

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015

**HOW WE HAVE PROVIDED
SOCIAL SERVICES AND OUR
PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

CONTENTS	Page No.
1. Summary	2
2. Delivering Excellence	4
a. <u>Getting Help</u> : Service Outcome 1 - People in the Vale of Glamorgan are able to request support and receive help in a timely manner.	
b. <u>Providing Services</u> : Service Outcome 2 - Social Services in the Vale of Glamorgan review, plan, design and develop quality services that deliver best value for money to improve outcomes for individuals.	
c. <u>Outcomes</u> : Service Outcome 3 - The Vale of Glamorgan Council protects vulnerable people and promotes their independence and social inclusion.	
3. Sustaining and Improving	25
a. <u>Shaping Services</u> : Financial Stability and Resources, Commissioning, Planning, Partnerships and Engaging People	
b. <u>Organising</u> : Workforce, Performance Management	
c. <u>Providing Direction</u> : Corporate and Political Support & Oversight, Leadership & Direction.	

This Annual Report can be made available in other languages and formats upon request. Please contact Jeanette Winter, Social Services Secretariat at The Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock Offices, Subway Road, Barry, CF63 4RT or electronically jwinter@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk.

Introduction

My annual report to people in the Vale of Glamorgan explains how social services are meeting the needs of service users and carers, how we have delivered on our priorities during 2014/15 and what our focus will be for the next twelve months.

The structure of the report has changed this year to reflect our 2015-2019 service plan, which aligns with the changing duties for local authorities and their partners introduced next year by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Heads of Service who manage the three major divisions within the Social Services Directorate have each produced their own report. These are published separately and deal in more detail with all our key priorities, especially in the following areas.

- **Children and young people services**: services for children in need, children looked after by the Council, child health problems and disability, and safeguarding issues.
Hyperlink to be added
- **Adult services**: services for people with a learning disability, mental health problems, frailty because of ageing, a physical disability or sensory impairment or autism, and safeguarding issues.
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- **Business management and innovation**: corporate and political support, leadership and culture, financial stability and resources, planning and partnerships, commissioning and contracting, workforce development, management and management structure, performance quality/information systems and management, equality and diversity, procedural protection services for vulnerable people.
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A Social Services End of Year Performance Overview and Targets report for 2014-2015 is also available.

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**Philip Evans,
Director of Social Services**

1. Summary

Our aim as a Council is to ensure that we commission and deliver high quality services to vulnerable people and those in need so that they receive the right support at the right time, whether they live in their own homes or in settings such as care homes and fostering placements. My report outlines how most people in the Vale of Glamorgan continue to experience very good care and support, not just from services managed directly by the Council but also by other providers who work with us (including third sector and commercial organisations).

Wherever possible, we have responded to budget pressures and rising demand for services by taking steps to reshape services - making sure that services better reflect what people want and need and that they deliver better outcomes. This is a key priority in all our services. It means continuing to implement our large-scale service plans and commissioning strategies within the social services directorate as a whole and across each of the three Divisions. Next year, the work will need to align closely with a Council-wide programme of service change.

Through effective service planning and resource management via the Budget Programme Board, we have managed to achieve our 2014-15 savings target and ended the year with a balanced budget.

This report and the Heads of Service reports contain numerous references to changes in services based on an understanding of the need to promote independence and focus services away from institutional settings and into people's homes. We continue to focus on early intervention and preventative services in adult and children's services, providing opportunities for people to have a life independent of on-going services. People tell us that this is really important to them. Also, it is the only way to deal effectively with increasing demand for our services and reducing budgets. Reablement and family support are becoming even more central. Our plans for implementing the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act in April 2016 will provide increased opportunities to drive forward this approach to service transformation.

Improvements in collaborative working and in joint commissioning are key assets in delivering this programme. One of the most striking features this year is the amount of partnership activity taking place at all levels. This is not confined to integration of health and social care services, although it is taking place on an unprecedented scale. We have achieved excellent co-operation between adults' and children's services, effective corporate working between social services and other Council services, good collaboration across geographical boundaries with other local authorities and agencies, close ties with third sector partners and independent providers of care. Welsh Government initiatives such as the Regional Collaboration Fund and the Intermediate Care Fund have created further partnership opportunities in 2014/15 to deliver more integrated working across social care and health services. Again, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act will help us take this approach even further.

As a result of these change management programmes, users and carers are seeing improvements in their experiences of care and support and in well-being outcomes. We have in place good systems for ascertaining people's views about

gaps in services and the effectiveness of support and more is being done to ensure consistent involvement by all stakeholders in service review and redesign.

Our achievements reflect the contribution and commitment of people working in social care services and I am especially proud of our workforce, who continue to show exceptional professionalism and dedication in delivering services.

There have been considerable achievements in the past year.

For example, we have been successful in making further improvements across a wide range of children's services. This includes services for looked after children: (returning children to the Vale of Glamorgan from out-of-area placements; increasing the number of in-house foster carers in line with our target; improving the stability of placements for looked after children). In our safeguarding work, we have seen strong performance in our arrangements to protect children from harm (such as timely child protection conferences, initial core group meetings and core assessments)) and in family support services (including an expansion of the Flying Start programme so that all eligible families within the Gibbonsdown area will be able to access new services).

For adults, we have put into effect a considerable service remodelling programme. This includes: further enhancing our reablement services for older people who are frail and/or affected by dementia; increasing day opportunities for people with learning disabilities; developing more recovery-focused community interventions for people with mental health problems; and significantly decreasing the annual figure for delayed transfers of care (DTC) from hospital.

Conclusion

Considerable work has been done this year to develop and improve services, with clear benefits to service users and carers.

1. Notwithstanding demographic changes, difficult financial times and changing expectations, the Council is well placed to continue its programmes for improving care and support services.
2. In the face of well understood challenges to sustaining and improving levels of service and of performance, there is more still to be done but realistic plans are in place to tackle areas where further change is needed.
3. It is essential that we continue to align the work we are doing locally with changes in national policy set out in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act which will be implemented next year.

2. Delivering Excellence

This part of my report considers how we ensure that people get the help that they need in a timely and effective way. It also explains how well we are able to deliver the range and quality of services required to achieve positive outcomes, so that people in need can be helped to achieve better well-being, greater independence and protection from abuse and exploitation.

a) Getting Help

Service Outcome 1: People in the Vale of Glamorgan are able to request support and receive help in a timely manner.

Our service objective as set out in our Social Services Plan 2015-2019:

- *To ensure that people have access to comprehensive information about Social Services and other forms of help and support, and are appropriately signposted to help and supported by proportionate assessments, care and support plans, and services, which meet their individual, assessed needs.*

What were our key priorities for 2014-2015?	What did we do to achieve these priorities?
Use the support provided by the Welsh Government through the Intermediate Care Fund to implement the Joint Communications hub to ensure effective screening, signposting and identification of priority needs.	We made good progress in implementing the Joint Communications hub with Cardiff and Vale Health Board. This has played a key role towards fully integrating locality social care, housing and health teams/services at the first point of access for most service users and carers.
Revise and streamline our systems for working with other agencies to assess and plan for children in need	We have worked with the third sector and other organisations to streamline and improve our plans for meeting the needs of individual groups of children, such as young carers and homeless young people. We are also fully engaged in national work being done to simplify assessment, planning and reviewing processes for individual cases.
Review current service models to ensure individuals are able to access appropriate services in a timely manner. This will include examining the capacity of current services and ensuring appropriate allocation of resources.	Our plans and commissioning strategies have been developed via considerable engagement with service users and carers. They describe how the Council and its partners intend to change the patterns of services to emphasise well-being outcomes. We have procured and jointly commissioned new services in

	areas such as residential care for children and young people and day opportunities for people with learning disabilities.
Continue working with Cardiff Children's Services and the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board on the Joint Equipment Service, a Joint Strategy for Children with Disability, and assessment and decision-making around Continuing Health Care criteria for children.	This work has been delayed by difficulties in establishing a new programme manager post, to be jointly financed by all the key partners. All work streams are on-going.
Develop and promote opportunities for children and young people who have a disability or who undertake a caring role to engage in play, physical and cultural activity.	We have promoted and increased opportunities for all children and young people including those who have a disability or who undertake a caring role to engage in play, physical and cultural activity.
Implement the new integrated unified assessment process across adult social care and health services, to streamline the system, help people have more control over the services they receive and deal with rising demand.	We have worked in partnership with Cardiff and Vale Health Board and Cardiff Council to implement a common integrated social care and health assessment process for older people. Integrated health and social care management teams have been established across Adult Services.
Review with the NHS implementation of the Integrated Discharge Service, to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible.	The Integrated Discharge Service has been through a period of consolidation, with significant improvements in the communication between health and social care staff to ensure the safe discharge of patients. We have achieved a significant reduction in the number of people who experience a delay being discharged from hospital for social care reasons.
Extend the provision of reablement rehabilitation services and work with the third sector and business organisations to deliver a preventative, community approach to supporting older people to live as independently as possible.	Through grants from Welsh Government, we have been able to make good progress with our work to reshape services. Evaluation has demonstrated considerable benefits for service users and carers.
Implement the Cardiff and the Vale Dementia three year plan, with a	A specific post has been established to support the development of services for

view to developing an approach which emphasises reablement approach	those with dementia and their carers in line with the Cardiff and the Vale three-year Dementia plan.
On behalf of people who live with autistic spectrum disorders, further develop an online employment and skills information resource for individuals, carers and professionals.	An important aspect of the improvements to the Contact Centre has been ensuring that people can get access to other preventative service provision such as education and employment support where this has been identified as an area for action within the assessment process.
Explore how to develop support options for people who use local NHS drug and alcohol treatment options, to help maintain motivation during this process.	The introduction of EDAS, a new single point of entry, has allowed more people to receive support and treatment closer to home.

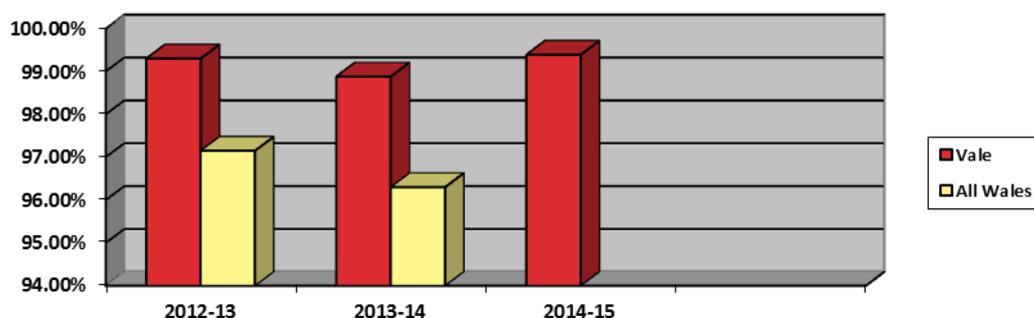
What impact did this have?

Children

The principal goal of Children and Young People Services is to ensure that effective help and support reach those vulnerable children, young people and families assessed as being in need. We have continued to provide support to a growing number of families by increasing the speed of assessment and extending services that help families in need.

The Division has relocated to the Dock offices where facilities for reception and meetings with families are much improved. Despite some disruption caused by the move, staff have continued to maintain a high level of performance. For example, in responding to referrals, they have exceeded the All Wales average figure. As shown in Table 1, a 99% rate for decisions made within one working day was maintained. When there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of being harmed or neglected, the assessment always starts immediately.

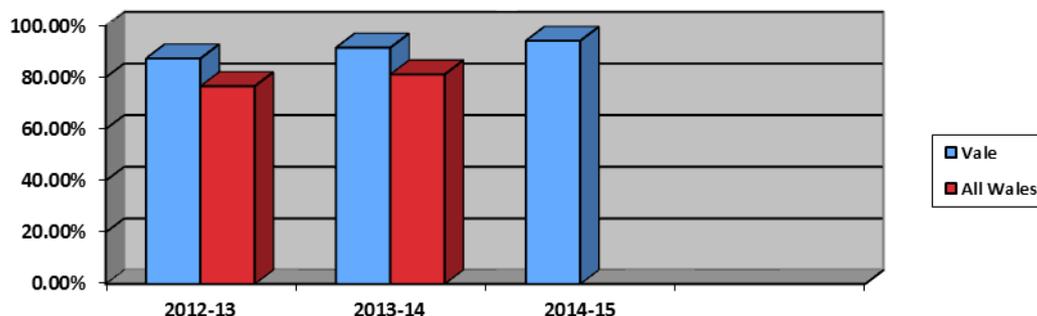
Table 1: % of decisions made within one working day



The timely completion of Initial and Core Assessment is also crucial in ensuring that those children in need of urgent support get the help required. As shown in Table 2, we have continued to improve our performance and it continues to be well

above the Welsh average. The proportion of re-referrals has also decreased from 24% in 2013-14 to 16% in 2014-15.

Table 2: % of required core assessments completed within 7 working days



Adults

In Adult Services, we can demonstrate that some of our ambitious programmes of changes are now having a profound impact at the front-line; the place where they make a real difference to people's lives. Funding from the Welsh Government Regional Collaboration Fund and the Intermediate Care Fund has enabled us to accelerate our efforts to integrate social care and community health services. Our new locality model removes many of the traditional boundaries between health and social care. It has enabled us to redesign comprehensively community services, with an integrated intake service and a longer-term care service.

During 2014-15, the service, the staffing and management structure for the Vale of Glamorgan locality has been extensively redesigned. This has enabled us to create a completely unified approach to delivering adult social care and community health services for older people – with prevention, early intervention, reablement, intermediate and long-term care as part of a single, co-ordinated and community-based system. This is the model that older people have told us that they want and need to experience.

Our enhanced reablement services continue to play an important role in supporting an increasing number of older people to regain their independence and remain within their own community. Overall outcomes have been very positive with over 80% of people who receive the service achieving improved levels of independence.

New initiatives around integrated services are supporting sustained improvements in our ability to tackle winter pressures in the hospital system. There has been a significant decrease in the annual figure for delayed transfers of care (DTC) from hospital for social care reasons. Improved and integrated access arrangements, discharge services and reablement have all helped to generate this progress.

E-DAS (Entry to Drug and Alcohol Services) is the new single point of entry into substance misuse treatment and support for individuals looking to address their own use of alcohol or drugs, as well as members of their family and carers looking for guidance and support. It is helping more people to get support closer to home.

There have been further improvements in the Directorate's arrangements for ensuring that people have access to comprehensive information about services and can easily contact key staff. The Council's Customer Contact Centre at C1V increasingly operates as the main access point for health and social care community services. Changes to the Centre have resulted in significant improvements in response times and means that people are now receiving services more quickly and have better access to the right services first time. The Telecare team has also been relocated here, to ensure good links with the Contact Centre. The numbers being supported by Telecare increased during 2014-15. A task and finish group, led by the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee, have put forward a number of recommendations for the telecare service and an action plan has been developed for delivery in 2015-16.

Case Study – The Customer Contact Centre

The centre deals with the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and Council services. It covers adult social services, Out of Hours Service, District Nurses, Emergency Dental, Welsh Ambulance Service Trust, Falls, Care in the Community, Building Maintenance, Telecare, Environmental Services, Housing, Blue Car Badges, Bus Passes. Key Performance Indicators show that service users and carers get prompt advice and support, with good response times to initial requests for help (except for some waiting lists in respect of older people services as a consequence of steeply rising demand). The Council has also put in place new Integrated Assessment processes which are intended to reduce bureaucracy and increase workflows.

The integrated Contact Centre has made a real and noticeable difference to the way we are involved in people's lives and ensure that people have better access to health and social care community services. In the Centre, staff from social services, the NHS and the third sector work together to deal with requests for help. The case example below illustrates how the changes have improved outcomes for service users and their families.

The nurse at the Customer Contract Centre received a referral from Accident and Emergency at the University Hospital of Wales regarding the admission of a man (Mr Y) who was the sole carer for his wife (Mrs Y). She was 96yrs old and experiencing significant memory problems. Initially, both of them were in UHW waiting for acute beds to become available. Working with the Integrated Discharge Service, a placement was arranged in a local care home as Mrs Y was considered to be unsafe to remain at home with a package of care. Mrs Y and her husband agreed to the placement. Mrs Y was taken to the home that evening. Mr Y was discharged a few days later and his wife returned home to live with him.

Carers

Support for Carers is through a dedicated team which is situated with the Family Information Service at Dock offices. The service offers many levels of support to carers who contact them, including carers assessments, peer support and training

for individuals and information and advice. The team are also piloting dedicated officers within social work teams in hospitals to provide direct support.

Our performance in completing carers' assessments has remained at 100% and this is in the top quartile for performance on an all Wales basis. During the past year, the role of the Carers Support Officers (CSO) has been reviewed to ensure the service will be able to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act. These posts are essential in enabling people to continue in their caring role. As a result of the review, some additional CSO capacity is being made available to ensure that the service can support all carers, including those in Children's Services.

National Carers Week events in 2014 were again planned and delivered with Cardiff Council. The format was changed in order to provide information and advice at a range of venues. These events were well attended and we received positive feedback.

We also provide specific support for young carers and once again 100% of young carers known to the Council were assessed in 2014-15. Families First funding and Carers Services funding were combined to procure a new Young Carers Project. The enhanced service offers additional one-to-one support, including support for young carers to improve their educational attendance and attainment.

Case study – Young Carers Project

T started with the Vale Young Carers Project a number of years ago when he was aged 10. Now 16 years old, T has two younger sisters, one of whom has Down's syndrome. T does a lot of the caring for both siblings. Mum is very supportive of all the children and they have a loving family unit. Mum recently informed the project worker that, since attending Young Carers, T's confidence and self-esteem have grown. T is now in the St. John's Ambulance as a sergeant. Mum said he would never have had the confidence to do this before.

Mum also said there was a time when T had negative feelings about being identified as a young carer. By attending the project, he has realised that this can be positive and provide opportunities to learn new skills. Mum couldn't praise the project enough and now the youngest sibling is joining.

What are the main challenges now?

- Ensuring that we meet the requirement of the Social Services and Well-being Act in our approach to promoting people's well-being, including the provision of clear information and advice, preventative and early intervention services.
- Ensuring that the pattern of integrated Health, Social Care and Community services continues to develop so that all services operate together across the region in a streamlined and effective system.

- Maintaining our ability to provide timely and effective assessments and care plans in the face of rising demand and reducing resources, not only in social services but elsewhere within the Council and across partner organisations.

What are our priorities for 2015-2016?

We will:

- Co-operate with partners to establish effective information, advice and assistance services in accordance with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Complete the review of current service models in Children's Services in the context of the requirements of the Act. This will include giving consideration to the review of the Resource Panel and its recommendations, with the intention of identifying a more effective mechanism for responding to need and signposting families to the right services at the right time.
- Continue to develop processes to ensure that a full exchange of information between the Child Health and the Disability Team and partner agencies is completed in a timely manner.
- In partnership with the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, consolidate the integrated social care and health assessment and care management teams for Learning Disability, to improve communication and information sharing.
- Deliver on the Telecare Services action plan developed by the Task and Finish group.
- Embed the locality restructure integrated health and social care model of service to provide clear processes for a service user's journey through the health and social care system, streamlining processes and making best use of resources/professionals and skills.

b) Providing Services

Service Outcome 2: Social Services in the Vale of Glamorgan review, plan, design and develop quality services that deliver best value for money to improve outcomes for individuals

Our service objective as set out in our Social Services Plan 2015-2019:

- *To have in place clear planning and programme management processes, which are identified in commissioning strategies and annual commissioning plans, and help to ensure an appropriate range of services that deliver equity of access, joined up services and best value from a variety of providers with defined, proportionate budgets directed to meeting service priorities.*

What were our key priorities for 2014-2015?	What did we do to achieve these priorities?
Complete the 2015 expansion phase for Flying Start which will provide support to 1,200 children.	We completed the 2015 expansion phase for Flying Start and the programme now offers a service to 1,200 children and their families across 17 wards in the Barry area.
Reduce the number of placements with Independent Fostering Agencies.	We reduced the number of placements with Independent Fostering Agencies, with targeted efforts to improve this position in 2015-16.
Make best use of our commissioned local residential provision for looked after children once it is operational.	The Council issued a tender for residential care provision for looked after children. The first of three residential units opened in December 2014 with the second expected in the first quarter of 2015-16.
Host the regional adoption collaborative for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff.	Having led the work to establish a regional adoption collaborative for the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff, staff will be transferred to the single location as employees of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
Review use of custody levels in partnership with Cardiff YOS and Cardiff and Vale Magistrates Court	The YOS has undertaken a review of custody levels in partnership with Cardiff YOS and Cardiff and Vale Magistrates Court. Further work is being undertaken to ensure that the YOS is removing barriers to engagement and promoting compliance.
Make good use of the Regional Collaboration Fund and the new Intermediate Care Fund, in line with the proposals submitted to	The Regional Collaboration Fund supported the development and implementation of streamlined integrated assessments, an enhanced Occupational

Welsh Government, to change service models in adult services as set out in our Commissioning Strategies.	Therapy service, and Learning Disability Service. Both the RCF and the Intermediate Care Fund have been used to support the development of a more integrated first contact centre and speedier access to services.
Explore with our partners the cost and benefits of re-organising the provision of Community Mental Health Teams, to ensure our services are able to meet the challenge of increasing demand and expectations from primary care referrers while continuing to offer quality secondary care interventions.	We have developed models for alternative delivery with colleagues in Cardiff and Vale Health Board which recommend reducing the number of separate teams. This work is ongoing via the Mental Health Clinical Board, which is developing a consultation document that will inform the future structure and operation of Community Mental Health services into the next decade
Reconfigure Locality Services to deliver a more integrated model of health and social care services that can meet the demands of the population in the future.	The reconfiguration of Locality Services has delivered an integrated model of health and social care services. . The service, staffing and management structure for the locality has been extensively restructured with prevention, early intervention, reablement, intermediate and long term care as part of a single, co-ordinated and community based system.
Consider the extent to which Telecare can be used to better support people with dementia and strategies to increase its uptake	The Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee reviewed the use of Telecare leading to an action plan to increase the number of people taking up the service. When restructuring the locality service, we invested in a specific post to support the development of services for people with dementia.

What impact did this have?

Children

During 2014-15, we have continued to respond to the high and growing demand for children's services by offering a range of services, many of which are designed to support a child or young person to remain living within their own family or in their local community.

To ensure that demand for children and family services can be met and that we continue to improve the quality and range of services available, we have focused our efforts on implementing the key strategic objectives in the Children and Young

People's Commissioning Strategy 2013-18. In order to achieve our aims, we work in close partnership with other agencies and service providers to offer a range of family supports to meet assessed needs. We ensure priority is given to those children, young people and families in greatest need to ensure the services are used most effectively and efficiently.

We have achieved significant changes in the past year including:

- Further expansion of the Flying Start programme, with three new projects including our second partnership in childcare as part of a school site. Flying Start are actively working in partnership with Families First, Community First, Third Sector organisations and statutory services to identify and address needs within the wider community, with a particular focus on the 'tackling poverty' agenda.
- The opening of our first commissioned residential provision in the Vale of Glamorgan. A successful tendering exercise with the independent sector has meant that we are able to offer a wider range of placement options, including the provision of smaller units of accommodation, which means that children with especially complex needs can live closer to their own communities.
- Meeting the annual target set for increasing the number of in-house foster carers. We have also actively involved our foster carers in providing community support to families that support rehabilitation or enables families to remain together.
- Returning children to Wales from out of area placements. In March 2015, of the 167 children placed in foster or residential care, only six were placed outside Wales. Each of these is in very specific circumstances where the level of need warrants a specialist placement not available in this country.
- Leading the work to prepare for creating a regional adoption collaborative to include the local authorities within the two Health Board areas of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and Cwm Taf. This collaboration will enable us to work to increase the number and range of adopters, support timely planning for children where a plan for adoption has been agreed and promote improvement in the availability and consistency of adoption support.

We are currently reviewing our Commissioning Strategy, which contains an analysis of need for services, to ensure that it is up to date and that we are focusing the provision of resources in the right way.

The national CSSIW review of safeguarding and care planning arrangements for looked after children in 2014-15 highlighted that the Vale has good quality assurance processes to manage risk appropriately. The report also recognised the improvements to residential care provision through commissioning of new facilities which have enabled young people to return or remain in their communities.

During 2014-15, our Youth Offending Service (YOS) has focused on an analysis of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System as part of ongoing work to revise the Youth Offending Prevention Strategy. Partners have contributed to this work and

we intend to launch a new Youth Offending Prevention Strategy in 2015, following approval by the YOS Management Board. The YOS has also worked with the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to reduce re-offending rates as the YJB identified this as a priority in 2014-15.

Adults

In Adult Services, we have accelerated our collaborative working with Cardiff Council and the University Health Board. This includes projects supported both by the Regional Collaboration Fund (to establish remodelled Adult Social Care services delivery) and the Intermediate Care Fund (to invest in services which support older people to maintain their independence and remain in their own home).

The additional grant funding made available in 2014-15 has allowed us to enhance and redesign services by means of increased integration between adult social care and community health. End-of-year evaluation of these projects demonstrates that they are already improving the experience of service users and carers in accessing services. Our new locality model removes many of the traditional boundaries, with an integrated intake service and a longer-term care service focusing on delivery of co-ordinated care.

As anticipated, the year continued to see increasing demand for older people's services. There are particular challenges in meeting the needs of a growing number of older people with more complex difficulties and higher levels of acuity when they fall ill. The increase in the size and number of complex care and support packages demonstrates that these needs are being met by services which enable people to be supported in their own home. While the rate of older people aged 65+ supported in residential and nursing care homes increased slightly during 2014-15 from 14.74 to 15.70, this remains well below the Welsh average of 18.84 and demonstrates top quartile performance.

We have developed strong ties with the Housing Division within the Council, in areas such as reablement and use of supported accommodation. The new extra care facility at Golau Caredig in Barry is a very impressive addition to the range of 'accommodation with care' options for older people. A multi-million pound project, it has involved us working closely with housing and care providers. All 42 apartments have been allocated to residents requiring this type of accommodation and it is providing an effective alternative to more institutional models of care.

There have been significant changes to our Learning Disability Services as we take forward plans for increased integration of services with Cardiff Council and Cardiff and the Vale University Health Board. A new strategic vision for day services has been developed which moves away from a building based model of provision to one that is based upon offering a wider range of opportunities. We are actively seeking ways to work in partnership with a wide variety of organisations, including social enterprises and stakeholder co-operatives, to deliver models of provision that are more centred on meeting the specific assessed needs of individual service users and delivering outcomes.

There have been further improvements in supported accommodation services and we are currently scoping a model of respite care provision as part of the overall

Vale of Glamorgan Council's Reshaping Services programme. This is intended to ensure that we have settings which are accessible to people with the most complex and challenging needs. Service users living in supported and other accommodation can now make full use of Telecare equipment, to live more independently.

In the area of Mental Health, the Council continues to work with the Health Board and the third sector in developing services and responding to challenges, such as the growing imbalance of the workload across adult mental health services. The Mental Health Clinical Board has undertaken a comprehensive review. This work will continue over the next year and it will help to determine the future structure of adult mental health care, enabling social work staff and clinicians to meet increases in demand.

The new locality structure in adult services has also benefited people with physical disability or sensory impairment, with the focus on improving response times and raising public awareness of the support available. We have worked with colleagues across the Council to achieve a considerable reduction in the time it takes for people to get a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and we are developing a more integrated approach to Day Services.

What are the main challenges now?

- The Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 will have a profound impact. There will be increased rights to services, especially for carers and vulnerable adults. Local government, Local Health Boards and other public bodies will be required to work together even more in meeting new responsibilities for improving people's well-being. This means:
 - placing the well-being and prevention agenda at the heart of strategic planning, commissioning and delivery of services;
 - giving people more control over their lives, wherever possible, by creating systems and approaches that put the citizen's view first and are based on genuine co-production;
 - changing community expectations so that local authorities are able to manage demographic and resource challenges while meeting new responsibilities for improving people's well-being.
- Because of the difficult financial context and increasing demands for services, the only sustainable answer for social services in the longer-term is for the Council and its partners to change the pattern of services. This work must be based upon an understanding that we need to reduce dependence wherever possible and focus services on prevention, using the strengths within families and communities as key resources. This requires us to:
 - reshape services in line with new models and developing our commissioning strategies, partly to divert demand but also to make sure that people get the right support at the right time;
 - find new types of service providers while helping current providers to become more efficient and reduce costs, where possible;
 - integrate services;

- regionalise services;
 - manage resources even better; and
 - make difficult decisions about investment and areas for savings.
- Our commissioning strategies and plans will need to reflect the Council's commitment to working with a wide range of service providers, including social enterprises and cooperatives, in ensuring that the diverse needs of service users and carers are met through the provision of good quality services.
 - Staff will need new information and support to ensure that they are complying with the new requirements of the Social Services and Well-Being Act and also using them to drive improvements in the delivery of services.
 - The Council must ensure that it gets good value for money from the services it commissions and, in doing so, reflects the strategic direction of the Council in wanting to provide services to people more locally, whether in supporting children (within their own families and in care) or adults in their own homes.
 - As a Council, we need to continue contributing to changed service models while also managing the pressures arising from both increasing demand and reduced budgets and staffing levels. This means responding to the challenge of co-ordinating an improvement agenda which is shared by a wide range of stakeholders, especially service users and carers.

What are our priorities for 2015-2016?

We will:

- Deliver actions identified in the regional plan for implementing the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Fast track integration of services, particularly with the NHS and in the area of older people's services, to achieve better outcomes for service users and carers.
- Consider fully the implications of the Social Services and Well-being Act as they relate to looked after children and demonstrate our ability to respond to these changes.
- Co-ordinate preventative and early intervention services for families in the greatest need including Flying Start, Families First and Intensive Family Support Services.
- Complete the review the Children and Young People Services Commissioning Strategy 2013-2018.
- Contribute to implementing the LSCB Integration Programme as it relates to agreed priorities regarding children with disabilities, CAMHS provision and models for entry into Children and Young People Services.

- Continue to explore fully all opportunities to reduce safely our numbers of Looked After Children, including changes to the range and provision of family support services.
- Work with our statutory partners to review the ICT support required for changes in service provision and plan for implementing the new All Wales system.
- Review our commissioning arrangements for domiciliary care to ensure value for money and quality service provision.
- Continue to work with the Wales Co-operative Centre to develop accommodation with care services for older people, in collaboration with the Housing Division.

c) Outcomes

Service Outcome 3: The Vale of Glamorgan Council protects vulnerable people and promotes their independence and social inclusion

Our service objective as set out in the Social Services Plan 2015-2019:

- *Through the Council working in co-ordination with other organisations, to ensure that people are helped to achieve their best possible outcome and that people at particular risk have their wellbeing promoted and are safeguarded from abuse and exploitation.*

What were our key priorities for 2014-2015?	What did we do to achieve these priorities?
Reduce the number of care leavers who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).	We have increased the rate of care leavers who are in employment, education or training from 44% in 2013-14 to 57% in 2014-15.
Continue working closely with partner agencies on helping young people move from Children's Services to Adult Services through good transition planning and support, including updates to the Transition Protocol and underlying policy guidance.	We are about to conclude the revised Transition Protocol and underlying policy guidance.
Maintain effective partnership working with all agencies through the new joint Safeguarding Children Board across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.	The joint Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Children Board and the main sub-groups are established. It includes appropriate multi-agency representation. Governance arrangements are in place and joint policies and procedures have been implemented.
Review our responses to forms of abuse where there is national or regional evidence of increasingly prevalence (such as child sexual exploitation, trafficking and internet grooming).	We are working on a regional scale, both within Cardiff and the Vale and also across the South Wales Police area to deal with forms of abuse that occur across local authority boundaries, especially child sexual exploitation. We are now better equipped to deal with the activities of adults who pose a risk to children in terms of intelligence gathering, safeguarding action and disrupting the activities of perpetrators

Relocate the Community Support Team to Hen Goleg and, in collaboration with our partners, look at further ways to promote integrated working with the NHS.	We have consolidated a number of our day services into one location at Hen Goleg. Closer working arrangements with health services in this area remain an essential component of future planning arrangements.
Work with the Vale of Glamorgan Housing Service and Registered Social Landlords to develop innovative and cost effective housing and support options that help people to remain independent.	We have developed a new Floating Support Service to work with people known to secondary mental health services and to help them live independently in their own homes.
Consider the resource implications of the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act and case law for both the Protection of Vulnerable Adults and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards teams.	We have drafted a new Operational Policy for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team. This has yet to be finalised and ratified by the Partnership Board for Cardiff and the Vale. A major recruitment of Best Interest Assessors has taken place during the year, with an additional 10 health and social care professionals trained to provide the service on a rota basis.
Train appropriate staff in adult services in investigative skills, to ensure that we identify issues early enough to make a difference	A review of the POVA team structure and processes is underway, scheduled for completion and implementation during 2015. We are reviewing training needs, including investigation training, as part of the review.

What impact did this have?

Children

As a consequence of actions taken to implement our Commissioning Strategy, performance across a number of important well-being indicators has been maintained or improved, despite the high and growing level of demand for children and family services. We continue to promote services such as the Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) Team, which play a critical role in supporting children and young people to remain within their family networks and minimise the need for more intrusive and costly intervention. The focus on prevention and earlier intervention is critical in changing the way in which services meet need and this model will continue to be reinforced through the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act.

The number of Looked After Children has remained relatively stable over the year, from 184 at end of March 2014 to 189 at end of March 2015. We have continued our efforts to increase the availability and range of local placements and reduced the number of placements with Independent Fostering Agencies. This year we have enhanced the Personal Education Plan (PEP) to include robust information for tracking a child's education history. Our performance in completing PEPs within the required 20 days during 2014-2015 improved considerably compared to the previous year, at 97% from 76%.

We continue to demonstrate strong performance in the processes we have in place to safeguard children and young people in areas such as decisions made within one working day; the timeliness of child protection conferences and initial core group meetings. All children involved in the child protection process are offered an advocate. At the end of March 2015, there were 103 young people on the Child Protection Register, compared to 105 in 2014.

Tackling effectively Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a priority area for the Local Safeguarding Children Board. A strategic group is in place which will have oversight of CSE activity across the region. It is led by a senior police officer. The group is gathering and analysing data on CSE and the local CSE Forum is also developing plans to increase awareness of children and families and to encourage preventive action.

Educational achievement of our young people leaving care

One young person will be qualifying as a solicitor during 2015. Another has finished her degree and qualified as a Social Worker. Four others are at University and a number are taking their A Levels. One young person has secured a place at University to study pharmacy.

Adults

During 2014/15, the remodelling of adult services has continued to produce significant improvements in service efficiency, ensuring that people are supported proportionately and in ways that maintain independence as long as possible. We now have in place faster arrangements for safe discharge and the number of people experiencing a delay in their discharge from hospital has fallen significantly from last year. In 2013-14, the rate of delayed transfer of care was 8.17 (per 1000 population); in 2014-15, it was 4.55. People have been helped to maintain higher levels of independence from statutory services.

In recognising the importance of promoting independence, we have been determined to build further on the reablement model by reducing the need for long-term, intensive domiciliary packages of care and the pressure to accommodate an older person inappropriately in residential care settings. The Intermediate Care Fund has supported a pilot project with independent providers of domiciliary care to expand our reablement approach into that sector. The grant has also allowed us to enhance the community resource service through improved integration, building upon the co-location of staff in Barry Hospital achieved at the end of the previous financial year.

Occupational Therapy (OT) teams have maintained improvements in waiting times for services during 2014-15. The wider OT service has benefited from the Regional Collaborative Fund and Intermediate Care Fund which allowed us to pump prime new ways of working. We have seen the benefits of an OT and a Social Worker undertaking joint visits to service users. This helps to ensure that their packages of care support them in the most effective manner - maximising their independence, motivating them, and making the most of assistive equipment to increase their privacy and dignity. These trials have been successful and, as a consequence, we are working to embed these new ways of working in our practice.

Mental Health Community Support Workers are continuing to develop recovery-focused community interventions to support some very vulnerable people to become more independent. The team has worked with Vale MIND to develop an integrated outcome measurement approach, using the 'Recovery Star' approach. It is intended that all community support work services across Cardiff and Vale will use this methodology to measure the progress made by service users and service effectiveness. Our Carers Support Officer is now an integral part of the Community Mental Health Team, delivering a more effective and timely assessment of carers' needs. It aligns well with the work that Hafal provides on behalf of the Council in supporting individual carers and operating carers' support and activity groups.

In Learning Disability Services, we have implemented the Day Opportunities Strategy and action plans, to ensure that people are enabled to participate in meaningful and more typical day-time activities and maximise their independence. We have increased day-time opportunities for 27 people who were being supported within a traditional day-centre based service. They are now part of two social enterprises, Snax café and Positive Images, undertaking voluntary and work opportunities. We have received really positive feedback, with service users expressing their excitement about being part of a new enterprise. For example, one man explained how he was 'proud to wear a work uniform for the first time'.

We have worked closely with the Vale of Glamorgan Housing Service and Registered Social Landlords to review the range of housing and accommodation options available to people with learning disabilities, to ensure that agreed outcomes help people to develop their capacity for independence. We have relocated the Community Support Team to Hen Goleg and, in collaboration with our partners, looked at further ways to achieve integrated working.

During the past year, the safeguarding collaboration between staff involved in Protection of Vulnerable Adults arrangements (POVA), complaints and contracting has gone from strength to strength. There are good examples of how they have

tackled together performance issues in respect of some nursing, residential and domiciliary care providers. The provider performance protocol has been reviewed and enhanced with the introduction of a process for addressing low-level concerns with providers at an early stage. This helps us to work together in sharing information, addressing concerns, improving service provider performance and improving our ability to safeguard vulnerable adults.

The Cardiff and Vale Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)/Mental Capacity Act Team has continued to develop its methodology and work load management processes in line with the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the DoLS Codes of Practice. The team provides coordination of Best Interest Assessments, advice and support to health and social care teams across the sector and training for CSSIW registered care homes and all in-patient sites across the hospitals of Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan areas. The team received a total of 101 referrals during 2014/2015, a small increase on the figure for the previous year.

The Council has continued to see a rise in the number of referrals to the Protection of Vulnerable Adult service with 357 referrals received during the year. However, it is positive to note that the risks have been appropriately managed in all cases. The Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Adults Board (C&VSAB) was established during 2014/2015 and it is chaired by the Director of Health and Social Care from Cardiff Council. The Board includes appropriate multi-agency representation and has established multi-agency audit sub-groups

What are the main challenges now?

- All Local Authorities will be required to ensure that the Social Services and Well-being Act is implemented in line with revised regulations and guidance. In doing so, we will need to meet the challenge of having available the resources needed to deliver the new safeguarding requirements in the legislation, especially the statutory responsibilities in respect of adult protection.
- We need to keep pace with growing evidence about the scale of abuse experienced by children and adults in specific areas including child sexual exploitation, trafficking, internet grooming and financial abuse of vulnerable adults.
- There is an increasing demand for joint working with other organisations to ensure that people are protected from harm and abuse. This is most evident in respect of the regional safeguarding boards. There have been some economies of scale. However, it is becoming increasingly obvious that resources are very stretched, especially given the scale of savings required by nearly all public services with statutory responsibilities in this area of work.
- Work undertaken by the Older People's Commissioner and others is providing evidence that services which provide care and support to vulnerable people are fragile, occasionally negligent and sometimes struggling to recruit, train and retain appropriate staff.
- The number of older disabled children and young people needing support is increasing; some of them require 24 hour care.

- We must also consider future growth in needs. Over the next ten years, the number of over 65s in the Cardiff and Vale region will grow by 22% (from c.74, 300 to just over 91,000). However, the demand driver arising from increased frailty differs due to local demographics meaning that this increase is 31% in the Vale, 25% in Cardiff N&W and 18% in Cardiff S&E. The combined demand driver for frailty is greater than that when looking simply at the increase in the number of >65s, due to the growth in the very old population where frailty is more prevalent. There are similar trajectories for the prevalence of dementia and for the significant growth in needs of those who are likely to have both dementia and frailty. In the over-85 age group, nearly one-third of people who have one of these conditions will also have the other. Helping this increased number of potential service users to achieve their best possible outcomes, in the context of reducing resources will be an exceptionally difficult task.

What are our priorities for 2015-2016?

We will:

- Respond in a timely way to increased safeguarding requirements in the Social Services and Well-being Act as they relate to children and adults, ensuring our responsibilities to vulnerable people in the Vale of Glamorgan are prioritised.
- Finalise and implement the revised structure for ensuring that concerns about vulnerable adults are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Work with the police and other agencies to improve our awareness of child exploitation rates by developing baseline data that will inform a strategy for early intervention and also to deal effectively with cases where multiple abuse is suspected.
- Explore with partner agencies ways of increasing the resources available to the regional safeguarding boards for children and adults.
- Through the Integrating Health and Social Care Programme Board, develop robust plans for changing the overall pattern of services for older people to better manage demand and to focus on well-being outcomes, building on strategies such as 'Prudent Health Care and 'Sustainable Social Services.
- Consider the final recommendations of the strategic review of services for disabled children and their families, and develop a joint implementation plan with our strategic partners, especially in the area of transition to adult services.
- Consider in detail the changes required by the Social Services and Well-being to ensure that assessment of children's needs is more outcome focused and that there is wider exploration of how the needs of carers for respite can be met without making use of residential options.

- Progress work on the review of Community Mental Health Services with our partners and service users and their families, to inform the future development of community services.
- Develop a Dementia Resource Service for service users and carers.
- Review the impact of the Learning Disability Day Opportunities Strategy and its potential application for services users with Physical Disabilities.
- Ensure that the transfer of the Independent Living Fund to Welsh Government and to service users in the Vale is properly in place at the end of June 2015 and monitored throughout the year.

3. Sustaining and Improving

There are a number of considerable challenges set out in this document. Some of them are immediate and others long-term, given the time needed for proposed solutions to take effect. We are unable to prioritise everything and we need to exercise judgment about what can be done and at what pace, especially in tackling the most complex issues and ones which require considerable collaboration and strategies agreed by multiple stakeholders.

This section of my report examines the effectiveness of the council's approach to shaping services that meet needs and provide value for money and it sets out our financial, commissioning, planning and partnership arrangements designed to achieve this. It also considers our arrangements for leadership and the corporate and political context for supporting and scrutinising the Council's objectives for social services.

a) Shaping Services

Financial Stability and Resources

Effective resource management remains a key priority for Social Services. The Budget Programme Board has ensured that the financial position within Social Services continues to be monitored and managed at a senior level across the Council, which in turn assists the directorate in planning for the present and future.

As with the previous financial year, 2014-15 also proved to be a very difficult financial year for social services. While dealing with increased demand for services, the directorate was also required to make cost savings of over £700,000 as part of overall budget reductions for the Council. Through effective service planning and resource management via the Budget Programme Board, we have managed to achieve our 2014-15 savings target and ended the year with a balanced budget.

Detail of revenue budget for 2014-15 as against expenditure is shown in Table 3 below.

TABLE3

Service	Budget (£'000)	Spend (£'000)	Variance (£'000)
Children and Young People	14,358	14,343	+15
Adult Services			
Elderly	15,335	15,587	(252)
Physical and Sensory Disability	4,541	4,572	(31)
Mental Health	1,633	1,657	(24)
Learning Disability	10,684	10,790	(106)
EMI	4,637	4,258	379
Total Adult Services	36,830	36,864	(34)
Business Management and Innovation	308	300	+8
Directorate Total	51,496	51,507	(11)

In Children's Services, cost pressures arose from the need to respond effectively to increasingly complex needs of Looked After Children. This was especially the case in respect of providing placements and therapeutic services, where the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) has experienced increasing difficulty in meeting demand.

In Adult Services, the key pressures were the consequences of demographic changes in relation to older people and the above inflation increase in fees for care home placements. Although the savings target for 2015/2016 has been reduced to take account of these pressures, Social Services will need to continue making substantial savings in the financial years ahead as set out in the Budget Programme. We will continue to prioritise completion of actions set out in the Programme.

The severe financial pressures have been reported regularly to Cabinet and the Budget Programme Board has continued to meet during 2014-2015. Budget plans have been produced and these are closely monitored by the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and the Corporate Management Team.

Commissioning

Our commissioning strategies set out how the Council intends to secure the services that people will need (both now and in the future), whether these are provided by social services directly, by the third sector, by the private sector or by organisations such as social enterprises.

During 2014-2015, we have worked on:

- Developing a Market Position Statement for Older People Services which will enable us to share our intentions with service providers and how we wish to work with them in the future.
- Continuing to develop a completely integrated approach to reablement services, with good examples of how we have been able to turn intent into service remodelling.
- Tendered for a direct payment service and included in the specification that we would encourage the delivery of the service to be via a social enterprise, a model for future procurement exercises.
- Started to review our 'accommodation with care' services for Older People, supported by the Wales Cooperative Centre.

There are strong bridges between service and financial planning. As a consequence, we can provide good evidence about our work in reviewing, planning and developing services that deliver best value for money and improve outcomes for service users and carers.

The Provider Performance Protocol was used on a number of occasions during the year when providers have failed to meet the quality standards required. The Protocol was revised during 2014-2015 to enable the Council to have discussions with providers who are experiencing difficulties before the issues escalate, which can result in risks for the individuals receiving services. This additional stage has been used, resulting in corrective action being taken and reducing the need to invoke the Escalating Concerns Process.

We have also commissioned external help in exploring and costing the changes required to the social care and health economies in the region if we are to deliver changed service models and increase the range of service providers.

Collaboration, Planning, Partnerships & Engaging People

Collaboration remains at the heart of our work to transform services. Working closely with other statutory partners such as Cardiff Council and the Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, together with third sector and commercial organisations, we have been able to do more by pooling our expertise, resources and planning. These close working arrangements have supported the directorate to be more efficient in how we work and it has contributed to the development of professionals skilled in achieving good results from collaborative enterprises.

This approach has been greatly assisted by both the Regional Collaboration Fund and the Intermediate Care Fund, which have delivered tangible results for service users.

In developing our partnership arrangements we have:

- Continued to support joint appointments. There are now three senior posts within adult services that are joint appointments with either Cardiff Local Authority or Cardiff and Vale UHB. The adult services locality management team is entirely integrated. The Programme Manager for the Collaboration Programme has also been a joint appointment with Cardiff Council. These appointments help us to cut through the organisational and professional barriers that can sometimes exist and follow a shared strategy for what needs to be delivered.
- Introduced new governance arrangements for integrated working, including representation of the third sector.
- Reconstituted the Public Health and Wellbeing Board to operate across the Vale and Cardiff area, recognising the importance of all partners having a role in supporting this work as we also prepare for implementing the Social Services and Well-being Act.
- Delivered further integration of our services through Welsh Government grants.
- Worked with our colleagues in other local authorities through the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative (SEWIC,) including joint commissioning with the NHS on high cost mental health placements and with other local authorities on securing independent sector fostering and residential placements.

Involving Service Users and Carers

We recognise our responsibility for engaging people in a meaningful way in the design and evaluation of our services, as part of our commitment to shifting power to service users and carers wherever possible. Our consultation framework has been improved to align better with service priorities.

Consultation exercises with service users consider the most appropriate method of engaging with that service user group, with flexibility to adapt methods for individual service users as required. Reports and issue logs are prepared and shared with service areas, to identify recommendations and existing good practice. Consultation exercises are now timed to support any service reconfiguration work being undertaken.

A summary of what service users reported during some of our 2014-15 consultation activity is outlined below.

i. Adult Placement Service

Respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the matching and introduction processes and also with introductions and involvement in reviews. People were pleased with documentation and the information they received from the service. Many respondents felt satisfied with the response they received in

times of need, when an emergency placement was needed or during placement difficulties. All felt involved and consulted with during the contract/adult plan/review meetings.

ii. Vale Community Resource Service

Many people felt they have regained their independence as a result of the support they received. Most respondents rated the service as “excellent” (74%), and 19% of respondents rated it as “good”. Many felt they had benefited from the encouragement the carers provide.

iii. Contact One Vale information pack

80% of respondents said they could resolve the query themselves using the information provided and 90% of respondents would use the service again.

iv. Youth Offending Service

Many respondents talked about how the work undertaken by staff has allowed them to understand their behaviour and its impact on others.

v. Families and Children Together (FACT)

Nearly all respondents felt that they and their family have benefited from the support received. Other professionals highlighted the knowledge and experience of the team and the intensive support that can be offered to families. Those using the service reported increased levels of confidence.

vi. Respite Care

Respondents welcomed having the opportunity to have a break or holiday. Staff were praised for the help they provide and people enjoy the activities.

vii. Residential care

Nearly all respondents felt that the support and assistance meets their needs. Many of them were very happy with the service and pleased that someone would be able to take care of them if they were unwell. Many praised the staff.

viii. Child protection

Response rates to surveys are generally low and we will continue to develop ways to meaningfully engage with children, young people and their families subject to child protection processes. Work is underway to develop a standing children’s consultation group for the purpose of engaging on a range of matters, including service reshaping and remodelling. Young people have been approached and some have agreed to participate in this work.

ix. Protection of vulnerable adults

Most of the vulnerable adults and carers were satisfied with the protection service received. All felt that, if something happened to them again or to someone they knew, they would be happy to tell about it. The consultation identified that there was a lack of initial awareness about the service in general. Some vulnerable adults do not know who to contact with a concern and there was some dissatisfaction with information received in the initial stages of the referral. To address these issues, we are redesigning our public information on the Council website and reviewing our Protection of Vulnerable Adults team structure and processes, to include improvements on providing feedback to families.

b) Organising

Workforce

In my introduction, I thanked our staff for what they have achieved. We rely on their professionalism, their commitment to delivering high quality services and their resilience during periods of service transformation. As part of our commitment to ensure that staff receive the right level of training, we have undertaken a number of initiatives during the past year. These include:

- Delivering training for Day Services staff working with adults on the autistic spectrum and raising awareness with a wide range of staff teams and external organisations (such as education staff, Job Centre Plus, care providers, homelessness services and eating disorder clinicians).
- Continuing to work with local providers of social care, to improve their skills and experience of providing support services to people using illegal substances and those undergoing rehabilitation/treatment.
- Delivering training for staff to ensure they can use the new Integrated Assessment Process well.

The Performance Development and Review System (PDRS) was revised during 2014-2015 and staff from across the services are required to have an annual PDR. An annual qualification and training needs audit is completed for all providers of social care commissioned by the Council. Analysis of the audit and PDRS data ensures that training is planned on the basis of the needs of the whole social care sector in the Vale.

The process helps us to monitor the qualifications of staff within regulated services and provides training to support them to meet their targets. We can also demonstrate that 31% of all training provided during 2014-2015 was delivered to the independent/voluntary sector, which is an improvement on our performance in 2013-14 and above our 25% target. This is a result of improved working with the sector and tailoring the programme to meet their particular needs.

For 2015-16, we will plan a programme of training to support the changes arising as a result of preparing to implement the Social Services and Well-being Act and the changes being made to services as a result of service reconfiguration and integrated working. Options for increasing the scale on which social care training is delivered in partnership with other local authorities will be considered.

The annual training programme is responsive to the developmental requirements of the social care workforce. In the main, our staff provide positive evaluations regarding training opportunities made available to them. Feedback from the Welsh Government about the way in which the Vale uses central government workforce development grants indicates that our work is well grounded. Further evaluation is needed about the long-term effect on practice but we are fortunate to have available many staff with high levels of knowledge, skills and qualifications.

Performance Management

Managers within the directorate have maintained effective systems for managing performance, monitoring outcomes, achievements and shortfalls, and taking corrective action as required. Audit, inspection and other external reports on performance are reported to Scrutiny Committee. During 2014-2015, the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee received reports from CSSIW in relation to the Fostering Service and the National Inspection of Safeguarding and Care Planning of Looked After Children and Care Leavers who Exhibit Vulnerable or Risky Behaviour. In response to their findings, action plans are produced, monitored and reported to corporate management, the Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

Performance is a regular item on the agenda for meetings between the Director and Heads of Service and for Divisional Management Teams. The management information reports are produced on a monthly basis and widely circulated within the directorate. We continue to report performance information to the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. The content of the performance reports to Scrutiny Committee have changed during this year to reflect the new service plans and highlight any significant changes in performance.

We remain part of the SWIFT Consortium, a group of local authorities that use the same management information system and work together in making sure that it can record all activity within the service and report in a timely manner on those activities. During 2014-2015, work has been undertaken to commission an All Wales IT system to support social services and community health services. The first phase of the work was completed during the year when a preferred provider was identified.

Implementation of the new Integrated Assessment Process within adult services has resulted in service users receiving a speedier, more streamlined and integrated assessment from health and social care professionals. The IT system has been modified during the year to support these new ways of working.

There is an extensive range of policies and procedures in place across the Directorate, which establish quality standards for the service. These are readily available to staff. A review framework is in place to ensure that policies are updated at least every three years and more regularly where policy and legislative changes dictate. Policy consultation arrangements are in place, together with robust process ratification via the senior management team.

Dealing with Complaints

The directorate believes strongly that handling complaints well is a crucial responsibility and a vital part of ensuring that our service users receive the support to which they are entitled. It enables the directorate to acknowledge quickly when mistakes have been made, put them right effectively and to apologise where appropriate, ensuring that we learn lessons from complaints. Our ability to improve services means that we need to understand the reasons for things going wrong and put them right as quickly as possible.

Some people who contact Social Services are not sure if they want to make a formal complaint. In these cases, the Complaints Officer offers to meet with them to try and help clarify the issues and listen to their concerns. This approach has proved to be valuable and effective in terms of reaching an early resolution of concerns. The initiative is in keeping with the spirit of 'Listening and Learning' and acknowledges the extended duty placed on local authorities by the guidance to safeguard and promote the welfare of service users.

The Complaints Officer uses a variety of approaches, including discussion, supplying information and, in many cases, listening to the concerns raised and ensuring the relevant service area is notified. The Complaints Officer has also found ways of engaging with service users who have not made complaints, for example by visiting residential and day care settings, schools and advocacy providers. This helps to disseminate information about the Complaints Procedure.

During 2014-15, the Complaints Officer made 151 visits to service users/families of service users, to alleviate their anxieties or to signpost them to other services. None of those visited went on to make a complaint. The effectiveness of this approach is demonstrated in the comparison of numbers progressing to complaints from visits, as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4 Number of visits resulting in progression to stage 1 complaint

2014-15	2013- 4	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
0	2	0	41	96

As shown in Table 5, there was a decrease in the number of enquiries recorded in 2014-15 and a very small increase in the number of complaints from 54 to 55. Staff awareness of their responsibilities under the new complaints procedure and commitment to addressing concerns at the earliest opportunity, coupled with the new requirement to have a discussion with complainants early in the process, means every effort continues to be made to resolve matters quickly and effectively.

TABLE 5 Number of representations received by the Directorate

	Enquiries		Complaints	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15
Adult Services	22	17	17	24
Children and Young People Services	22	19	32	30
Business Management and Innovation	9	2	5	1
Total	53	38	54	55

During 2014-15 the Directorate implemented the revised Welsh Government Guidance in relation to complaints and staff have been briefed on the new process. We continue to produce monthly reports and track how complaints are dealt with, sharing this information with managers which assists in significantly improving the compliance with timescales for resolution.

c) Providing Direction

Leadership and Culture

Providing continuous improvement in the delivery of services depends upon effective strong leadership and a well-defined and positive staff culture.

The senior management team within social services directorate has been stable this year. It meets on a regular basis, ensuring that the key strategic and service issues for social care are debated and appropriate decisions made to support service delivery and improvement. There is a strong professional culture and a willingness by staff to accept responsibility for their own practice and learning. Our work with Welsh Government policy and professional leads, the service and workforce regulators, audit and inspection bodies is characterised by mutual respect and a willingness to cooperate in improvement activity.

Senior staff in the directorate continue to have a defined role in meetings of the Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and the Council, and the Director of Social Services plays a key role in advising the Executive on policy-making and budget-setting.

Corporate and Political Support and Oversight

We are able to judge the extent of our improvement and support the delivery of services through our key strategic plans, which provide a clear vision and direction for Social Services. The 2015-2019 service plan sets out our priorities and objectives to continue to improve the delivery of services, combined with the Directors annual report, heads of services reports, and recommendations from CSSIW. The Director is responsible for reporting progress on the plans through the corporate and political processes within the Council, and actions are reported through the political process on a quarterly basis.

Recent inspections confirm that the directorate continues to benefit from stable and effective political and corporate support in delivering its responsibilities. This includes identifying priorities, challenges and risks. The Director held meetings on a monthly basis with the Leader of the Council and the Heads of Service also met regularly with their Cabinet members to ensure that they were fully aware of issues affecting social services at all times.

The governance arrangements for managing the extensive programme of collaborative working with the NHS, Cardiff Council and the Third Sector worked well during the year. Senior figures from all the relevant organisations in the Vale of Glamorgan and Cardiff have reviewed future arrangements. The revised structure was implemented, with the Leader of the Vale of Glamorgan Council chairing the strategic leadership governance board for social care and health which includes the most senior political and corporate leaders across the two local authorities, the health board and the local third sector organisations.

The corporate and strategic arrangements for social services give us confidence that we are able to continue with plans for transforming services to meet people's needs.