciliary care services to recover, and to support people to remain in their own homes.

Whatever the challenges of this coming year, we are committed to what needs to be done; to develop and deliver resilient and smart services with children, families and the people we support at the centre, helping to shape our services to deliver outcomes that matter.

## 2. Summary of performance

### Background

At the end of each financial year, every council in Wales must publish a report about its social services. This is our report.

The aim is to evaluate how well our services have been delivered, and highlight any improvements needed.

It is also a chance to explain how we're going to help people over the coming year – both people who need care and support, and unpaid carers who need our help.

As you read through these pages, you will notice we talk about six 'quality standards'. These are part of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (we will just call it 'the Act' from now on).

The format of this report reflects the requirements of the Act, and the need to measure the performance of social services around these six standards.

It also feeds into the Well-being of Future Generations Act, which aims to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales – helping to create a place where we all want to live. Both now and in the future.

Finally, you will notice we talk about 'outcomes' a lot. This is because so much of our work is focused on helping people achieve the end results they want to achieve.

### Complaints and Compliments

Complaints are dealt with in accordance with the statutory social services complaints procedure, which is managed by a centralised complaints team in the council. The team have an excellent working relationship with senior managers across the department and liaise regularly to address complaints.

A full report on complaints and compliments is presented to the relevant scrutiny committee on an annual basis and subsequently published on the council's website. This ensures appropriate scrutiny of the complaints received by members and offers transparency for the public (whilst ensuring complainant details remains strictly confidential).

During 2021/22, the number of complaints received has decreased, with 40 being received compared to 42 received during 2020/21.

Seven complaints were investigated independently at Stage 2. This is unchanged from the seven investigations in 2020/21.

Fifty-five compliments were received during 2021/22, highlighting the appreciation from service users and families for the support provided:

**Example of the compliment received by adult social care:**

"I was just blown away by the speed in which things were in put in place for us. I'll be eternally grateful really. We couldn't be happier with the way things were handled. Like I say, the whole thing, the whole team, your work colleagues, just pulled it out the bag."

**Example of the compliment received by children's social care:**

"I wanted to let you know what a star X is. As I'm sure you're well aware, his organisation and attention to detail is fantastic. He is always punctual and a pleasure to work with. He is also very child-centred and the children adore him. He makes our job so much easier, which is very much appreciated."

### 3. What people tell us about our services

Listening to the people we support is crucial. It's how we make sure we're delivering services that help them achieve what's important to them.

We're developing our approach to 'co-production' – where people and organisations work together to come up with ways to shape our services at every stage.

#### Jargon buster – 'Co-production'

'Co-production' refers to work undertaken with the full and equal involvement of service-users. In other words, people who use services are given an equal say in decisions and changes that affect them.

### Unpaid Carers Survey – Summary of Responses

As an organisation and department we really value the huge contributions unpaid carers make, not least during the last extremely challenging two years. Unfortunately, on revisiting our unpaid carers survey this year, this was not the experience of many unpaid carers in Wrexham. Whilst the survey only saw an 11% return rate, suggesting we need to improve the way in which we engage with unpaid carers, the responses and comments remain concerning to us:

- 45% of unpaid carers who received support or services agreed that adult social care has provided them with a good level of support that has helped to improve their quality of life.
- 38% of unpaid carers strongly disagreed/ disagreed that adult social care has provided them with a good level of support that has helped them improve their quality of life.

Full report available at [wrexham.gov.uk](http://wrexham.gov.uk)

In response to this, you will see later in the report the investment we are making to address the gaps in services people are telling us about; we also plan to make significant changes and improvements to the way we capture feedback from unpaid carers and their involvement in service development.

### Friendship Hub

"The Friendship Hub and SWS have been so helpful. Moving into a new area it has really helped me settle in.

"I really enjoy working on Safe Places because I like trying to make things safe for everyone, especially people with disabilities"

- Peter Davies, new Friendship Hub member"

## **Working with the Third Sector**

The team at our voluntary sector body, AVOW, have been working with us over the past 12 months, helping us to engage with the third sector in Wrexham as we have continued to work together in our efforts to recover from the pandemic, to maximise grant funding opportunities for Wrexham citizens and in developing new and exciting services.

During this time, AVOW bid farewell to former Director John Gallanders and welcomed a new Director in Dawn Roberts McCabe. We would like to take this opportunity to thank John for his significant contribution to the Third Sector in Wrexham and his commitment to partnership working in the development of Social Care Services.

## **Wrexham Wellbeing Hub**

AVOW has been representing the views of the third sector in the development of a new Community Health and Well-being Facility at the redeveloped Crown Buildings. They provided valuable insight and the opportunity to develop a truly co-produced service for Wrexham citizens, the progress of which you will read more about later.

## **Development Officers**

We have also worked closely with AVOW this year to maximise access to Welsh Government Grant funding for the recruitment of new development officers. Officers will shortly be recruited to engage with citizens and community groups to support with priority areas like creating age-friendly communities and dementia projects.

## 4. Improving well-being (The Six Standards)

These are the six standards we mentioned earlier.

There's a lot of information here, so we've split them into two sections to reflect our two social care areas within the department – adult social care and children's social care.

### **Standard 1: Helping people achieve the well-being outcomes they want**

This sounds complicated, but it's simple really.

We're talking about helping people improve their situation in a way that takes account of how they feel, and what they want.

#### **Adult Social Care**

##### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- Review the domiciliary care market and grow in-house provision to increase domiciliary care capacity.
- Review 'right sizing care' projects, developing further those which are proven to improve outcomes for people.
- Explore the development of 'micro-commissioning' models, to make it easier for people to access care and support – particularly in our rural communities.

##### **This is what we did:**

#### **Supporting the Care Market**

We are facing a national workforce crisis, which is impacting on our ability to recruit and retain staff right across social care including residential and domiciliary care provision. We have supported providers to access £6.1m of Welsh Government Hardship funding and social care bonus schemes to support their Covid recovery and workforce challenges.

We have been working collaboratively across our organisation and with BCUHB partners to trial new approaches to the workforce challenge with new joint recruitment drives piloted.

Growth has begun to be realised in our in-house provider service through the transfer of an external agency into in-house provision, but further growth remains slow as we continue to face workforce shortages.

The Regional Commissioning Team, hosted by Denbighshire County Council have coordinated the development and publication of the regional Population Needs Assessment and Market Shaping Report. Together these reports present a comprehensive picture of the population and needs of North Wales citizens and the market challenges that need addressing to be able to deliver in the coming years. We have been part of this work, ensuring the needs of Wrexham are represented and will use the reports to inform our future service development plans.

### **Jargon buster - 'Domiciliary care'**

Domiciliary care is provided to people who want to stay in their own home, rather than move to a residential care home. Care-workers visit the person in their home, usually on a daily basis.

### **Right Sizing Care**

Right sizing care means people being able to access the right level of care to meet their needs; no more and no less.

With advances in technology and equipment over the years, alongside improved access to training for staff and citizens, we have been able to support people to access much less intrusive levels of care that is focussed on dignity, reablement and independence.

There has been some real success in the right sizing care projects, this has supported the reduction in the need for double-handed domiciliary care calls, which has also supported domiciliary capacity. Further work is planned around right sizing care and the development of a Centre of Excellence. This will focus on accredited training being delivered by the occupational therapist team to carers, O.T's, Nurses and other health and social care professionals for manual handling with minimal person involvement. This is an educational approach to right sizing care to provide practical solutions.

Packages of care through all elements of social care have been regularly reviewed to ensure that reductions in support have been made as and when people achieve greater independence ensuring that people are not over supported while keeping a person-centred focus.

### **Micro Commissioning**

To support us in the development of small, social care enterprises or businesses, we are working with Community Catalysts. They help people and communities across the country use their talents to start and run small enterprises and community businesses that support and care for other local people; these people are called community catalysts locally, but all have their own business name too.

Funded through Welsh Government Community Transformation Programme, Community Catalysts identified gaps in current services and recruited local people to develop small enterprises to fill them, helping to care for and support Wrexham citizens, they include services like home help services, care services and support with household and garden tasks.

The project continues to develop well with 37 enterprises having completed the 'doing it right' standards. All enterprises are fully booked up with packages of care, with citizens accessing direct payments to fund care in this way. With recruitment to domiciliary care proving a significant challenge, this model of care and support is able to offer citizens an alternative, person-centred care solution.

### **Jargon buster - 'Micro commissioning'**

Micro commissioning is where care is sought on an individual level from small often independent or third sector organisations or sole traders.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- Further grow Direct Payments and Micro commissioning.
- Deliver a local Action Plan to address service gaps as reported in the Regional Market Shaping report.
- Utilising Welsh Government Capital, develop a plan for delivery of Intermediate Care for the medium and longer term.

## Children's Social Care

### This is what we said we'd do:

- Ensure the national Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) is firmly embedded and supporting our social care teams on the ground.
- Continue to engage with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and progress with our improvement plan.
- Review SPoA processes for decision-making and case-transfer to ensure they're still fit for purpose.

### This is what we did:

#### Health and Social Care IT System (Welsh Community Care Information System)

Throughout 2021/22, the department has continued to refine forms and processes in the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) in order to support social care teams with efficient, timely and consistent recording. Whilst this has not gone without its challenges, the department has resources in place for membership on all national teams to ensure communications between the local authority and system supplier is in place. A Systems User Group is in place with nominated representatives from each team across children and adult services to ensure issues are raised and responded to quickly with all agreed changes and developments included in the department's Systems Development Roadmap.

We have active involvement in all national groups and Reporting Task & Finish Groups facilitated by either Advanced or the WCCIS National Team. All embedded forms have been reviewed for child's voice and form part of life journey work.

#### Management Information

To make things easier for our social workers and their managers, we have focussed on developing virtual desktops. These give all of our managers and social workers access to their caseloads and assessments, which helps them to manage and prioritise their daily workload.

Our social workers have told us how valuable access to these reports is and, with the department's focus on quality assurance, they are a constant reminder of best practice timescales and make it easy to spot if the timescales are slipping.

Through the department's focus on Practice, Performance and Quality Assurance (see below), we are ensuring our staff are equipped with the tools needed to provide better outcomes for our most vulnerable.

## **Accelerated Improvement Board (AIB) – Our Improvement Plan**

The AIB action plan was established in 2019 and is structured around the following six improvement objectives for the service, to tackle challenges that had been identified:

- Organisational Delivery Model that is fit for purpose
- Continued development of highly skilled and stable workforce
- Have and deliver effective processes and procedures
- Deliver high quality practice and services
- Work effectively with internal and external partners
- Ensure children and families can participate in services and decisions about them

The department continues to engage openly and frequently with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) with progress of our improvement plan. Updated action plans and quarterly performance are shared with monthly engagement meetings in place to ensure lines of communication remain in place.

## **Performance, Practice & Quality Assurance**

Alongside the AIB action plan, we have the Quality Assurance Framework. This outlines:

- how we will ensure the quality of our work
- how we will examine the response and service we are providing
- how we will learn from what we find

So, children's services now has a Performance, Practice & Quality Assurance work stream. This work stream contains a robust 12-month audit plan to select case files and conduct themed audits, regularly scrutinise case files against the audit scoring tools, and ensure findings from audits are identified in order to draw conclusions, identify training needs, and facilitate conversation in quarterly department-wide performance workshops.

## **Front Door**

Our children's SPoA team, acts as the "front door" for children's services. The decision making process in this team is effective and ensures that all referrals have a decision made within 24 hours of being submitted.

Timely decision making and within SPoA remains a high performing area with on average 98% of decisions being made within 24 hours over the last three years.

Furthermore, children's SPOA have been supported by a review undertaken by an external consultant with outcomes to be reported in quarter 2 of 2022/23.

## **Jargon buster - 'Strategy discussion'**

The purpose of a strategy discussion is to decide whether the threshold has been met for a single or joint agency (Social Care and Police) child protection investigation, and to plan that investigation. They happen when it is believed a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, serious harm.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- Formally launch Wrexham Children's Services Threshold Policy to all external partners and organisations
- Continue to engage with CIW and progress with our improvement plan, ensuring plans are in place to sustain the level of change achieved
- Agree and adopt a regional approach to the screening tools and safety plans used for missing, exploited and trafficked young people.

## **Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote physical, mental and emotional well-being**

This means helping people look after their physical, mental and emotional health.

### **Adult Social Care**

#### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- Through the Integrated Care Fund, develop a Wrexham Well-being Hub for Wrexham citizens
- Develop integrated locality working
- formally launch the pacesetter project in South Locality (of Wrexham) to improve citizen experience and further enhance integrated working
- Expand the Community Development Fund to further enable development of innovative care and support solutions for people and families living with Dementia
- Work with services-users to co-produce projects that transform some of our mental health and learning disability services
- Ensure positive working relationships are developed between adult social care and the proposed 'well-being hub' in Wrexham

#### **This is what we did:**

##### **Community Health and Well-Being – Wrexham Wellbeing Hub**

Despite the challenges faced as a result of the pandemic, the capital work to create the new Wellbeing Hub in the town centre completed on schedule and to budget this year. Alongside the capital works, the partnership Steering Group of BCUHB, AVOW and WCBC have worked coproductively with citizens and community groups to recruit the Wellbeing Hub Team and begin designing what activity the venue will host. It aims to be able to offer a range of prevention and wellbeing information, advice and assistance for citizens of all ages. Members of the citizen-led, Standard of Wrexham Services Group on visiting the Hub:

"The new wellbeing hub is a friendly light place with lots of welcoming areas. It will be a great place for us to use."

"The entrance is easy to use and it's all on one level. It will be easy for people who use wheelchairs to access. Including all the toilets and the kitchen area. Well thought out. It's really important that we all have access."

"I liked the outside areas, the play area and planting. I wanted to go and plant things! All the meeting rooms and larger spaces look brilliant. I can't wait to use them! Bring it on!!"

(Members of the citizen-led, Standard of Wrexham Services Group on visiting the Hub)

## **Locality Working**

We have continued to develop transformed health and social care services in line with 'A Healthier Wales' utilising Welsh Government's Community Transformation Fund.

Integrated working is progressing well with the successful development of three area Multi-disciplinary Teams and weekly Complex Case Meetings in South, Central and North, North West Wrexham. Each area has a care co-ordinator and the engagement of health, social care and partners is growing. The complex case meetings are running successfully and allowing multi-professional support to review the needs of people with complex needs and develop approaches and plans to support citizens to receive the right support in the right way to reduce their risk of admission to hospital or reduce the demand on health and social care systems.

## **Supporting People Living With Dementia Through Community Development Fund**

To support the delivery of the Welsh Government's Dementia Action Plan for Wales (2018 – 2022), local authorities and health boards are awarded annual grant funding through the Integrated Care Fund Programme. This is to develop service provision that supports people living with dementia, and unpaid carers. Utilising part of this funding, we created the Community Development Fund to trial new ways of supporting people living with dementia.

Citizens living with dementia and their unpaid carers have had a really tough time during the pandemic as access to face to face support reduced. As such, we have flexed the way we use Dementia Action Plan funding to enable innovative service development in this area. An Unpaid Carer's Respite Direct Payment was set up with NEWCIS to enable unpaid carers to source their own, person-centred respite solutions. In addition, the establishment of the Wrexham Dementia Forum with representation from people with lived experience of Dementia has and will continue to ensure that the services we commission are coproduced and informed by lived experience.

A project we were able to move forward this year through the Community Development Fund has been the purchase of Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activity (RITA) devices. We worked with our partners, the Alzheimer's Society and My Improvement Network, to understand and scope the project, shaping it to meet the needs of Wrexham citizens based on what people with lived experience told us mattered to them.

## What is RITA?

RITA comes in a variety of sizes i.e. 24" monitor, 10" tablet or a 13" portable device and aims to increase the care delivered to older people, those living with Dementia, Alzheimer's, brain injury and learning disability as a means of supporting them and reducing their agitation, isolation, depression and/or delirium.

RITA is an all-in-one touch screen solution providing digital reminiscence therapy, which is a new tool in the fields of nursing and healthcare; it encompasses the use of user-friendly interactive screens and tablets to blend entertainment with therapy and to assist people (particularly with memory impairments) in recalling and sharing events from their past through activity such as listening to music, watching news reports of significant historical events, playing games, karaoke and watching films.

Whilst the primary purpose of RITA is to enhance quality of life and wellbeing; it is also supporting:

- unpaid carers and family members to communicate more effectively with loved ones
- reduction in falls
- a reduction in some very high cost and intensive packages of care
- dementia care mapping and a reduction in anti-psychotic and sleeping medication
- improved patient, family and staff experience

## Case study - Manager at Pen-Y-Garth Residential Home

"We have had the RITA in place at Pen-Y-Garth for some time now, it is clear to see that it is enjoyed by all during one-to-one activities along with group activities. It is refreshing to see those engage in activities and with others who do not normally. The RITA puts a smile on everyone's faces and we often hear huge cheers and lots of laughing coming from the communal areas of the home when it is being used.

"Visiting professionals and family members have commented about residents being alert and engaging which has improved their personal visits and the response they get from their loved one during the visit.

"Since the RITA has been in place, we have seen a marked improvement in the falls data analysis; residents are now completely occupied, stimulated and settled during the day which has decreased the amount of residents who 'wander with purpose.' We have been able to change the personal falls risk assessments to reflect these changes.

"Residents have had their anti-psychotic medication reviewed and we are very pleased that this medication is now used minimally in the home with very few people currently prescribed any sort of anti-psychotic medication.

“The RITA has been used to successfully minimise anxieties and agitation which has resulted in de-escalation of potential problems in the environment and given staff the knowledge and confidence to use the RITA for residents who struggle with presentation due to their mental health diagnosis.

“It is lovely to also see those residents use the RITA who are unable to access the communal areas due to mobility and illness, to see them enjoying the relaxation apps and music and engaging in sensory activity giving them a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

“Overall, we would recommend the RITA to any health and social care setting in the country; this is a fantastic piece of equipment which suits every person we support due to the person-centred profiles and the wide variety of available apps. The RITA has improved quality of life, mental health, and wellbeing especially during the pandemic where residents have been unable to see their loved ones for so long, potentially putting them at risk of decline in mental health and wellbeing.”

### **Transforming Mental Health and Learning Disability Services**

This year we have established our new Community Wellbeing Team, which will help to bridge the gap between clinically based mental health services and the community. This means that we are working towards making mental health services more accessible to citizens. We have engaged, and continue to engage, with citizens and service providers about what’s already out there, where there are challenges or gaps and how we best work together to develop solutions that work and deliver real outcomes for people. To support this, we are using value based recruitment with mental health ambassadors and unpaid carer/family representatives forming part of recruitment panels.

#### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- launch and continue a coproductive development of Wrexham Wellbeing Hub in partnership with BCUHB and AVOW to deliver community based health and social care prevention and wellbeing activity (across all ages).
- deliver a programme of coproduced integrated care and support projects utilising new Welsh Government Revenue Investment Fund that deliver positive outcomes for citizens.

## Children's Social Care

### This is what we said we'd do:

- in line with the refreshed recruitment strategy, continue to increase the number of in-house foster carers.
- deliver on our wider Corporate Parenting Strategy.

### This is what we did:

#### Foster Carers and Recruitment

We have ensured fostering recruitment has been the main focus of the fostering service. We have used methods of recruitment activity such as advertising online, through social media, as well as local marketing campaigns advertising with Wrexham AFC, digital billboards, advertising on buses and on pillars throughout the centre of Wrexham.

Through our increased efforts in recruitment we received 47 enquiries: of these four have moved forward and have been successfully screened and moved onto the assessment stage. In addition to this, in 2021/22, we have approved four new foster carers.

Our main aim is to recruit additional foster carers to meet the ongoing needs of the children and young people in Wrexham. This includes increasing the number of foster carers for teenagers as well as mother and baby foster carers.

Wrexham fostering services is currently reviewing their rates in terms of what they currently pay foster carers and proposing an increased rate of pay for experienced and/or skilled carers who are able to care for our most complex children and young people.

#### Care Leavers

The purpose of leaving care services is to assist young people who have been in the care of a local authority to move from being looked after to living independently. The advice and support that care leavers receive depends upon their age and care leaving status.

The looked after children team and the leaving care team have always been managed as one team. In the last year, they were separated out. This important change means the leaving care team has a manager experienced in care leaver issues and who can make sure that new elements of support are developed and offered.

#### Corporate Parenting Strategy

During 2021/22 we began the process of revising our corporate parenting strategy by starting a conversation across the council and wider partnership. We are calling it the "the big ask". If we truly believe that corporate children deserve to be treated like our own children, we have to challenge ourselves to do more, think wider and become more integrated in our approach.

To demonstrate our commitment to this strategy, we are driving forward with an Early Permanence Framework in support of children's growth and development and their need for a permanent home. To further enrich the lives of children in care, we plan to increase our work with the community and leisure services to facilitate mentoring programmes, community activities and generally expand the horizons of looked after children.

We recognise the harm that some children have suffered and, in response, we plan to implement a Trauma Informed Practice Model, strengthen our work with CAMHS on the review of the self-harm pathway, continue work on our Missing from Home Protocol, and adopt a Restorative Justice model across looked after children.

To assist our young people who are nearing independence, we plan to continue our work on the Kick Start Project, implement assessment and risk planning for any care leavers who are not in employment, education or training, and work to develop apprentices, ensuring our young people have a springboard to their future.

Most importantly, we value the voices of our young people. In support of this, there is the redevelopment of our Young People in Care Council and plans to fully implement a child participation strategy. We recognise that everything we do is grounded in what children and young people are telling us and we continue working to ensure they have the means and support to do so.

**This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- fully embed and launch the Special Guardianship Team and offer
- development and launch of Life Journey work policy and practice
- development of Young People in Care Council web site

### **Standard 3: Safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm**

This means helping to protect people who might be at risk of abuse, neglect or other forms of harm or exploitation.

Throughout the pandemic our priority was, and continues to be, safeguarding people and families and utilising all resources available to us. This included adapting to rapidly changing guidance and restrictions, keeping people safe in their homes and communities, and enabling access to responsive emergency placements to ensure people were supported to be safe and well.

Both the adult safeguarding team and children's safeguarding and quality assurance teams have had to continue to respond quickly and flexibly to rapidly changing scenarios. The approach has been innovative and flexible by using virtual meetings, being creative with the way in which we conduct and facilitate contact, whilst remaining focussed on the safety of our citizens and staff.

#### **Adult Social Care**

##### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- develop skills to co-produce services with people with complex communication needs.
- develop an audit cycle ensuring key themes of asset-based assessment, outcomes-focussed care and support planning, mental capacity and advocacy are embedded into practice.
- manage the safe and effective transition from the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to the Liberty Protection Safeguards.

##### **This is what we did:**

#### **Improving How We Communicate – Complex Communication Needs and Advocacy**

We are always looking for ways we can improve how we communicate with people. We know that having people using services involved in shaping them makes a real difference. This year we have been looking at our services for deaf, blind and deaf blind services and how we can improve those so that we can better communicate, coproduce with and advocate for people with visual and hearing loss. We have been working closely with our commissioned partners, Deaf Support Network and Vision Support to improve and expand our service offers in this area and will review those improvements this coming year.

Within the department's operational teams, we have also been rolling out training to expand the scope of our communication with citizens. A selection of staff have undertaken Graphic Facilitation Training to be able to create visual representations of information and increasing numbers of staff are now able to communicate via Makaton. We're also creating a digital, person-centred planning platform to enable as many people as possible to take a central role in designing their care and support, and are in the early phase of creating an accessible, multi lingual "this is Wrexham" website.

In addition, we have been looking at our advocacy services. Advocacy can take many forms, for example peer advocacy, advocacy that supports people without mental capacity to make some decisions, or advocacy services that support people in vulnerable situations to make life decisions. We've been mapping what services we have in place, and who they are available to, to help inform where we have gaps and want to develop in future. We will develop an action plan from our findings to help us address these gaps.

### **Jargon buster – 'Advocacy'**

'Advocacy' is when a person has another person (i.e. an advocate) to help look out for their interests. The advocate is usually a professional, relative, friend or another service-user, and they'll often accompany the person to meetings with health and social care providers.

### **Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)**

The LPS will provide protection for people aged 16 and above who are, or who need to be, deprived of their liberty (in other words have some of their freedoms restricted) in order to enable their care or treatment, and who lack the mental capacity to consent. This might include, for example, needing to add cot sides to a bed to prevent someone falling or locks on doors to prevent someone from running into a busy road.

Work is underway to achieve this. The LPS consultation document including Code of Practice has been published by Central Government and we have shared it with our colleagues and partners to get their views. We are working with our Workforce Development Team to explore access to the necessary training staff will need. A working group is being established to ensure that we are prepared for LPS and staff have the skills and knowledge needed to ensure that all persons who meet the requirements of LPS have their rights protected.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- conclude our reviews of deaf support, visual impairment and advocacy services and deliver an action plan of service improvements.
- deliver a programme of training, development and communication with staff, partners and citizens to support the roll out of the LPS.

## Children's Social Care

### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- improve attendance of young people at child protection conferences.
- develop and implement our Child Protection Plan.
- ensure our risk model is embedded in everything we do.
- increase the involvement of the 'referrer' and other agencies involved in strategy meetings and discussions.

### **This is what we did:**

#### **Child Protection Conferences**

Throughout 2021/22, the safeguarding & quality assurance team have improved the process for invitations to children aged 10 and over at any review Child Protection Conferences. Individual invitations are sent to young people notifying them of their Child Protection Conference date and time and inviting them to attend.

Additionally, the Department have introduced the Mind of My Own Apps, which invite children and young people to express their views in an electronic format, should they not wish to be present at the meeting. The Mind of My Own Apps are actively promoted by social workers and independent safeguarding and reviewing officers across the department.

A Mind of My Own Steering Group has been put in place to monitor usage of the apps and feedback from young people.

#### **Child Protection Plan**

The Multi-Agency Child Protection Plan has been in full use throughout 2021/22, accompanied by a Dispute Resolution Process used by the department's safeguarding & quality assurance team to raise alerts at the earliest indication of drift or delay in care planning. This demonstrates the quality assurance footprint across all care and support plans for our most vulnerable children and families.

Our next stage of improvement is to conduct a full review of this plan in 2022/23 to align with the department's trauma informed risk model and good practice noted within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019. Marketing will continue through social media and local events.

## **Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (Met) – Risk Model**

Children's Services have undertaken a thorough and comprehensive review of our current risk model with members of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Team undertaking a full evaluation throughout 2021/22.

Evaluations were completed and the Department will adopt a Trauma Informed Risk Model in 2022/23.

Engagement with external consultant to review all risk related documentation/guidance in line with the new risk model and support a project to embed into practice throughout 2022/23.

## **Strategy Meetings**

The department has been working to improve involvement of multi-agency partners and referrers in strategy meetings. Whilst performance against this target has improved slightly in 2021/22, the introduction of North Wales Police presence in Children's SPoA supports the model we wish to move toward and will enable more co-working, sharing of information, and attendance of other agencies in social services and police strategy meetings going forward.

Whilst performance has improved overall, improvements month-on-month have not been consistent.

Completion of the SPoA/North Wales Police project is underway and will have direct input from NWP Detective Sergeant and Police Researcher from July 2022.

## **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- fully embed the MET protocol to include a transitional plan from 16 to adulthood where there are risks of exploitation and trafficking.
- commission and embed the agree risk model.
- develop a suicide pathway to ensure communities are supported following a suicide of a child.
- further evaluation of the Mind of My Own apps for obtaining the voice of the child/ young person in the child protection process.
- move to virtual platform for Child Protection Conferences.
- Improve and monitor the Active Offer of Advocacy.

## **Standard 4: Helping people to learn, develop and participate in society**

This standard is about encouraging people to take part in society – helping them learn, interact with other people and be part of their communities.

### **Adult Social Care**

#### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- continue to grow the shared lives offer as a more flexible and personalised alternative to more traditional care services
- evaluate the Community Agents project and design a clear pathway between social prescribing and community agents
- co-produce Intergenerational Strategy to support improved outcomes for people
- co-produce a sub-regional partnership with the third sector for delivery of Safe Places
- prepare for implementation of Autism Code of Practice
- co-produce further development of a community based friendship hub

#### **This is what we did:**

It has been another hugely challenging year, trying to recover from the impacts of social isolation and more throughout the pandemic. Some of our priorities remained paused, moved at a slower pace or changed direction as we focussed effort of support for front line services to recover.

#### **Shared Lives**

'Shared Lives' is a scheme that pairs people with dementia and other health issues with carers who have similar interests and hobbies – so they can continue to enjoy a full and rewarding life. This can be anything...from gardening to fishing to going to watch the football. Unfortunately, despite prolonged efforts our provider was unable to attract carers to our delivery model and we mutually agreed to end our contractual arrangements for the delivery of Shared Days services this year. The good news was that, having had success elsewhere with our Community Catalyst contract, staff and citizens were able to seamlessly transfer support to our growing micro enterprise service.

## **Community Agents**

Community Agents play a key role in helping us support the development of 'strong and resilient communities.' They help older people find local solutions to meet their needs – rather than having to come through social services. There are 24 operating across the County Borough.

The Community Agent Service continued to provide some much needed and well-received grass roots level support to people throughout the pandemic this year; working closely with AVOW to access the volunteer pool and with other providers and third sector services, the Community Agent Service was able to respond rapidly to local need throughout.

What we have struggled to do is support Community Councils (who manage the Community Agent Service for us) to be able to deliver the service in all areas of the borough. So, some areas have well-resourced Community Agent Services and others don't. Now we are in the recovery phase of the pandemic, we will once again focus on reviewing some of this inconsistency to inform a plan to roll out an improved Community Agent Service for the whole of the borough.

## **Intergenerational work**

We have previously been able to celebrate a lot of intergenerational work in our Director's Reports, such as linking nurseries and schools with care homes via activity coordinators, and the positive wellbeing outcomes this type of activity has for all those involved. This year we began the work to draft an Intergenerational Strategy for Wrexham, which will help embed these approaches into our service development plans. Taking learning from national and regional policy, we have drafted some key principles that we will now seek people's perspective on as we coproduce a final strategy to guide our commissioning work.

In addition to this, we have been engaged in the Welsh Government's Ageing Well Strategy development and are utilising Welsh Government Ageing Well funding to recruit to an Ageing Well officer post who will work with citizens and partners to drive forward Welsh Government and local policy, which supports positive ageing. To coincide with the post we aim to launch an Ageing Well Grant to enable community groups and other third sector organisations to access funding for activity, which supports ageing well principles.

## **One vision**

In any collective endeavour clarity of purpose is key. Harnessing the opportunities and responding to the challenges of an ageing society require everyone to pull in the same direction. That intended direction is that:

- our vision is an age-friendly Wales that supports people of all ages to live and age well.
- we want to create a Wales where everyone looks forward to growing older.

- we want to create a Wales where individuals can take responsibility for their own health and well-being whilst feeling confident that support will be available and easily accessible if needed.
- we want to create a Wales where ageism does not limit potential or affect the quality of services older people receive.
- ultimately, we want to be a nation that celebrates age and, in line with the UN Principles for Older Persons, a nation that upholds the independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people at all times.

This national vision for an age-friendly Wales encompasses the places where people work, their rights and entitlements, their relationships within their families and local communities and with governments. It also encompasses the relationships we have across the generations and aims to challenge and change the way we think about ageing.

(Welsh Government – Age Friendly – Our Strategy for an Ageing Society)

### **Safe Places**

The Safe Places scheme provides reassurance to people who may feel vulnerable when they go out, helping them to live more independently, knowing there are safe places in their community offering help if needed. Local shops, businesses and organisations sign up to become a 'Safe Place.' A sticker is placed in the window or on a door of a Safe Place, identifying that help is available there.

Our local Safe Spaces service continues to grow with increasing numbers of safe places created. We are continuing to work regionally to establish how Wrexham citizens might benefit from a regional Safe Places scheme.

### **Autism Friendly**

With the implementation of the Wales Autism Code of Practice, an options appraisal was undertaken to establish priority responsibilities placed on local authorities. A Wrexham Autism Strategic Partnership (WASP) group was already in place, and an Autism Action Plan devised, based on the Welsh Government's four autism priority themes. In order to promote Autism Awareness and acceptance across the County Borough of Wrexham, a new Person-Centred Co-ordinator post was created focussing on autism. This post has been instrumental in driving forward the Autism agenda, and has included the development of Safe Places, the Orange Wallet Scheme, and greater interaction with businesses and retail outlets to promote awareness and change in understanding the needs of people with autism. We have also implemented a service level agreement with a local autism charity to ensure coproduction is sought in identifying and achieving change in the delivery and implementation of services.

As part of this agenda, we are working with workforce development to roll out Autism Aware training across the organisation with a view to achieving the status of Wrexham Council as an 'Autism Aware Organisation.'

"Your Space have been commissioned by Wrexham Council to set up a steering group of people with lived experience of autism, to work in conjunction with the Wrexham Autism Stakeholder Partnership (WASP) group to ensure coproduction is present in the delivery and development of services across Wrexham. This has been especially beneficial in helping to roll out the newly implemented Wales Autism Code of Practice across Wrexham, and develop a local Code of Practice Action Plan, as it has enabled the group to give first-hand experience of some of the priority areas, which they believe needed to be tackled to enable people with autism to feel their voice is being heard. Although there is some way to go, as a result of coproduction work with the WASP group, the steering group feel communication with both health and education services in Wrexham are improving, which are the main areas of concern parents and families raise regularly at our meetings. To be able to ensure the voices and experiences of those affected by autism are heard and acted on is paramount and we continue to work hard to progress this."

(Rachel Hancocks, Head of Service, Your Space)

## **Friendship Hub**

During Covid, the Friendship Hub continued to develop online, offering inclusive activities for anyone who needed support. Working co-productively with SWS we developed numerous online activities providing support, friendship, information and advice.

The Hub are working with Iris Film Prize. The film is addressing identity, and words we use to identify ourselves and is due to be completed summer 2022. The film will be co-produced with SWS members, Friendship Hub members and local community assets including Yellow and Blue.

Using Welsh Government Transformation Funding, we have created a film to record our coproduced Declaration of Independence, which is a coproduced statement of rights and expectations of disabled, and learning disabled people, when accessing services.

## **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- launch our Intergenerational Strategy alongside our Ageing Well officer and Grant Fund to support an Age Friendly Wrexham.
- continue to work towards Wrexham Council becoming an autism-friendly local authority.

## Children's Social Care

### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- review the IFSS model to ensure the current service is fit for purpose.

### **This is what we did:**

#### **The Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS)**

The review of the IFSS model will be a coordinated review as IFSS is a service shared with Flintshire Council. Although plans to review were in 2021/22, other department priorities have moved this review to 2022/23.

A full review will now be undertaken in 2022/23.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- participation in development of the Wrexham Wellbeing Hub.
- participation and rollout of the Prevention and Early Intervention Strategy.
- full development of the pre-birth team.
- full development of the NEET project to support young people not in education, employment or training.
- review of IFSS, its functions and outcomes to better support improved numbers of families.

## **Standard 5: Helping people maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships**

This standard is about helping people achieve healthy relationships at home and with the people they're close to.

### **Adult Social Care**

#### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- implement outcome-focussed monitoring of care homes based on what 'good' looks like to people
- commission emergency respite solutions for people living with dementia and their carers

#### **This is what we did:**

We've all been learning to live with the impacts of the pandemic this year, many of which will be far reaching and long lasting. We know social isolation can be detrimental to people's health and well-being and whilst virtual platforms offered some respite from this, accessing the technology was a barrier to many. This year we have been working with our service providers to recover from the pandemic and return to a 'new normal' where people can begin to feel safe in face to face engagement again.

### **Care Homes**

We continued with our Quality Circle meetings throughout the pandemic, which involved a multi partner approach to reviewing the quality of care across the market. Naturally throughout the pandemic, these focused on how homes were managing through an incredibly challenging time and ensuring access to essential support. These meetings are now slowly returning to more normal practice, evaluating quality across the sector in a post pandemic world.

Standard monitoring visits to care homes were suspended in March 2020 as they implemented local lockdowns to shield their vulnerable residents. These have now started to recommence under a carefully monitored programme enabling a proactive, supportive, service review process, which involves citizens and families. Reports and recommendations will now also cover how homes are recovering from the pandemic and how we can support the market to restabilise.

## **Supporting Unpaid Carers**

Our engagement with unpaid carers has highlighted a number of significant challenges, which have been exasperated as a result of the pandemic. We have been working with unpaid carers and organisations supporting them to assess some of the gaps and draw up an action plan to make significant improvements. In order to drive this agenda forward, we have secured Welsh Government Regional Investment Funding to employ an unpaid carers lead officer, which we will take forward in 2022/23.

In beginning to address some of the challenges, we also utilised a Welsh Government grant to aid respite service development and after engaging with unpaid carers about what was needed, we launched the Unpaid Carers Direct Payment Service. Thirty one direct payments were made last year with the service continuing into 2022/23 via our commissioned provider, Newcis. Receiving a direct payment to fund respite solutions enables unpaid carers to purchase respite solutions that meet the needs of them and their loved ones flexibly.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- employ an unpaid carers lead officer role to coproduce solutions to gaps in services reported to us and our partners, to include increasing the range of respite options.

## Children's Social Care

### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- review the PASS Team to ensure the current service model is fit for purpose.
- embed the regional adoption service model.
- continue to develop early intervention and preventative services in line with Welsh Government priorities.

### **This is what we did:**

#### **PASS Team Review**

The review of the PASS Team has been started with an initial scoping exercise of the team's remit and purpose. Although the full review should have taken place in 2021/22, other department priorities have moved this review to 2022/23.

The team manager is currently undertaking an exercise on the team's remit and purpose for inclusion in the review.

The plan is for full review to be undertaken in 2022/23.

#### **North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS)**

All practical arrangements for the NWAS have been agreed. A NWAS Steering Group is in place, Terms of Reference agreed with all six North Wales local authorities, meets regularly, and a North Wales Adoption Service is in place. In 2022/23 legal departments will need to review and agree on the form of words needed to confirm the contract arrangements. This is currently with legal services in the six North Wales local authorities.

#### **Preventative Services**

Throughout the year, the department has made steady progress in the development of early intervention and preventative services. In November 2021, the Early Help and Prevention Framework document was published, following a multi-agency launch along with the Children's Services Threshold document.

The Prevention and Early Help Framework document is to assist all when planning Prevention and Early Intervention Services. It supports in considering who needs to be involved, what the principles are that will drive discussions and decisions, and to enable individuals to develop a clear business case for enhancing, expanding or repurposing current services.

Since the development of the Prevention and Early Help Framework, a new Prevention and Early Help Partnership has been established and work is currently underway to develop a strategy that will help to focus both the council and its partners to ensure that support to children, young people and families is available before issues worsen. It aims to help children, young people and families to help themselves in the first instance, but when more help is needed, we aim to provide the right support much earlier.

Further development of the Prevention and Early Help Partnership will continue throughout the coming year.

**This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- continue with improvements at the front door with the inclusion of a domestic abuse safety unit worker forming part of the SPoA service.
- continue to support healthy domestic relationships with the addition of a mental health worker and housing officer in SPoA.

## **Standard 6: Helping people achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs**

This means helping people improve their income. As well as helping them benefit from a social life and a suitable place to live.

### **Adult Social Care**

#### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- implement further phases of the day and work opportunities review and co-produce new and alternative solutions to enable people to achieve greater economic and personal wellbeing.
- expand the use of assistive technologies to enable people to live independently.
- develop our model of community-based care and support solutions for people with mental health conditions.

#### **This is what we did:**

##### **Day and Work Opportunities**

We worked in partnership with North Wales Advocacy Service to complete two co-production events to find new ways to help individuals and families with moderate to low needs.

We still have much work to do in taking this work through to completion following a pausing of the project as services were impacted by the pandemic. This year we plan to coproduce an action plan to deliver a modernised service that meets the needs of Wrexham citizens.

##### **Assistive Technology**

This year we have continued to deliver a successful Telecare Service via our contracted service provider, which has proved invaluable as many were shielding throughout the pandemic. We have also worked with our provider and other partners locally, regionally and nationally to scope the potential impacts of Digital Switchover in 2025, where all phone lines become digital. Our new health and social care programme manager will now deliver an action plan for how to mitigate some of the risks associated with digital switchover, including ensuring that our commissioned assistive technologies are compatible with new phone systems. Our commissioned provider and ourselves will communicate regularly with our telecare and assistive technology users throughout this process to help people stay informed about the changes and how they might be affected.

## **Mental Health Supported Living**

The community wellbeing team have separated from the health-led community mental health team and are now based with social care, maintaining a close working relationship with community mental health team colleagues. This enables mental health social workers and support staff to work within communities and alongside community and third sector mental health organisations. This will support a joint social care and third sector approach to support citizens with mental health needs and their unpaid carers, making services more accessible to people experiencing wide ranging mental health needs who might not meet criteria for health-led services.

This year we also launched a new supported living scheme with 24-hour care and support; a further development with a more flexible model of support to meet a range of mental health needs is also in development.

## **Care Closer to Home**

Utilising Welsh Government Integrated Care Capital Funding, this year we were able to launch our Care Closer to Home Programme, which will remain a priority into the next four years. The programme focuses on the purchase, repurposing and/or redevelopment of property either by Wrexham Council or in partnership with registered social landlords to deliver supported living schemes and small children's homes within Wrexham, enabling people to return to the borough to meet their housing and/or care needs and preventing the need to commission out of county placements in future. This year, we secured three properties and more are in the planning under the new and expanded Welsh Government capital grant schemes.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- research to continue into alternative models of delivery for day service and work opportunities to enable the expansion of services available.
- deliver an expanded Care Closer to Home Programme.

## Children's Social Care

### **This is what we said we'd do:**

- progress the 'Kick-Start' project offering intensive and therapeutic support to young people with complex needs who are at risk of placement breakdown and homelessness.
- ensure 4C's framework is embedded in practice and results in improved, cost effective placements.
- deliver on the care leavers offer.

### **This is what we did:**

#### **The Kickstart Project**

The Kickstart Project (provision of up to 14 placements for children and young people aged 16+ with complex needs) was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and construction issues. The Kickstart steering group has continued to meet over the last year, to drive forward progress and to ensure that policies and procedures are in place for when service is operational.

The project is supported by a Kickstart Steering Group and project action plan, which is updated regularly to ensure project timescales, risks, and issues are adequately and appropriately discussed and escalated.

The project is expected to be completed in Autumn 2022 and, upon completion, will provide a valuable addition to the placements that children's services are able to offer to support our children and young people.

#### **Placement Stability**

Progress has been made in the implementation of the 4C's Framework and a placement officer has been appointed to manage the framework database within Wrexham. The usage and expectations of the 4C's Framework continues to be embedded into practice as evidence of best practice. We have experienced an increased demand for placements able to meet the needs of highly complex young people, this has led to an increase in the number and cost of such placements. In order to deliver against the not for profit agenda, further investment will be needed in the development of local authority residential care.

Although no cost savings have been realised, it is noted that good progress is being made in Wrexham as we are saving money per placement via the framework; however, our number of placements and overall cost has increased, which mustn't detract from the way the 4C's framework has altered our way of working.

## Care Leavers

Our Care Leavers Offer has been progressed throughout the year and we are currently in the process of developing our accommodation pathways for young people, which will provide varying degrees of support on their pathway to independence and their own tenancy.

We hope to achieve this by continuing to develop our in-house Supported Lodging's Service, Kick Start Project, Step Down Project, When I'm Ready and use of our Training Flat.

The leaving care team are seeing more care leavers take advantage of the 'reconnecting to care' policy with pathways back into education or employment up to the age of 25. Where care leavers do not wish to take advantage of this, details of how to 'reconnect' are given to each care leaver prior to their exit interview.

Children's services continue to offer access to a payment of up to £500 from the St David's Day Fund emulating the 'bank of mum and dad' as well as access to the 'first homes grant' of up to £2000. In 2021/22, the leaving care team successfully relocated back to the 'Info Shop' from being based within Crown Buildings, enabling young people to gain more accessible contact with their social workers and personal assistants while being able to take advantage of the 'one stop shop' for any identified areas of support.

In 2022/23 we intend to continue with the development of our Care Leaver's Offer with the offer of ILM Level 2 in Leadership to 10 care experienced young people 18+ through the Fuse Research Project starting in June and the Basic Income Pilot, which is due to launch in the summer.

### **This is what we want to do in 2022-23:**

- completion of the Kickstart Project.
- increase our respite provision.
- support and aid development of the Miner's Rescue Station for Care Leavers.

## 5. How We Deliver for Our Citizens

### A. Developing Our Workforce

Our workforce development team continues to offer a range of online training modules for the social care sector. The regional Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) 2022/23 grant application has been submitted. Wrexham's grant allocation (which includes 30% match funding) is the same as last year £441,696.

Training and qualifications are made available to the social care workforce development partnership, whose membership and function is detailed in our communication plan.

In response to COVID, we have offered virtual online learning to support the workforce, including Community Care Inform (CCI), eLearning, signposting to resources available from Social Care Wales and workshops delivered via Zoom/Microsoft Teams.

More information about regional and local training and qualification priorities, emerging effective practice and training initiatives can be found on our website:

[www.wrexham.gov.uk/service/workforce-development](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/service/workforce-development)

### B. Finances and Planning for the Future

Since the 2018/19 financial year adult social care have delivered £4.2m of savings and children's social care have delivered £225k of savings.

In 2020/21 an additional £2.5m was allocated to the social care budget, £1.5m for children to fund the accelerated improvement of the department along with £1m for adults to fund demography. In 2021/22 a further £3.5m was allocated to children's services to deal with the significant increase in specialist provision. This additional cost has been offset by additional funding in 2021/22 through Welsh Government Recovery Funding and £6.1m of Hardship Funding. However, this underlying pressure will continue into the medium term and is reflected as a commitment in the 2022/23 to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Plan with an additional £6m invested in 2022/23 to meet social care demand and workforce pressures followed by a further commitment of £2.5m over the next two financial years. In addition, an amount has been committed in 2022/23 to meet the additional costs of introducing the Real Living Wage for care workers as set out by the deputy minister for social services.

## **C. Political leadership, governance and accountability**

On a political level, the council is supported by an executive group of councillors – called ‘lead members’ – who make key decisions.

They’re supported by scrutiny committees. Social services comes under the safeguarding, communities and wellbeing scrutiny committee.

On a management level, the director of social services (chief officer) reports directly to the chief executive of the council, and they are supported by a departmental management team.

Councillors and senior managers with these lead-responsibilities understand the importance of social services, and council policy states that we’ll prioritise services that support vulnerable people when setting budgets, making savings and changing how we do things.

The Accelerated Improvement Board comprises the two lead members for social care, the chief executive and senior officers from across the council who can support the improvement work, including from children’s social care, legal, HR and finance. The Accelerated Improvement Board meets every two months to review progress against the AIB Action plan, with regular reports provided to the leader, deputy leader and lead members and end of phase reporting to all members. A Scrutiny Task and Finish Group has also been established to provide further challenge for the improvement journey. The senior political and officer leadership provided is crucial in underpinning the sustained positive changes that are being achieved.

## **Partnership working**

The Wrexham Public Service Board (PSB) was established as a result of the Future Generations Act.

It aims to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wrexham County Borough – in a sustainable way that won’t harm future generations.

To help do this, the PSB has different boards working on different things.

PSB priorities are:

- that children and young people have the best start in life
- that all people can learn and develop throughout their lives

## Safeguarding Arrangements

Everyone has the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is about people and organisations working together to prevent, and put a stop to, the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, and at the same time, making sure children and vulnerable adults' wellbeing are promoted, including taking into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on action.

Safeguarding remains at the forefront of everything we do; whether that be responding to referrals, undertaking assessments, arranging and delivering services, or working with the wide variety of multi-agency partners; our work is underpinned by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019, Working Together to Safeguard People, and our newly published Children' Services Threshold Policy, Prevention and Early Help Framework, and our Extra Familial Harm Protocol 2022.

Working to these guidelines, our teams are well equipped and knowledgeable to provide response and action for any concerns of safeguarding.

In partnership with our workforce development team, safeguarding training is delivered throughout the year, and covers both basic safeguarding awareness, multi-agency working and sharing of information, and individual targeted subjects where trends or patterns are emerging locally or nationally.

Safeguarding is embedded in the day to day work of all our teams from preventative services like Together Achieving Change (TAC), whose responsibility it is to coordinate support services for children and young people between the ages of 0-25 years and their families who have additional needs and Prevention and Support Services (PASS) who undertake supervised visits for children with their families, conduct Family Group Conferences, and hold responsibility for return home interviews for those children who are reported missing from home or care.

Children's Single Point of Access (SPoA) are the "front door" for any member of the public or professional who have concerns for the wellbeing of a child or young person and our assessment and intervention team hold multi-agency strategy meetings with multi-agency partners like North Wales Police, Health, Education and Probation to make decisions on next steps where concerns have escalated to child protection and complete comprehensive assessments on children and young people to identify strengths and areas for improvement to proactively help families remain together, where possible.

The department's pre-birth assessment team work with expectant mothers and the safeguarding midwifery service where there are concerns for unborn babies with joint goal of providing early assistance and support to help families remain together. The family support team provide statutory child protection services and support services to those children, young people, and families who (after assessment) require services to help promote emotional, physical and social wellbeing.

The team also provide services to children who are accommodated (looked after) by the local authority following proceedings in the family court. For those children and young people for whom it has not been possible to remain living with their family, our looked after children team and leaving care team are in place to work with each young person, their family and carers to encourage them to reach their full potential, remain in placements that meet their needs, and safeguard and promote the young person's welfare.

Our safeguarding & quality assurance team bring together several roles to ensure the department has robust arrangements for oversight, quality assurance and challenge over all statutory processes and the care and support plans in place for children and young people in receipt of child protection or looked after children services.

Learning and development is key to continuous improvement. The safeguarding & quality assurance team is central to creating a learning environment across children services through identification of key patterns and trends in practice. The team are supported by the Quality Assurance Framework, which ensures a monthly audit programme is in place and provides us with regular opportunity to measure practice and standards of service delivery, enabling us to safeguard our most vulnerable, self-evaluate, challenge and improve.

## 6. Further information

This final section lists where you can find more information about some of the things mentioned in this report.

### Council structure

[wrexham.gov.uk/council](http://wrexham.gov.uk/council)

### Council Plan

[wrexham.gov.uk/service/organisational-structure](http://wrexham.gov.uk/service/organisational-structure)

Overarching plan that defines where the council focuses its energies.

[wrexham.gov.uk/service/council-plan-2020-2023](http://wrexham.gov.uk/service/council-plan-2020-2023)

### Wrexham Public Service Board

[wrexhampsb.org](http://wrexhampsb.org)

### North Wales Safeguarding Board

Helps ensure children and vulnerable adults are protected from abuse and neglect.

[northwalessafeguardingboard.wales](http://northwalessafeguardingboard.wales)

### Your Voice Wrexham

Public Service Board consultation website – used by the council for online surveys.

[yourvoicewrexham.net](http://yourvoicewrexham.net)

### Council complaints and compliments

[wrexham.gov.uk/service/contact/complaints-and-compliments](http://wrexham.gov.uk/service/contact/complaints-and-compliments)

### Dewis Cymru

[dewis.wales](http://dewis.wales)

## Care Inspectorate Wales

Inspects local authority social services, and reports on their effectiveness.

[careinspectorate.wales](http://careinspectorate.wales)

Wrexham Council reports:

- [Local Authority Annual Performance Review Letter 2018-19](#)
- [Report of Children's Services Risk Based Inspection and Adults Services Performance Evaluation Inspection October 2020](#)
- [Inspection of Older Adults Services 2019](#)
- [Report of performance evaluation inspection: Wrexham County Borough Council's adults and children's services - June 2022](#)
- [Care Service Directory](#)

## Wrexham Council Reports and Documents

[wrexham.gov.uk](http://wrexham.gov.uk)

Council Reports and Documents

- [Workforce Development Communication plan](#) (PDF Download)
- Workforce Development training plan, brochure and mid-year report  
[wrexham.gov.uk/service/workforce-development](http://wrexham.gov.uk/service/workforce-development)
- Welsh Language Standards  
[wrexham.gov.uk/service/complaints-and-compliments/welsh-language-standards](http://wrexham.gov.uk/service/complaints-and-compliments/welsh-language-standards)
- Transport  
[wrexham.gov.uk/service/links/links-transport](http://wrexham.gov.uk/service/links/links-transport)

## Appendix 1: Performance Measurement Framework

### Standard 1: Helping people achieve the well-being outcomes they want

#### Performance Metric: AD/002

- The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 5,946

#### Performance Metric: CA/002

- The total number of contacts to statutory social services by adult carers received during the year where advice or assistance was provided
- 2021-22 out-turn: 842

#### Performance Metric: CSC/014

- The percentage of assessments completed within statutory timescales
- 2021-22 out-turn: 74.71%

## **Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote physical, mental and emotional well-being**

### **Performance Metric: AD/032**

- The total number of adults during the year where the need for an independent professional advocate was identified.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 36

### **Performance Metric: AD/033**

- The Total number of adults during the year where the need for an independent professional advocate was identified and provided.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 24

### **Performance Metric: CSC/0010a**

- The percentage of assessments completed where there was evidence of the Active Offer of Welsh.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 99.72%

### **Performance Metric: CSC/034**

- The percentage of initial core group meetings held within timescale.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 68.27%

### **Standard 3: Safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm**

#### **Performance Metric: CSC/033**

- The percentage of initial child protection conferences held within timescale.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 54.70%

#### **Performance Metric: AD/023**

- Total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk where it is necessary for enquiries to be made.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 931

#### **Performance Metric: ASD/024**

- Total number of enquiries completed within 7 working days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 881

## **Standard 4: Helping people to learn, develop and participate in society**

### **Performance Metric: CSC/033**

- Of Care Leavers (Categories 1, 2 and 4), the percentage who have completed at least 3 months of consecutive employment, education or training in the 12 months since leaving care.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 66.67%

### **Performance Metric: AD/010**

- The percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year which reduced, maintained or mitigated the need for support.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 100%

## **Standard 5: Helping people maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships**

### **Performance Metric: CSC/038**

- The percentage of children looked after at 31st March who were registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 100%

### **Performance Metric: CSC/042**

- The percentage of health assessments for LAC due in the year that have been undertaken.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 40%
- Comment: Quarters 1 and 2 are unverified due to agency partner staff absence.

### **Performance Metric: CSC/052**

- The percentage of Young People that required and were allocated a personal advisor.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 96.77%

## **Standard 6: Helping people achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs**

### **Performance Metric: CSC/055**

- The percentage of young people leaving care who move into a “When I am Ready” placement.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 7.48%

### **Performance Metric: AD/015a**

- The percentage of Residential Care services started during the year.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 47.59%

### **Performance Metric: AD/015b**

- The percentage of Domiciliary Care services started during the year.
- 2021-22 out-turn: 31.47%