

**Report of the
Director of Social Services
2020/2021**



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Introduction

2020/21 was a particularly demanding year characterised by the maintenance of quality and standards of service delivery in the midst of the Coronavirus Pandemic. In April 2020 we had no idea of how long the situation would last or of the impact it would have on services, citizens and staff.

This report will document how services responded and maintained and where we find ourselves at the end of a 12 month period characterised by some unique challenges that will inevitably lead to some permanent changes in the way we support citizens in the future.

The task of embedding the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 continues to influence the provision of Early Intervention and Preventative services and in the ongoing work to manage demand. The well-being objectives tie closely to the Newport City Council (NCC) Corporate Plan, notably:

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

In Childrens Services, efforts have continued to address the shortage of placement options with a new 4 bed residential home now in operation with 2 more services planned for 2021/22. The preventative work to minimise the number of children becoming Looked After continues to develop with new and innovative practices such as Baby & Me, Family Group Conferencing and Rapid Response.

Work in Adult and Community Services continues to focus on improving and developing integrated working between health and social care with the Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) and the Transformation Fund being key enablers. The collaborative work to minimise the number of delayed hospital discharges has continued with pathways including Reablement and Home First fully integrated into the new Grange Hospital that opened during this year

The Coronavirus Pandemic brought unprecedented challenge across the range of services and older persons residential homes were impacted early on as Newport experienced high numbers of cases before preventative measures were in place. Although I have referenced the way we responded to the Pandemic throughout the report I thought it would be helpful to summarise here some of the themes of the past year to establish the context.

In April, May and December of 2020 there was a spike in deaths of citizens known to us and people have been fearful of going into hospital and into long-term care. Our domiciliary care providers have worked with us and with GP's District Nurses and Community Psychiatric Nurses to keep people safe in the community and to ensure they have access to the right care

We have adopted new ways of working, as have our partners, utilising technology where possible. We have supported our providers, ensuring PPE is available and working collaboratively with colleagues in Environmental Health, Public Health Wales, ABUHB and Welsh Government to offer practical and financial support.

People receiving some services and their carers had to deal with the fact that their care had to be delivered in a different way e.g. support at home and in the community rather than attending a building. Social Workers continued to undertake urgent assessments and maintained contact with others to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place offering telephone support and arranging welfare visits when necessary. Volunteers did shopping, collected prescriptions and delivered food parcels.

We developed a new outreach service and successfully embedded our hospital discharge processes into the new Grange Hospital that opened in September 2020. The Hospital and Reablement teams have been present at hospital sites throughout.

Considerable and impressive effort was made to house 70 street homeless people in temporary accommodation and to ensure they have ongoing access to specialist substance misuse and mental health support.

In Children's services we have continued to work in partnership with Barnardo's to prevent children coming into care, to work with children with additional needs and to support young carers.

Referral rates for safeguarding have remained high throughout the Pandemic, increasing the pressure on statutory services due to the restrictions on other community based provision. The new Rapid Response service started in October 2020 and aims to help families de-escalate and manage their crisis to prevent children coming into care.

The number of Looked After Children has remained constant (378 at 31st March) which indicates the effectiveness of prevention given the high rates of referral. Family Group Conferencing, Baby & Me, Rapid Response and MyST are all proving effective tools in supporting families. We maintained family contact sessions using technology and continued with face-to-face engagement where necessary.

Despite the restrictions, we progressed 26 adoptions, approved 23 new foster households and opened a new 4 bed residential home.

The year end financial position mirrors the operational experience, the adult underspend reflects not only the loss of life as a result of Covid 19 but also the reluctance of citizens to access services. Lockdown and furlough meant that more informal networks were available. We also had access to a significant amount of additional Welsh Government funding the future of which is not yet confirmed.

The Children's services overspend is reflective of the increased pressure on services that was already high but further exacerbated by the Pandemic. The prevention services continue to mitigate rising costs.

Across adults and children's services, we are now experiencing higher than usual levels of complexity and increasing referral numbers. Social care services have not had sufficient time to recover and there are concerning signs of a staffing crisis. We expect ongoing budget constraints but at this stage, we are still in the midst of a crisis and uncertain about how the medium to long-term impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic will affect the community and how we deliver our services.

Summary of Performance 2020/21

A new performance framework was planned for implementation during 2018/19 but it was delayed until April 2020. Unfortunately, the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic in March 2020 led to a further delay until April 2021

NCC have developed the WCCIS system and new reporting and recording processes are now in place.

The data contained in this report represents the new performance framework but not all of the figures are for the full 12 month period. It is unavoidable that this year has been a period of transition but our systems are now complete and ready to go from April 2021 in accordance with Welsh Government timescales and the draft guidance that is yet to be finalised.

End of Year Performance Figures for Adult and Community Services

The new performance framework has changed the way we are required to measure the data so comparison with last year is problematic. This new set of metrics and recording processes coupled with the enforced working from home arrangements and the shift in demand as a result of the Pandemic means that it is sensible to treat this period as a baseline set of figures upon which to build future datasets to support evidence of future success, good practice and service pressures.

For example, last year (2019/20) **the number of people receiving assessments was 4038**, an increase of 891 from 2018/19.

During 20/21 the figure is **1538** that appears to be considerably less but this is because the metric is now restricted to **'new' assessments**

Another example of this is the change in the way the provision of **advice and assistance** is measured. In 2019/20 the figure of **4,588** was recorded but in 20/21 this has **reduced to 1,718** as we have been required to remove the numbers where only information was provided. This must be considered in the context of the **5,597 contacts recorded in 20/21** that demonstrates an overall increased level of activity

Hospital discharge figures have not been provided as they are no longer a statutory reporting requirement. However, In Reach, Reablement and Home First continue to be effective integrated service approaches to manage the flow of patients through the hospital and ensure they return home with the right level of support to maximise and maintain independence.

NB: No targets have yet been established, a full year of data is required to establish a benchmark for future performance

Adults Measures	Figure 20/21	Results & Comments
Total No. of Adults Who Have Received Advice & Assistance	1718	5,597 contact in total that includes when information only was provided
No. of New Assessments Completed During the Year	1538	Only represents new people 1 st time assessments
Active Offer of Welsh Accepted	0	
No. with a Care & Support Package at 31st March 2021	1861	
No. with Eligible Needs for Care & Support Maintained by Direct Payments at 31st March	93	over 18's only
Total no. of Adult Protection Enquiries Completed in the Year	648	doesn't represent individuals - could be multiple enquiries for same person
No. of Adult Protection Enquiries Completed Within Timescales	636 Within 7 working days	98.1%
Total No. of Packages of Reablement Completed During the Year	584	
Outcome of Reablement - Reduced Package of Care & Support	43	7.4%

Outcome of Reablement - No. of Packages of Reablement That Maintained the Need For Support	95	16.3%
Outcome of Reablement – No further Package of Care & Support	409	70%
Increased package of support	37	6.3%

End of Year Performance Figures for Children and Young People’s Services

The new performance framework has changed the way we are required to measure data so a comparison with last year is problematic. This new set of metrics and recording processes coupled with the enforced working from home arrangements and the shift in demand as a result of the Pandemic means that it is sensible to treat this period as a baseline set of figures upon which to build future datasets to support evidence of future success, good practice and service pressures

Notwithstanding the above it must be noted that children’s services has experienced significant additional demand during 2020/21

The continuing development of **additional residential placements** and the ongoing efforts to **recruit Foster Carers** will improve capacity and enable more children to remain within the City.

Preventions services including **Family Group Conferencing, Baby & Me** and the new **Rapid Response service** are enabling families to stay together and preventing new entrants to the care system.

NB: No targets have yet been established, a full year of data is required to establish a benchmark for future performance

Children’s Measures	Figure 20/21	Comments
No. of referrals where advice and assistance was provided	5,424	10104 contacts in total that includes where information only was provided

No. Where Physical Punishment was the Only Factor	144	New law coming April 2022 about physical punishment by the parent or care – this is a new measure to start to gather data to measure the impact
Active Offer of Welsh Accepted During Assessment	0	
No. of Children With a Care & Support Plan (CASP) at 31 st March 2021	978	This figure includes children with a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and includes children receiving finance only support
No. of Children who are LAC at 31 st March 2021	378	
No. of Children Becoming Looked After During the Year	91	
No. of Children Who Ceased Being Looked After During the Year	92	
No. of LAC Who have had 3 or More Placements	26	* Note this may change once we receive final notification from WG improved figure since 19/20
No. of LAC Returned Home During the Year	36	
No. of Children in Care Proceedings During the Year	44	
No. of Foster Carers Registered with the LA	159	
No. of Childrens Residential Beds as at 31 st March 2021	21	
Total Number of Children on Child Protection Register (CPR) as at 31 st March	158	
Total No. of Registrations on the CPR During the Year	179	

No. of Children Who Were Removed from the CPR	148	
No. of Reports of Child Exploitation Received During the Year	62	*Note this only covers the 6 month period 01 Oct 2020 to 31 March 2021
No. of Contacts by Young Carers or Professionals During the Year	74	<p>Provided by Barnardo's and relates to new contacts.</p> <p>50 received advice and assistance and progressed to a formal care plan</p> <p>At 31st March there were 84 on a formal care plan</p> <p>Reviews are conducted every 6 months</p>

Youth Justice Service

By continuing to shape the service in line with the Welsh Government's **Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales**, we have seen a dramatic increase in our preventative cases, which is promoting positive outcomes for children.

We adopt a "**Child-first**" practice approach and continue to develop community partnerships to improve diversionary opportunities for children. We work with key agencies under an Anti-Social Behaviour umbrella to ensure there is a multi-agency approach to planning.

We have engaged a **Speech and Language Therapist** to aid communication and understanding and ensure each child has a plan that is individual to them.

We have just started a Restorative Justice Clinic that will provide specific restorative justice sessions for the child we are working with. These sessions will include victim empathy work

We are reviewing how we work with **victims** including providing various ways of communicating and using a "cooling-off period" to ensure they can access support at a later date if needed. We are developing a process to help us reach out to the victims of children who have been diverted away from criminal justice to ensure they are not forgotten and have the option to access a service

We have set up an **allocation pathway with the Safeguarding Hub** to ensure that those coming through the Children's Services front door can access the Youth Justice Service without delay.

We are working with the **Preventions Team**, to ensure that where possible, we work with the children and the parent/carers or siblings, so that each has their own personal support plan. This is designed to provide a family-based approach

to prevention support and to ensure any younger children can benefit from the service provided to the older children.

The Youth Justice Service Workers have been trained in **Trauma Informed Practice** which is used throughout assessment and case management.

We have monthly **psychology input** and use that for case formulation sessions where children with complex situations and adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) are considered in a multi-agency forum and a **case formulation document** completed. This document will travel with the child throughout their involvement with children's services and is available to explain their particular needs and vulnerabilities from a psychological perspective,

We continue to work closely with our **specialist services**; CAMHS, Speech and Language Therapy, Education, Probation, Police and Barod (Substance Use) These services are currently under review to ensure they are fit for purpose as the YJS goes through this period of transition. We have introduced monthly performance reporting for specialist service provision.

We have re-organised the structure and recording of **Risk Management Panels**. These have become an integral part of partnership working and are well attended by all key agencies, the outcome being that an accurate and multi-agency risk plan is completed.

Children's Measures	Target	Results & Comments (2020/21)
Number of young people sentenced to custody	25	1 child was sentenced to Custody in November 2020. (0 in 2019/20) The YJS proposed a community order as an alternative to custody in the pre-sentence report 5 other local authorities in Wales had more than one child sentenced to custody in 2020/21
Number of first time entrants into the youth justice system	40	37 (Within target but 12 more than last year) YJS identified that the outcomes from Bureau were often a Youth Caution or Conditional Caution resulting in the child becoming a first time entrant. YJS have reviewed processes to deliver more child focussed bureau outcomes and there was a reduction in first time entrants in the latter part of the year Additionally, 9 children were sentenced to a statutory court order because of the nature and seriousness of their offending.

Young people out of court disposals re-offend within 12 months	30%	<p>30% (On target but an increase of 16%)</p> <p>NB: This figure is 12 months behind as reoffending rates are tracked over a 12 month period and covers 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020)</p> <p>Based on a cohort of 116 young people with 35 re-offending.</p> <p>The numbers of children re-offending have more than doubled.</p> <p>YJS have commissioned an audit to inform future practice.</p>
Young people statutory orders who re-offend within 12 months	50%	<p>27.5% (Strong and Improving performance)</p> <p>NB: This figure is 12 months behind as reoffending rates are tracked over a 12 month period and covers 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020)</p> <p>Based on a cohort of 29 young people with 8 re-offending.</p> <p>This improvement has been strongly influenced by the information provided to the bench on Trauma Informed Practice and engagement with the Court User Group whose support for diverting young people away from the criminal justice system is resulting in a decrease in the amount of court disposals</p>

How Are People Shaping Our Services?

Newport City Council is committed to ensuring that people are able to have a say in how they receive support and how services will be developed and delivered in the future.

Some examples of how we do this are:

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

- Engagement with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).
- Active promotion of voice of the child

Consultation events in 2020/21

These included:

- Carers Week – virtual event
- Annual public budget consultation process in December 2020.
- Regular feedback obtained from children and adults living in NCC residential homes at house meetings.
- The Cabinet Member for Social Services is very active at community level

Welsh Government agreed that Local Authorities were not required to undertake a citizens survey during 2020/21. The statutory reporting requirement is currently under review.

Adult – Residential & Reablement Services

Due to Covid the Care Inspectorate Wales inspections did not take place as planned. However, 3 monthly visits by the Responsible Individual (RI) were completed.

Common themes identified for improvement by the RI across the residential care homes at Blaen-y-Pant, Spring Gardens and Parklands were as follows:

- Ensure staff receive mandatory training within specified timescales
- Ensure vehicles have sufficient fuel, and journey logs are completed
- Ensure staff are regularly tested for Covid
- Ensure regular supervisions are completed
- Ensure photographs are placed on Mars charts of residents

Reablement were required to provide better information to citizens about what the service could achieve and to prepare them properly for the fact that it is a time limited programme

Children's Residential Services

Common themes identified by the RI across Forest Lodge, Rosedale, Oaklands, Rose Cottage and Brynglas Bungalow were as follows:

- Improve Health and Safety risk assessments
- Improve information provided at shift handover
- Ensure staff are up to date with mandatory training
- Progress outstanding environmental improvements i.e garden/decoration

Care Inspectorate Wales Inspections 2020/21

Brynglas Bungalow unannounced visit - 27th October 2020

- *There is a full staff team but there were high levels of staff absences.*
- *Staff were positive and their comments indicated that they are motivated and committed to the young people and their roles.*
- *Robust referral and admission arrangements are in place with systems in place to ensure only children whose needs can be met live at the home.*
- *Systems for engaging children in seeking their views about the day to day life at the home and their personal goals and outcomes are in place.*
- *The group of young people are well established with feedback from young people, staff and a social worker describing each of the young people making good progress.*
- *Young people are generally satisfied with living at the home*

Cambridge House unannounced inspection – 30th November 2020

- *The home is a large detached property and not well suited for such use and although changes have been made in order to meet the needs of the placement the premises are in poor condition.*

Cambridge House closed in May 2021 as the Council develops new residential services that meet the needs of children and young people. Rose Cottage and Rosedale already provide an additional 8 beds over 2 sites and Windmill Farm is scheduled to open in 21/22

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Assurance Check Newport City Council - May 2021

NB Whilst this inspection took place outside of the 2020/21 reporting timeframe the focus of the check was very much on our service delivery during the Pandemic. As the findings are available at the time of writing they have been included to add further depth and context to the period of time covered by this report.

To determine:

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

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

The findings identified culture of improvement and mutual support and a recognition of positive leadership. It was noted that staff morale was generally good.

"Partnerships were in the main working well at all levels and delivering an integrated sustainable approach to meeting need and promoting well-being"

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

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

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

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

Areas for improvement - Overview

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

A full copy of the report can be found at:

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

Overview of complaints 2020/21

A Stage 1 complaint is for local resolution within 10 working days.

Following Stage 1, if the complainant remains dissatisfied they can request to proceed to Stage 2. This involves a formal investigation conducted by an independent investigator and if a child or vulnerable adult and Independent Person is also appointed, at a cost to the Local Authority.

Following Stage 2, if the complainant remains dissatisfied they are advised to proceed to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW)

During 2020/21, the Complaints Service received **130** Social Services complaints, **11 less than last year**

Adults' Services –

- **52** total complaints received
- **26** were **not progressed** to a complaint
- **22** were **resolved** at stage 1
- **2** were **discontinued** (This is where a resolution has not been mutually met but the complaint does not progress to a stage 2)
- **2** proceeded to **stage 2**
- Stage 2 outcome – **part upheld** and **not upheld**
-

Children's Services –

- **78** complaints
- **50** were **not progressed** to a complaint
- **20** were **resolved** at stage 1
- **6** were discontinued (This is where a resolution has not been mutually met but the complaint does not progress to a stage 2)
- **2** proceeded to **stage 2**
- Stage 2 outcome – **part upheld** and **upheld**

The decrease in the number of stage 2 complaints has been noted again for this financial year with a total of 4 stage 2 complaints. This continues is a result of the number of complaints being resolved at stage 1.

4 complaints (2 Children Services and 2 Adults Services) were assessed by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW). The outcome of each were as follows:

1 Adults complaint - premature and referred back to the Council to complete their complaints procedure

1 Adults complaint- early settlement, progress complaint to a stage 2

1 Childrens complaints - refused as a matter for the courts

1 Childrens complaint- investigation completed by the Ombudsman – resulting in financial redress and actions to be taken forward

Recommendations for service improvement as a consequence of complaints management.

- Improvements to information provided to customers on viability assessments
- Improvements to information sharing and communication to families of children in their guardianship
- Improvements to recording and transition practices within Children's residential settings

Overview of compliments 2020/21

Adults' Services **15** - **2 more than last year**

[Occupational Therapy Team](#)

"Everything I wanted and needed you got for him without hesitation and that made his daily life a lot easier and that meant the world to me. I can't thank you enough"

Children's Services **4** - **4 more than last year**

Children's Team

"I just wanted to personally thank you for being so supportive and understanding. I'm hopeful with the help you've put in place, and support from everyone at the meeting today we'll get there."

Promoting & Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

Quality Standard 1 – Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

In order to respond appropriately to the wide range of adult enquiries, our First Contact Service is a multi-disciplinary team with co-located specialist officers who offer on-the-spot information, advice and assistance to citizens in the following areas:

- Safeguarding;
- Occupational Therapy;
- Housing advice (funded by Housing Support Grant)
- Sensory impairment;
- Independent living – Direct Payments;
- Financial advice.
- Community Connectors

There are plans to extend the services available within First Contact to strengthen the preventative focus of IAA by ensuring citizens get the right advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Physiotherapy, Falls and Reablement is scheduled to join the First Contact team.

In 2020/21 **1538 citizens received advice and assistance** from the First Contact Team (this figure does not include those who only received information)

IAA has been successfully extended to the hospital environment and is an integral part of the following 2 components of hospital discharge that contributes to effective patient flow:

- **In Reach** - Targeted engagement with patients and families whilst still on the ward ensures safe discharge arrangements are co-produced to maximise independence.
- **Home First** - The offer of IAA is a critical feature of this regional service, hosted by Newport City Council. It offers IAA to patients within the hospital with the aim of preventing admission.

Where the First Contact Team are unable to meet the needs of adults through the provision of **Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA)** via a proportionate assessment, an integrated assessment is offered that further explores the person's eligible needs and works with the individual on how best to meet them.

"In adult services, proportionate assessments were undertaken in a timely manner. Although variable, people's voices were mostly heard, their choices respected and people achieve self-identified outcomes"

(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)

Every young person who is involved in the child protection process or who are Looked After has the opportunity to speak with an advocate.

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) provides a regional advocacy service. Every Newport child who is involved in the child protection process or who is Looked After has access to the **statutory active offer** and has the opportunity to speak to an advocate to ensure their voice is heard.

- **139 active offers of advocacy were made in 2020/21**

Dewis is commissioned to provide an independent advocacy service to adults. In 2020/21 they supported **135 adults** with a range of issues by adopting new ways of working, blending virtual contact with face to face based on individual risk assessments.

Dewis advocates supported the consultation process in relation to the closure of Brynglas Day Centre and also ensured that the views and wishes of residents and their families were independently represented during 2 care home closure processes that occurred during the year.

This was a challenging time both in terms of the stress of upheaval for the residents and for the multi agency team who had to manage the transfer of clinically vulnerable people in the midst of a Pandemic. All were successfully moved and are now settled in their new homes.

During 20/21 Newport Childrens Services and Barnardos undertook a **Review of families and professional agencies experiences of Child Protection Case Conferences** as part of a commitment to hear the voice of the child and family in child protection processes

- We spoke to **12 family members** and **30 agencies**

- Responses were used to shape the redesign of CP processes and a greater focus on parental collaboration and ensuring the children understand what has been agreed is now at the forefront.
- This work is due to continue in 21/22

The Community Connector team offers support to citizens who may be socially isolated to help them gain independence and improve their well-being.

- Newport's team of **six Connectors** provided a service to a total number of **2,136 citizens** during 2020/21 with information, telephone advice and 1:1 support
- **4,427** outcomes were recorded at closure thereby highlighting the complexity of enquiries that resulted in multiple solutions.
- This year saw an increase in those requesting a support service and volunteer shopping due to shielding, isolating or ill-health. Food bank support continued to rise highlighting those in food poverty.
- There was a decline in those asking for social activities and skills or training but a rise in those seeking information and support regarding their health, mental wellbeing and financial assistance.
- The Connectors offer specialist support to BAME communities including work with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to enable access to social activities, volunteering and learning and employment opportunities.
- **302 BAME citizens were supported during 2020/21** this represents a reduction as engagement is usually centered around community events that did not take place this year
- Information about Covid Support Grants were shared with community groups

The Community Connectors and our Third Sector partners continue to update the **DEWIS** database that contains local and national information. Newport has **509** live resources on the site, a decrease of 20 from last year but still high when viewed in the context of many services and groups being unable to operate throughout the year

There has been an increase in database use during 2020/21 that indicates continued trust in DEWIS as a reliable source of community information

- **Average of 7,144 views per month compared to 4,904 in 2019/20**

Occupational Therapists (OT) provide assessments to support people to remain physically independent within the home environment. An OT is based within our First Contact team to ensure appropriate advice is available for citizens at the earliest opportunity.



Over **200** urgent visits were carried out by the OT's during the Pandemic. Citizens on the non-urgent waiting list were contacted and offered advice and assistance to help with daily activities during lockdown

The OT team currently co-ordinate the telecare service that was established in 2019/20 in partnership with Monmouthshire and Caerphilly Local Authorities.

At 31st March 2020 87 Newport citizens were using telecare equipment to help them remain independent at home

Ask SARA - an easy to use online self-help guide providing information about equipment for independent living. The site provides an overview of what is available and how to obtain it and is available throughout Gwent.

CARERS

The Newport Carers Network has **540 members** and offers information, advice and support for Newport citizens in a way that suits their individual requirements.

Newsletters and updates are distributed via post and email and available on the NCC website.

The Newport Carers Offer – launched in 2020

Information around what is available to anyone in a caring role living in Newport – all this information is available on the NCC website and is regularly publicised via established communication channels.

- **132** adult carer's assessments were undertaken in 2020/21
- **689** carers received information, advice and assistance from the Connector team.
- **2,241** people accessed digital support information from the Carers Support Webpage and My Newport Online Portal (**1,330 in 2019/20**)

"We found recognition of the need to support carers during the Pandemic. Information and advice was given to carers and service provided to support their needs"

(CIW Assurance Check May 2021)

The Pandemic presented particular challenges for carers who were not only unable to access their normal support networks such as the established Carers Café, but community based services for the cared for were also unavailable thereby placing additional strain on informal arrangements. NCC recognised this and took the following steps:

- **A revised edition of the Newport City Council Carers Handbook was provided to every known adult carer with an outline of the Newport Carers Offer**
- **Information was shared on social media**
- **A new online request form was added to My Newport Council page in February 2021.**

Carers Week 8 - 12 June 2020

- **Information campaign launched with support of Public Relations colleagues**
- **Daily emails for network members and social media posts to reach a wider audience**

"Well done for all your efforts for Carers Week. I think it was really positive. Thank you for all the info, links and resources in the daily emails "

"It was helpful to see the post online and to find out that there is so much information and support out there"

Priorities for 2021/22

- To further develop the **First Contact** team into an **Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) hub** consisting of co-located Social Care, Health and partner organisations
- **Carers** - to engage and support more adult unpaid carers
- **Telecare** - to continue to expand and improve the service
- To continue to proactively **manage demand and reduce waiting times** as the community starts to recover from the Pandemic
- To **improve digital access** to the information and advice service by developing the website
- To launch an **NCC Young Carers offer** in partnership with Barnardo's
- To develop a **single entry point for adult safeguarding** issues

Quality Standard 2 – Working with people & partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

Covid has had a significant impact upon our foster carers and residential homes. It has caused issues in placing children with new carers due to the risks of spreading the infection and the young people in our care have experienced isolation from friends, a reduction in family time and less time in education.

The staff have had to cope with homes going into isolation, PPE and children frustrated at being unable to leave. This was overcome by finding new

entertainment and staff organised activities such as baking competitions and karaoke evenings.

A key priority since 2018/19 has been to open new residential services for children in Newport to reduce the number of out of county placements and keep children close to their family and community networks. The Pandemic has caused delays but the current position is as follows:

- **Rose Cottage**, a 4-bedroom residential home opened in January 2019
- **Rosedale**, a 4 bed property opened in January 2021
- **Windmill Cottage** a 4 bed property, joint project with health to support crisis placements on a regional basis is due to open in March 2022

Newport are active partners in the Gwent-wide Children and Families Strategic Partnership and has a positive working relationship South East Wales Regional Adoption Collaborative.

- In 2020/21 permanent and stable futures were secured for **26 children through adoption**. (6 more than last year)

Newport has more children placed with in house foster carers than with foster placements purchased from independent Fostering Agencies and this is an ongoing trend. Fostering offers a family environment and is often preferable to a residential placement. In house provision also means that children can remain close to their networks and NCC are committed to recruiting more foster carers who are based within the local authority area and to offer specialist support to prevent placement breakdown.

- At year end there were **378 Looked After Children in** Newport
- **256** are in fostering arrangements
- **207** are in NCC fostering arrangements
- **159** foster carers were registered with NCC at year end
- **75%** of the independent foster agency (IFA's) carers used by NCC are out of county placements
- **23** new NCC fostering households were approved during 2020/21

NCC Corporate Plan 2017-2022:

"We will reduce out of county children's social care placements by 25%."

- **MyST** was launched in 2020/21 (My Support Team). This multi agency approach to the provision of a therapeutic service for children with complex needs will better support foster carers and prevent placement breakdown. The central purpose of MyST is to improve the psychological wellbeing of

children/young people, their relationships with birth family members, their attachments with safe adults, reduce placement disruptions and particularly the risk of out-of-county placement for young people with emotional and behavioral difficulties.

- **When I Am Ready** – a scheme to enable care leavers to stay with their foster carers post 18 and up to the age of 25 – this is now available to looked after children in Newport and will continue to be monitored.
- During 2020/21 Barnardo's **Family Support Service (FSS)** provided support to **580 children (a reduction of 17% from last year)**
- **94%** of FFS cases closed during the year did not escalate or reduced the initial risk status

NB: the number of referrals reduced at the height of the Pandemic

It has been a challenge during lockdown to provide support to families using virtual platforms and only conducting visits in the most urgent of cases. Feedback has been positive but a clear preference for face-to-face sessions has been expressed and they have increased as restrictions have eased.

The Rapid Response Team is a new early intervention service offered to families in crisis as a result of a referral to the safeguarding hub.

The service commenced in October 2020 and is funded by the **Intermediate Care Fund (ICF)** with 3 workers employed by **Barnardo's** who work closely with the Social Worker using a range of trauma informed approaches. Support is offered for **6 weeks** and the intention is to de escalate risk and **keep families together.**

During the first quarter the team worked with 12 families

- **4** children returned home
- **4** children remained with their family

The Disabled Children's Team has been working in collaboration with adult services, commissioning and the education department to:

- Develop 2 transition supported living services & 1 residential service
- Develop a new outreach and day service provision for young people with complex behaviours
- Develop alternative post 16 education options for young people with special educational needs
- Continue to deliver sessional support for children and their cares

The Young Carers' Service is delivered by **Barnardo's** to ensure young people who care for family members have an opportunity to engage with their peers, achieve their personal development goals and get appropriate respite from their role as primary carer.

- Barnardo's offer **time out activities for young carers aged 8 - 25** who often face social isolation and low self esteem.
- During the Pandemic the service diversified to offer virtual groups and activities as well as phone calls and video chats with young carers
- **422** young carers were supported in 2020/21 (73 new referrals and an increase of 123 since 2019/20)
- **Young Carers ID Card** was launched in Newport to provide young carers with the opportunity and confidence to highlight their caring role to teachers, medical professionals and retailers.
- **Newport Young Carers** ran a virtual awareness raising campaign and held a poster competition **Carers Week**

Hospital Discharge & Community Based Services

Throughout the Pandemic services have maintained a full presence on the hospital wards and in the community, often working with people who are Covid positive.

Reablement operates as a fully integrated health and social care service to support hospital discharge in St Woolos, the Royal Gwent and the Grange

It is a short term focussed support package where people are encouraged and supported to do as much as they can for themselves, which has a positive impact on their physical and mental wellbeing.

During 20/21 at the end of the Reablement programme **70% of people required no ongoing support** (409 out of a total of 584)

The Dementia Reablement Service. A regionally funded project that began in October 2020

The Service will provide planned, time limited and goal orientated approaches that support people with memory problems or with dementia to maintain their daily living skills and remain independent for as long as possible.

- **Dementia Reablement Service supported 94 people** between October 2020 and March 2021
- **11 people reduced their package of care** at the end of the programme
- **36 people remained independent** at the end of the programme
- **82 people required no change** to their support at the end of the programme

During the Pandemic people were reluctant to go into hospital due to the risk of becoming infected with the virus. In order to respond to the increased number of community based referrals the Reablement staff worked in partnership with GP's District Nurses and Social Workers to keep people safe at home.

Dementia Service Development – the specialist Reablement service is part of a suite of interventions that will offer citizens options to remain in the community for as long as possible.

- **Spring Gardens** offers daily respite for people with dementia and this also supports the carer to have a break.
- **Outreach Service** newly established as a result of the closure of Brynglas Day Centre that offers flexible support to carers both in the home and in the community

Home First - Newport City Council host this regional service. The Grange University Hospital opened in December 2020 and Home First is fully operational on that site in addition to the Royal Gwent and Neville Hall Hospitals. It involves the offer of information, advice and assistance (IAA) through a proportionate assessment for patients within pre-admission wards, regardless of where they live in Gwent.

- **Home First** received **840 referrals** between 01/10/2020 and 31/03/21
- Home First **safely discharged 475 (60%)** people between 01/10/20 and 31/03/21

NB Home First stats were not formally recorded at the beginning of the year due to the Pandemic and the re-alignment of services to support the regional Covid 19 requirements for hospital discharge

Domiciliary Care. Newport City Council commissions services from approximately 30 independent providers. Despite a relatively stable market, recruitment of staff has been an ongoing problem across the region.

NCC Commissioners negotiate annual fees with providers that reflect the true cost of care to support the retention of a skilled and committed social care workforce but the Pandemic has exacerbated the staffing shortage and the post lockdown increase in the number and complexity of referrals means that care is having to be prioritised in a way that hasn't previously been necessary.

Staff shortages are affecting all social care services with recruitment processes often failing to identify any suitable candidates. This is a national problem that will require ongoing local, regional and national oversight to manage the risks and find sustainable solutions.

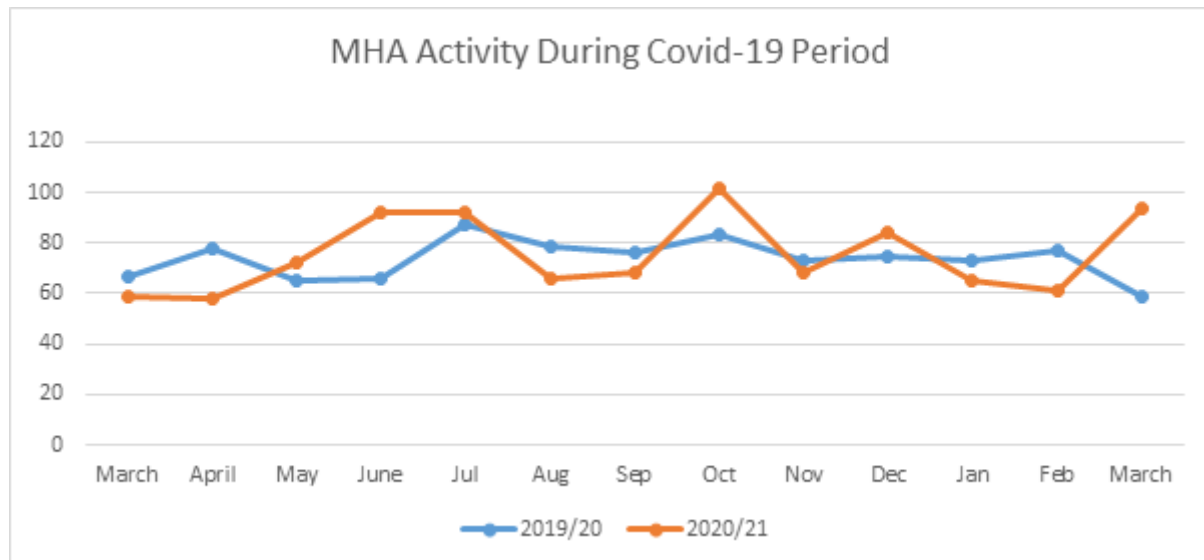
Providers worked tirelessly throughout the lockdowns with carers going into homes that are unregulated environments often knowing that individuals were Covid 19 positive. The number of cases among community based staff remained relatively low as infection control procedures were implemented.

The impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on services will continue to be monitored throughout 2021.

Mental Health. There is increasing pressure on mental health services and the Coronavirus Pandemic has created further immediate demand with an expectation that resources will continue to be challenged

The Pandemic has further highlighted increases in mental ill health and there has been an acknowledgement nationally that citizens and services are under pressure. Newport experienced 30% more referrals than usual during the period and this was replicated across Gwent.

The graph below shows a data comparison of completed assessments for the Gwent area between 20/21 and 19/20



Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) - the procedure prescribed in law when it is necessary to deprive a person of their liberty who lacks capacity to consent to the care that is required to keep them safe.

It requires Social Services to undertake a mental capacity and best interest assessment for each person where this applies

- 423 full DoLS assessments were undertaken in 2020/21

Due to Covid restrictions, the majority were completed via video conferences but the more complex cases were completed face to face using the appropriate PPE.

"We saw examples of best interest and mental capacity assessments with clear decision making; we also found capacity assessment reviewed over time to consider fluctuating capacity and changing circumstances"

(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)

A new model for authorising the Deprivation of Liberty for those receiving care was due to come into effect in 2020 but this has now been delayed until March 2022 – **Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)** are included in the Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019 and will place additional responsibilities onto Local Authorities. A **key priority** for NCC is to ensure full implementation of the new **Code of Practice**

NCC commissions a service from **Mind** that offers support to prevent a deterioration in mental health. The service offers practical advice and signposting to other agencies and self management courses to help with stress and anxiety.

During the lockdown Mind have undertaken active monitoring with their service users. Groups have continued to run via Zoom and activity packs and food parcels have been delivered.

Growing Space as an NCC commissioned mental health service provider has also kept services running throughout lockdown with zoom calls and outreach visits to monitor well being and offer ongoing practical support.

NCC are working closely with partners to understand the impact of the Pandemic. Some service initiatives such as virtual groups and zoom calls will continue to be available as they have become established as a valuable alternative method of engagement

Priorities for 2021/22

- **Reablement** – to further develop the **specialist dementia service** with links to the memory clinic, older persons mental health teams, step down facilities, the dementia respite service and outreach support.
- To establish **Windmill Farm** in accordance with planned timescale
- To continue to increase capacity within the **in-house foster care service**, improve training and support for carers and reduce pressure on external foster and/or residential placements
- To continue to realise the benefits of the **MyST** service to support children with complex needs and their Foster carers and prevent placement breakdown.
- To continue to provide the **Rapid Response** service to families in crisis
- To progress the new **accommodation projects** for disabled children in transition to adulthood
- To develop the **outreach and day service for disabled children** and young people
- To continue to identify and support **young carers** in partnership with Barnardo's
- To ensure our staff are sufficiently trained and prepared for the introduction of the **Mental Capacity (Amendment) Act 2019** by implementing the new **Code of Practice** ready for implementation in April 2022
- To work with our mental health partners in both the statutory and independent sector to establish a clear pathway into preventative services.

Quality Standard 3 – Taking Steps to Protect & Safeguard People from Abuse, Neglect or Harm

A full report on **Corporate Safeguarding** was presented to Scrutiny in June 2021. Safeguarding is intrinsically embedded within the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015, with the requirement for public bodies to ensure citizens are safe. The Social Services and Well Being Act 2014 strengthens the statutory safeguarding requirements for the Council with regard to the protection of both adults and children. Prevention and early intervention prior to statutory intervention is a key message within the legislation.

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is a corporate priority and Newport is an active member of each of the two Regional Safeguarding Boards that have amalgamated under the umbrella of "Gwent Safeguarding".

Newport City Council host the regional **Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership, (VAWDASV)** and are active members of the Board. Representatives from both adult and children social services within Newport attend all the subgroups for each Boards work plans.

The VAWDASV Team operate on a regional basis to develop and implement the Welsh Government's legislation across all relevant public services. This ensures that workplace policies are developed; that the **National Training Framework (NTF)** is operational for all staff; and the '**Ask and Act**' Welsh Government mandated training continues to be rolled out to all front line staff so that they can recognise signs of domestic abuse.

All employees complete basic VAWDASV level 1 e-Learning as part of the NCC induction process. The six NTF training levels are required to be completed depending on specific roles within the Council.

Newport City Council host the regional **IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor)** team, ensuring resources in Newport are available for our citizens at high risk of domestic abuse. The IDVA regional Manager is employed by Newport City Council (funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office) and based within the Regional VAWDASV Team (Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence). The progression and development of the regional IDVA service has required an increase in sustainable funding to ensure citizens with protected characteristics have no barriers accessing the IDVA service. Regional requirements for the service development will be seeking to tender the service for Gwent in 2021.

During 2020 the roll out of the mandatory safeguarding Elearning training was successfully launched and is a part of the recruitment process.

Newport Childrens Services have continued to develop an effective multi-agency response to child exploitation over 20/21 working in partnership and collaboration with colleagues across Health, Police, Education and specialist 3rd Sector agencies.

Our work has led to the creation of an **Exploitation Toolkit and Practice Framework** for identifying and responding to risk, which is rooted in research and Welsh Government guidance on keeping children safe within our communities. Our model was trialled across the region in 20/21 and is now adopted regionally as a model of good practice and approved by the Gwent Safeguarding Board. Interest in our approach has also extended to other Local Authorities across the United Kingdom with some now using the approaches pioneered by Newport. An evaluation of the Toolkit and strategy will be a priority for 21/22 with a dedicated Exploitation Social Worker..

During 20/21 the Child Protection teams remained committed to **keeping children with families** where safe to do so. The focus on work to redesign child protection conferences, was completed across children services and the inclusion of additional services such as **Family Group Conferencing** increases the partnership with parents and wider families to ensure the needs of the child are central to all decision making and plans to safeguard the child. Raising the prevention and intervention possibilities for families with social workers, the legal department and the judiciary to align on this objective has resulted in a **reduction in the number of children entering care proceedings in Newport** as well as a reduction in the number of children waiting to be adopted.

Child protection conferences have continued throughout 2020/21, when children are deemed at risk of significant harm. During the Pandemic conferences have been held virtually.

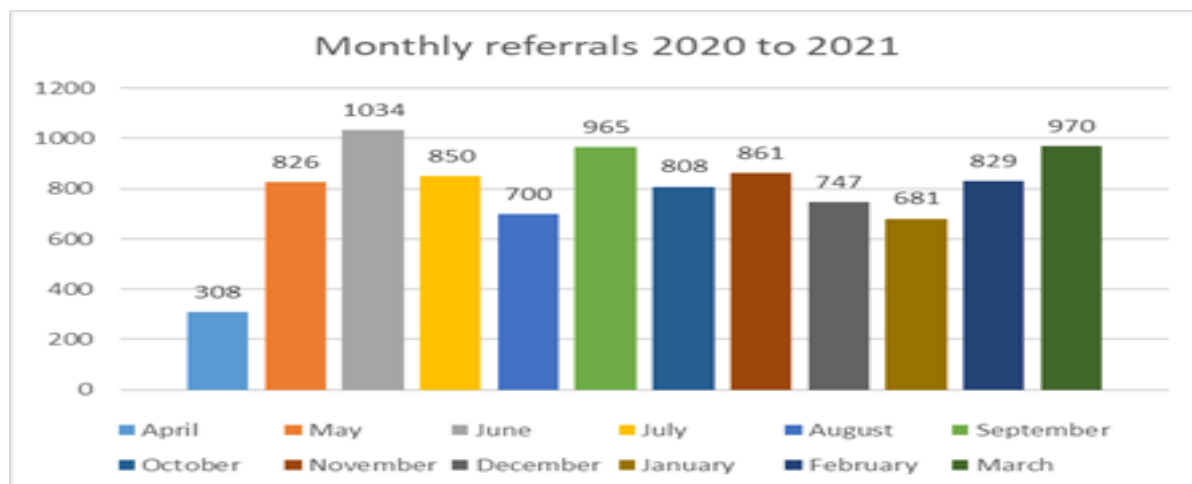
The number of children **Looked After as at 31.3.21 was 376**. The number of children who **ceased to be Looked After** during the course of the year was **92**.

The **Newport Safeguarding hub** and its success has resulted in the model being adopted across the region and the Police have restructured their resources to accommodate this way of working.

The "adult at risk" safeguarding process is still presenting through two referral pathways, the Safeguarding Hub and First Contact Team. This compromises the reliability of the data and leads to inconsistencies in the management of the process. A single pathway is the preferred option but requires further work.

There are safeguarding performance measures captured within the Safeguarding Hub

- Adults at Risk (duty to enquire) as follows:



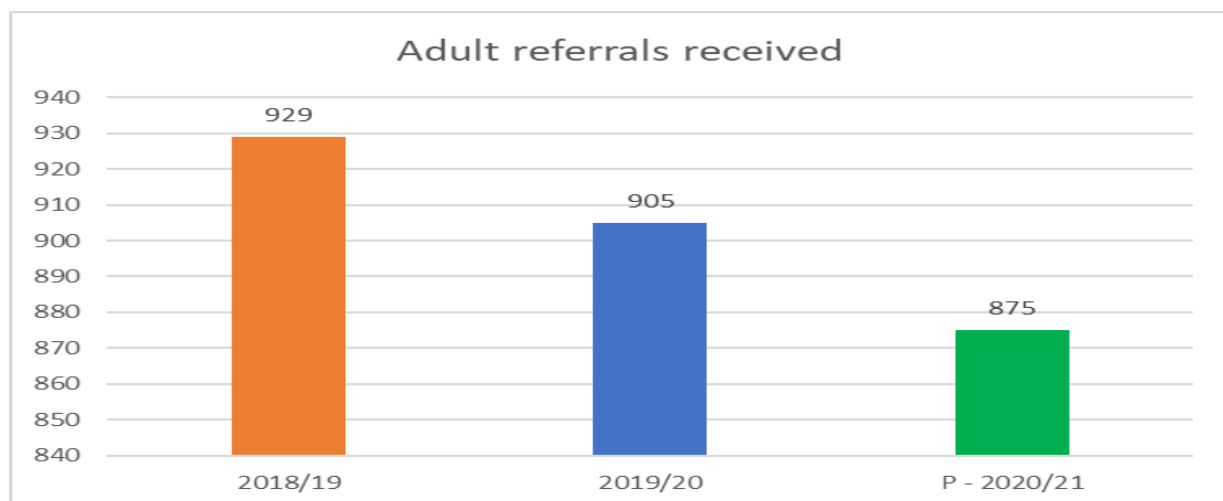
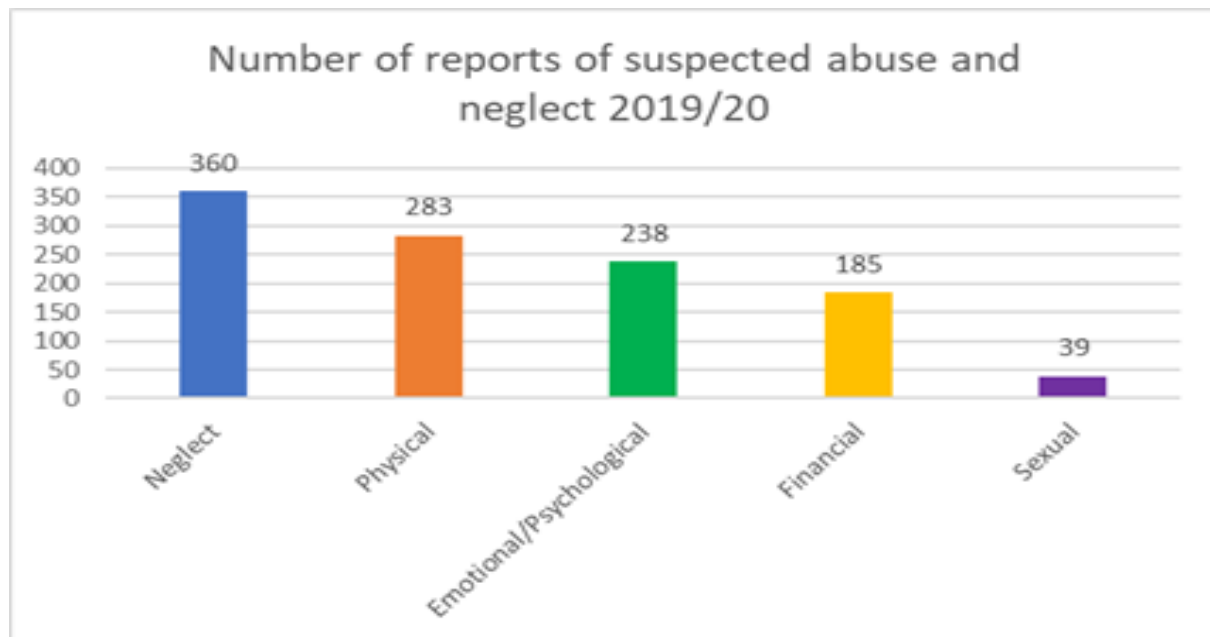
- Children’s safeguarding processes (contacts/strategy discussions/initial conferences);

There was a significant downturn in referrals (Children’s Services) in April 2020 due to the initial pandemic lockdown, however, since this time the number of referrals that have progressed through the Hub has since accelerated.

- **Referrals** to the **Safeguarding Hub (Children’s Services)** have overall **increased by 9.1%** compared to 2019/20.
- **Abuse or Neglect** continues to be the **most frequent** referral category.
- **Referrals** attributed to **Family in Acute Stress** category has **increased 55%** during the pandemic (1248 average to 2262).
- The **prevention service** and children’s duty team is the model in place to address the needs of families in acute stress, responding to need and **escalating only** those families where **thresholds are appropriate**.

The data suggests that there are effective controls within the safeguarding HUB, that there is compliancy and effective safeguarding arrangements in terms of children’s decision making and the statutory responsibilities for timely decision making.

The total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk received in 2019/20 was 905. This represents a drop of 24 referrals and a percentage drop of 3%. The projected figure for this year 2020/21 for the total number of reports of an adult suspected of being at risk is 875 referrals, a further 3% drop.



The Council continues to prepare for the **change in practice** from Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards **to Liberty Protection Safeguards** which will now occur in 2022. More training on the new legislation/ practice to increase knowledge and skill will be on-going and is clearly identified both within the Annual Corporate plan (2021/2022) and in the social services training plans.

Achievements 20/21

- A **self- assessment safeguarding audit tool** was completed across the council.
- **E-learning** safeguarding module for all Members, Officers and volunteers is operational and formal recording is in place on completion.

- The **safeguarding champion's** cohort continued to meet virtually throughout the pandemic restrictions.
- Completion of a **volunteers/chaperones register** is centrally held within People and Organisation service. This assures **training and recruitment** for all volunteers.
- **Safeguarding Hub for children and adults** confirmed and extended across the region.
- A **child exploitation strategy** and toolkit for Newport has been accepted by the regional Safeguarding Board and parts of the UK and is now established practice.

Priorities for 2021/22

- To work with each service on the outcome of **the safeguarding self-assessment audit** for continual development.
- **Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR)** Newport leading on the Policy and Process part of the Welsh Government and Home Office project to align all case reviews for children, adults and domestic homicides under Safeguarding Boards.
- Embed the change in legislation from Deprivation of Liberty to **Liberty Protection Safeguards (Mental Capacity Act)** and ensure a robust process is introduced for Newport citizens where this is applicable.
- Tender of the **regional IDVA service** and develop the service to ensure all citizens with protected characteristics access services.

Quality Standard 4 – Encouraging & Supporting People to learn, develop and participate in society

Supporting children who are looked after and young people leaving care to reach their full potential and achieve positive outcomes is a key priority for Children's Services. Targeted support is provided to children and young people at key stages in their education. In addition, tuition and extra-curricular activities are funded to provide further support.

The Child Protection service in partnership with Barnardo's have committed to improving collaboration and participation across Children's Services in 2021/22 by establishing the following:

- **Parent Advocacy and Mentoring Support Programme** to enable parents to receive direct support to meet the needs of their children. The model will also offer peer mentors and advocate training to encourage and facilitate meaningful participation in the development and evaluation of services
- **Young Persons Participation Board** to recruit young people who have experience of children's services and are able to help us shape what we provide in the future

The Career College Consortium (previously known as the Gwent Care Academy) is a regional initiative

- The Pandemic has both highlighted and aggravated the issues of staff shortages in social care. Carers have worked tirelessly throughout and better paid jobs in hospitality and retail are an understandably attractive option that will continue to diminish the workforce.

The Consortium is working hard to improve **recruitment and retention** by establishing a

- **Gwent Care Career Pathway**

Partners include:

- Coleg Gwent – ABUHB - Local Authorities - Care Forum Wales
- Regional employability projects - Mirus (as a provider representative)

Career College Consortium Main Objectives

- To create a seamless pathway from college into health and social care by developing relationships with statutory bodies and employers
- Add value to current courses while developing new, innovative courses that meet the future recruitment needs of the sector.
- To create more opportunities for work experience placements/internships across the sector

NB: The Pandemic has led to a reduction in the numbers of placements offered by employers and the motivation and focus of students has suffered. This is being addressed and priorities for 2021/22 are:

- To develop new approaches to **apprenticeships**
- To continue to **add value to courses** by working with practitioners and providers to develop 'service insights'
- To develop **data collection processes** to understand the impact of the work of the consortium on the student cohort and the care sector.

The Council has an apprenticeship scheme – but no placements were offered during 2020/21 as a result of the Pandemic.

Newport City Council is committed to ensure that people with **dementia** are not socially excluded.

NCC Corporate Plan 2017-2022:

“We will use best practice materials from the Alzheimer’s Society to create an online training module for staff and businesses”

The Pandemic made it difficult to deliver dementia awareness sessions but in May 2021

- **Newport Transport**, become the first bus company in Wales to be accredited as **Dementia Friendly**. The company has worked with the Regional Partnership Board, Newport City Council and Alzheimer's Society to make all staff dementia aware and highlight how drivers can support people living with dementia and their carers to use transport around the city.

In March 2020 adult services established a contract with **Volunteering Matters** to specifically address the needs of the community for low level support during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

- NCC, in partnership with Volunteering Matters established a range of essential support services such as shopping, medication/prescription collection for those shielding or with caring responsibilities who were unable to access services during the Pandemic.
- **58 volunteers** were recruited and trained and although some were on furlough and have now returned to work it has offered an opportunity build on the service and establish a meaningful volunteer programme to enhance the ongoing low level support needs of the community with funding remaining in place during 2021/22
- NCC provides funding and works in partnership with **Growing Space** who offer accredited training programmes for people recovering from **mental ill health**.

The service is based at Tredegar Park in Newport where they have established a gardening project and a shop selling plants and handcrafted items, offering participants horticultural, organisational and retail experience.

Priorities for 2021/22

- To continue to identify and source **additional educational support** for children who are looked after to improve choices for work experience, training, apprenticeships and wider employment options
- To develop the **Parent Mentoring and Advocacy Programme** and establish the **Young Persons Participation Board**
- To continue to support the health and social care sector through the **Career College Consortium**
- To further develop the **volunteer service** and establish a sustainable model.

Quality Standard 5 – Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

NCC supports children to feel they can make decisions for themselves and maintain important relationships. It is recognised that people having fulfilling relationships with those they are close to is important for their well-being. Children who are looked after maintain contact with their families through facilitated sessions.

the **Cwtch centre** who are responsible for facilitating family contact time worked tirelessly throughout the Pandemic using virtual and face to face methods to ensure parents were still able to see their children. This hybrid model successfully addressed the needs of the family and kept staff and participants safe.

- In 2020/21 **36 children returned home from care**

Barnardo's currently deliver an **Integrated Family Support Service** in partnership with NCC.

The partnership has developed innovative approaches to prevent children coming into care:

Family Group Conferencing Service. (FGC) encourages families to find their own solutions with appropriate support. The aim is to build resilience, develop problem-solving skills and reduce dependency on statutory provision. Whilst the Pandemic resulted in fewer FGC's the results still remain strong

- During 2020/21 there were **98 Family Group Conferences**
- **30% of families reduced risks** following FGC engagement
- **20% reduction in Looked After numbers** following FGC engagement

The success of this model has resulted in funding being made available by Welsh Government to deliver the **Later Life Links Model**, which uses the Family Group Conference approach for Care Leavers. This will be developed in the NCC Pathway Teams as a priority in 2021/22

Baby & Me went live in November 2019 and works with pregnant women whose children are at risk of being removed. The service includes a Social Worker, Midwife and Health Visitor.

- In 2020/21 **12 out of 18 babies** at risk of being removed **went home with their family**

Family and Friend Team This team aims to enable kinship Foster Carers to become Special Guardians. A panel has been established to consider **Special Guardianship** plans to ensure the Court is provided with sufficient reassurance of viable and safe alternative arrangements to **reduce the number of care orders** and enable children to remain within their family.

"We found a positive approach to developing creative services, such as Baby and Me and productive relationships with Families First, Barnardos and youth justice"

(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)

Respite offers an important opportunity for family members and the cared for person to have time for themselves. It supports the caring role and ensures the maintenance of healthy relationships. Newport offers **residential respite services for adults and children**.

Residential respite for **adults** with disabilities is available at the **Centrica Lodge** in the Gaer area of the city. Occupancy was reduced during the Pandemic but the service remained open. Discussions are currently underway to improve day time activities for those attending.

Oaklands residential **respite centre for disabled children** also remained open throughout the Pandemic offering much needed support for families.

The Carers Sitting Service was not available during lockdown but staff continued to offer support over the telephone and with practical issues such as shopping and prescription collection.

Brynglas Day Centre – After a long period of closure during the Pandemic it was agreed that it would not re-open and all those who previously used the services were offered alternative provision in full consultation with them, their families and carers.

During the period of closure **Social Work teams maintained regular contact** to ensure appropriate arrangements were in place.

- **Mental health** –
 - **Growing Space** based at Tredegar Park
- **Learning Disability** –
 - new **day service** at Ringland developed by an independent provider
- **Older People** –
 - new **outreach service** developed by NCC
 - new **Dementia Respite Service** developed by NCC based at Spring Gardens Residential Home

These services are in the early stages of development and some people are not yet confident enough to return. The situation is being monitored and will form part of the ongoing evaluation to determine how the Pandemic will impact in the longer term on service demand and models of delivery.

NCC Corporate Plan 2017-2022:

"We will develop our internal Care Homes and day opportunities to specialise in Dementia care"

Shared Lives offers shorter periods of respite to enable carers to have a break in addition to long-term placements. It gives older people, adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and people with mental health support needs including older persons with dementia the opportunity to experience family-based support settings, rather than in residential environments.

The service is managed regionally with Caerphilly County Borough Council as the host. The service experienced reduced numbers during the year but placements did continue to be made in accordance with guidelines and Covid safe practice.

- At the end of 2020/21, there were **41 people** from Newport in long-term placements."
- In the Newport area there are **69 registered shared lives carers** and **68 service beneficiaries**
- In August and September 2020 there were **3 virtual open days** to **promote awareness** of the scheme and **encourage carer recruitment.**

Relationships can also be harmful and as outlined under Quality Standard 3, work is carried out through the Safeguarding Boards and Regional services such as IDVA and VAWDASV to support and protect those who are at risk of harm.

Priorities for 2021/22

- To further develop the **preventions work** in Children's Services to support families, placements and develop sustainable alternatives to care
- To develop the **Later Life Links** Model for Care Leavers
- To develop the **domiciliary care service for children with disabilities;**
- To monitor and review the new arrangements for **day services provision** for mental health, learning disabilities and older people to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the community
- To continue to educate and inform people about the dangers of **unsafe relationships** and support those at risk of harm.

Quality Standard 6 – Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

As outlined in Quality Standard 4, Children's Services support children and young people to access education and training and provide individualised additional support where necessary.

In 2020/21 we recorded that **17** Care Leavers had completed **3 consecutive months of employment, education and training** within 12 months of leaving care and **26** within 24 months

This is a new measure and will continue to be monitored during 2021/22

In 2020/21 we recorded that **28** care leavers **experienced homelessness** within 12 months of leaving care

This is a new measure and will continue to be monitored during 2021/22

NCC works with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the Housing Department to ensure we can provide an appropriate response to young people facing homelessness. We have access to supported accommodation and lodgings for young people who need extra help during the transition from care to independent living and are currently working with a private landlord to increase the accommodation and support options available.

- We currently have the use of **10 properties** – 8 private and 2 NCC
- Funding has been sourced from the **Housing Support Grant to employ 2 workers** to help the young people develop independent living skills.

3 ICF capital bids approved

- 2 supported accommodation provisions for 18+ and 1 for 16-18 yr olds for development during 2021/22

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC)

- The National Transfer Scheme has been developed in order to support the dispersal of unaccompanied minors. Newport and Cardiff Children Services will be acting as the region for Wales and has agreed to accept up to 30 young people per annum.
- Collaboration is ongoing with stakeholders to ensure there is an infrastructure to meet the needs of this vulnerable group of young people.

"There has been productive working with Cardiff City Council as lead local authorities in Wales for the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and the safe transfer of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) from one authority to another"

(CIW Assurance Report May 2021)

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are available to citizens to make their homes safe and enable them to remain independent

Covid 19 has significantly disrupted the service .Suspension of onsite work from March to July.

- **86 DFG's** were completed (135 in 2019/20)- including ramps, stairlifts, and accessible showers to enable people to remain safe and independent. The total spend was £784,307 (£1,092,123 in 2019/20)
- **780 1130 Safety at Home Grants** were allocated (1130 in 2019/20) with a total spend of £242,445 (£374,931 in 2019/20)
- A further £343,425 was unspent but committed so will continue into 2021/22

The service is adapting by introducing new safe onsite working practices and the removal of paper based systems to enable staff to work from home.

Residential Care - NCC has **3 residential homes**, offering **94 beds** for older people and those with specialist dementia care needs. Parklands offers 15 specialist beds for those who are ready to be discharged from hospital but who need support to return to independent living.

- At the end of 2019/20 Newport was badly affected by the virus and the impact on care home settings was significant and devastating for residents, families and the staff.
- The ongoing work with care homes includes the continued distribution of PPE and the allocation of additional funding from Welsh Government.
- Close partnerships have been forged between Commissioning Teams, Environmental Health, Public Health Wales and ABUHB in order to provide support and guidance to providers, to ensure service continuity for citizens and to ensure oversight of the regional position.

Care homes have suffered **significant harm** throughout the Pandemic and although the vaccination roll out has reduced the number of infections cases, the relaxing of restrictions means that cases are still being recorded. This, along with the challenges of **staff shortages** is affecting the number of placements that can be made when increasing levels of need are presenting to adult services.

Regular testing is in place and close collaboration between ABUHB, Public Health Wales and Environmental Health to monitor the situation and offer support to providers.

Changes to the financial support later in 2021 by the Welsh Government may result in some homes becoming **financially unsustainable**

- During 2020/21 **2 care homes closed** in Newport with the loss of over **60 beds**

The situation will continue to be monitored, we **work closely with providers** and with ABUHB to ensure residential care provision is sufficient for the community both in terms of capacity and quality.

NCC has developed an **Independent Living Strategy** to identify the future accommodation needs for adults with **Learning Disabilities**. Discussions are ongoing with **Housing Strategy** to identify opportunities for the development of

new self-contained accommodation units where people can access support but live more independently.

- During 2020/21 a **new development** in Newport offered **5 adults** with learning disabilities improved opportunities for independent living
- More schemes are planned in 2022/21

Housing Support Grant (formerly Supporting People)

2020/21 has been a challenging year for the supported housing sector but the housing support team together with partners have found new ways of working to continue to support some of our most vulnerable citizens.

- **Hostels, refuges and supported accommodation** settings were fully operational
- **Floating support workers** quickly adapted their working practices using technology where possible to minimise the need for face to face contact.

During 20/21, the Housing Support Team

- received over **2,500 new referrals**, approximately **48 per week**, slightly less than in 2019/20 when 3,000 referrals were recorded.
- Over **5,000 people** were supported during the 12 month reporting period but in a different way. The **new ways of working** enabled more contact with service users

Homelessness - A major challenge for the Council was implementing the directive from Welsh Government and Public Health to ensure all homeless people were able to access suitable temporary accommodation during the Pandemic.

In order to respond to the complex needs of this group of people we established a **new floating support service** in partnership with three specialist providers. Working with colleagues in the Housing Needs Unit and the Gwent Drug and Alcohol Service (GDAS)

- Over **70 verified street homeless** were accommodated and supported in a variety of settings in the City.
- **Substance misuse services** were offered on an outreach basis

Housing Support Grant - Finance

- **2020/21 £6.3m** of Housing Support Grant funding was invested in a wide range of accommodation-based and community support services for Newport citizens.
- Welsh Government announced a major uplift in funding for the Housing Support Programme in 21/22 with Newport confirmed as receiving an **additional £2.57m** per annum.

A list of project proposals is currently being developed and presents a unique opportunity to further develop services that prevent crisis, keep people safe,

prevent homelessness and reduce the need for more expensive accommodation options.

Housing Support grant also funds a

- **Financial Inclusion Team** who, in 2020/21 increased income for vulnerable citizens by over **£300,000**, despite the constraints of the Pandemic.

The Citizens Advice Bureau is funded to provide financial advice and assistance. This service continued to be available by phone throughout the Pandemic.

The Appointee Team – NCC acts as an appointee for those who lack the capacity or capability to look after their own finances. This requires the oversight and management of income, general financial management to ensure bills are paid and that money is available for everyday expenses. Many of these cases are as a result of **safeguarding issues**.

This is a **critical service** and was maintained throughout lockdown by modifying systems to reduce the number of people requiring weekly cash collection. This included new bank account set ups to facilitate electronic transfer and working with providers to agree advance payments for individual allowances.

The team assisted Children's services by providing cash for care leavers utilising their established agreements with a local Post Office.

- At 31st March 2021 the Appointee Team were managing **109 cases** providing a service to individuals to protect their finances and maintain financial solvency.
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **recovered £57k in care fee arrears**
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **recovered £33k in Housing Benefit and Council Tax debt**
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **recovered £9k in rent arrears** therefore protecting tenancies and preventing homelessness
- During 2020/21 the Appointee Team **generated revenue of £50k** as service charges.

Priorities for 2021/22

- Continue to work with the RSL's to develop **sustainable accommodation** options for all client groups
- To continue to develop innovative services for people with **dementia**
- To continue to support Newport citizens of all ages to **manage their own tenancies and maintain their independence** through services funded by the Housing Support Grant
- To improve the support available to **care leavers** in order to address homelessness and assist in the transition to education, training and employment;

- Increase the range of accommodation and support options available for **young people leaving care.**

How We Do What We Do

Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

The workforce is a dynamically changing asset that supports service delivery to some of the most vulnerable people in the city. NCC faces many challenges, not least as a result of complex social issues associated with city centre living.

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

The Social Care Wales Workforce development Programme (SCWWDP) Board regionally agreed priorities for 2020/21 are as follows:

- Support the continued implementation of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act.
- Support the training, development and qualification of social care managers.
- Support the ongoing development of approaches to outcome-focused care and support practice.
- Support for both Social Work qualifying training and post qualifying training in Wales.
- Support frontline social care workers to develop their skills overall in relation to social care, and the revised induction framework.
- Enable the workforce to meet regulatory requirements for qualification and/or registration using guidance available in the Qualification Framework.
- Provide learning and development to equip the workforce to work effectively alongside carers.
- key priorities included support for digital solutions for workforce development and the implementation of welsh language standards, and the active offer.

Local Key achievements in 2020/21 focussed on immediate and responsive workforce initiatives required as a response to the Coronavirus Pandemic

- Resources and facilities redesigned to meet increased assessment of risk (eg continuation of personal training in buildings was risk assessed and managed)

- Continuation of face to face essential training to enable the workforce to remain competent within job roles e.g. by providing access to essential generic/ non-qualifying courses of core learning and development opportunities, delivered across the sector. Within this context we still delivered 2485 course places in a variety of formats.
- Implementation of digital formats for training (e- learning platform and licences, use of workbooks and paper-based formats to support learning, use of web -based meeting platforms to deliver training)
- Social Work Qualifying Training –5 trainee SW students from NCC workforce with 2 qualifying .
- Social Work Practice Learning Opportunities adjusted to meet COVID -19 requirements, and extended liaison with university partnerships to establish and implement *adjusted* programmes and PLO assessment requirements for SW students . This is with four universities and 30 teams /placements during the new academic year
- Similar adjustments made for our Post Qualifying Social work programmes with programmes offered via virtual formats with partner universities. 5 NQSW supported in their 1st 3 years. 3 Enabling practice learning. 9 CPEL Consolidation.
- Roll out of the new CORE vocational qualification in addition to other vocational qualification routes. The team continued to work with 85 learners across 9 vocational care and management based courses.
- Continued to work with Awarding Organisations at national level (City and Guilds and WJEC), to mitigate COVID -19 impact upon learners and qualifications, and introduce amended assessment arrangements
- Implementation of the new All Wales Induction Framework, support for SCW registration of the sector and delivery of online registration support sessions- with the Regional Transformation Team.
- Emergency training support for the sector/ Covid related resources using our networks, partners, and accessible formats such as Facebook and You Tube videos, to share knowledge and resources to the sector

The approach of workforce development to meet individual learning needs as a responsiveness to the challenges faced by teams, and practitioners managing frontline practice.

Between April 2020 and August 2020 the workforce team also responded with some front facing/care support and back office support functions that sat outside of their immediate roles (e.g. working in residential homes and supporting external sector data collection for Covid -19 data information requests). But even as supportive within these care roles, workforce staff were still completing learning activities such as assessment, observation, competency checks etc.).

Financial Resources & How We Plan for the Future

The 2020/21 revenue out-turn produced a net underspend, after core budget contributions to/from reserves, of £14m against the £300.2m budget (4.6% variance). This variance has arisen for several reasons.

At a high level, the following explains the position:

- Receipt of one-off Welsh Government (WG) funds to compensate Council services to support its enhanced service delivery to Newport's communities in response to Covid; and lost income from Covid restrictions; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Funding for the direct costs of, and delivery' of the WG support programs to businesses; meant these costs were not borne by the Council;
- Underspends across all services in relation to (i) costs of general administration and service provision due to changes in working practices and (ii) not undertaking planned/normal services, as they were not required or unable to be carried out due to Covid response work being prioritised;
- Resulting directly and indirectly from all of the above, the Councils budget underspent on its general revenue contingency budget, council tax reduction scheme and council tax income, which they would ordinarily do in a 'normal year'. These are all non-service budget areas.

Across Social Services, the overall outturn was a £2.824m underspend for both areas. £221k overspend in Children services and £3.045m underspend in adult services.

- Adults social care - community care – (£1.5m) underspend
- Adult In-House residential homes – (£500k) underspend
- Adult Staffing – (£290k) underspend
- Children's in-house residential and respite – £752k overspend
- Childrens Emergency Placements - £638k overspend
- Children's out of area placements – (£330k) underspend
- Youth Offending/Child Protection and Family Support Teams – (537k) underspend

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

Whilst Adult Services was expecting pressures due to increased demand from adults living longer with complex needs, COVID-19 caused a decrease in numbers. Numbers are expected to rise back up to normal levels, however the timeline is uncertain. Welsh Government compensated the additional cost, as a direct result of COVID-19.

However, within Children Services, the pandemic did not affect the numbers of looked after children. Therefore, Children services faced the normal pressures but with the added complication of not being able to carry out as much preventative work. There was also a lack of availability of certain placements/fostering options due to covid-19 restrictions.

The in-house residential services suffered from an unexpected high level of non-covid sickness across all homes. The issues have been addressed and this was hopefully an in year issue only. The alternative residential services project is progressing well which should in time reduce the reliance on external provision. Newport will continue to monitor this in 2021/22.

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

The annual budget in 2020/21 for social services was £75.1m. There is a well-developed financial management process in place across service areas that supports the medium term financial plan and enables the identification and management of budget risks.

Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance & Accountability

The features of partnership working have become more deeply embedded in the activities of both Children's and Adults with Heads of Service, the Strategic Director and Cabinet Member regularly engaged. NCC is a very active participant in the Regional Partnership Board.

Bids have, and will continue to be, made successfully to the WG Transformation Fund and the Integrated Care Fund, both capital and revenue. The former is a key mechanism for prompting and facilitating integrated working. The Newport Integrated Partnership (NIP), incorporating the third sector, ABUHB, Housing Associations and NCC continues to be the group that determines and drives the practical implementation of any regional approach to integration. The NCC Strategic Director is joint Chair of the NIP.

The Cabinet Member, Cllr Cockeram has been the Chair of the Regional Partnership Board since October 2020, he actively engages with numerous service user groups and with the Minister. In addition, Cllr Cockeram provides significant challenge to NCC officers.

The Cabinet Member, along with the Strategic Director and Heads of Service, regularly attend scrutiny. Cllr Cockeram presents reports on social services matters to Cabinet and responds to questions from Cabinet colleagues in addition to his appropriate provision of social services context within Cabinet discussion.

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

August 2021

Chris Humphrey

Director of Social Services



Glossary of Terms

ABUHB	Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
AMHP	Approved Mental Health Professional
BAME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DFG's	Disabled Facilities Grants
DOLS	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
DTOC	Delayed Transfer of Care
IAA	Information, Advice and Assistance Service
IDVA's	Independent Domestic Abuse Advisors
LAC	Looked after Children
NCC	Newport City Council
NFF	National Fostering Framework
NSP	Newport Support Partnership
OT	Occupational Therapy/Therapist
PSOW	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
RISCA	Regulation and Inspection of Social Care legislation
RSL's	Registered Social Landlords
SCWWD	Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme
UASCA	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
VAWDASV	Violence against women, domestic abuse and violence Team
WCCIS	Welsh Community Care & Information System
WG	Welsh Government
YJS	Youth Justice Service

