

Well-being Objective 1 – Start Well

Enabling our children and young people to have the best possible start in life.



Overarching Judgement

We aim to support all Carmarthenshire learners. We will ensure that they are happy, safe, thriving, and are fulfilling their personal, social and learning potential. We will strive to become the best we can be and be highly regarded locally, whilst also earning national and international recognition.

Children's services continue to introduce working practices (Signs of Safety and a relationship-based approach) which engage and work in partnership with families to help improve outcomes for children. To ensure this, senior managers audit assessments and highlight any areas for improvement and good practice.

For families with children under 4 living in deprived areas the Flying Start programme is expanding in a phased approach across the county. The Flying Start App has been integral in reaching families, providing key messages and support services.

We are continuing to develop our fostering and adoption services to meet the needs of children who become looked after and need permanence at an early stage.

Approximately 15,000 children and young people across the county aged between 0-25 years benefitted from the Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being initiative.

The new Childcare Offer national digital service has been rolled-out and continually promoted. We are working towards addressing the gaps identified in our fifth Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2022-27) and the accompanying Action Plan and continue to promote and develop Welsh medium childcare within the County.

Why this is important?

Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood.

What happens during these early years, starting in the womb, has lifelong effects on many aspects of health and well-being – from obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status.

To have an impact on health inequalities we need to address the social gradient in children's access to positive early experiences. Later interventions, although important, are considerably less effective if they have not had good early foundations.

Fair Society, Healthy Lives, the Marmot Review, 2010



The key overarching indicators and measures we set ourselves for this overall objective


Measuring Progress

The table below shows the overall population indicators and performance measures which will be monitored for Well-being Objective 1.

Population Indicators in the main are publicly available data that have been identified to develop an understanding of trends and Carmarthenshire's position relative to the other local authorities in Wales. Through our well-being objectives the Council has an important role to play in making progress against these indicators, however, it should be noted that these are not solely indicative of the Council's performance and will be influenced by many external factors.

Performance Measures are inclusive of statutory returns, internal Council measures and consultation findings that we utilise to measure and monitor performance on a regular basis. These are the direct responsibility of the Council.

Population Indicators		
Indicator	Trend	Explaining the Data
Children Living in Poverty		<p>Child Poverty Rates are Rising</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent shows that between 2014/15 and 2020/21 child poverty rates have generally been on an upward trend in the county. This is consistent with trends seen nationally.</i></p> <p>Data for 2020/21 indicates that 34.6% of children in Carmarthenshire are living in poverty, this translates to nearly 11,250 children. This is a 5.3 percentage point increase on 2014/15 figures and exceeds the Wales average by 0.6%.</p> <p>This is the 12th highest level of all local authorities in Wales which is an improvement on the 10th highest level the previous year.</p> <p>Poverty affects every aspect of someone’s life. It is especially detrimental to children, affecting their long-term health and development, educational attainment and their access to opportunities. A child growing up in poverty is at an increased risk of not having the best start in life given their access to food, shelter, health care and education may be compromised.</p> <p>The Council has seen increasing demand for many of its services and support systems following the pandemic, exacerbated now by the effects of the cost-of-living crisis which is causing some families to struggle. As always, the priority for the Council is to ensure that children are protected and supported with a focus on early intervention and prevention.</p>
Children aged 4-5 years overweight or obese (Child Measurement Programme NHS)		<p>Childhood Obesity Levels are Rising</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent covers the period 2014/15 to 2021/22. It indicates that following a decline between 2016/17 and 2017/18 childhood obesity levels have seen an increase in the county.</i></p> <p>As of 2021/22 in Carmarthenshire 31.4% of 4-5 year olds were overweight or obese. This is an increase of 1 percentage point since 2018/19.</p> <p>Obesity in early life will have detrimental effects on long-term health and in turn the life chances of that person.</p> <p>Whilst the Council alone cannot affect the level of change required to reduce childhood obesity, several of the Council’s services have an important role to play, such as the provision of nutritious school meals and access to leisure and sporting activities.</p>

Performance Measure		
<p>Children on the Child Protection Register (per 10,000 population)</p>		<p>Slight Increases in the Number of Children on the Child Protection Register but Levels Remain Significantly Lower than Welsh Averages</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent covers the period between 2020/21 and 2021/22 and shows a slight increase in the numbers of children on the child protection register.</i></p> <p>Despite this increase from 21 to 27 children per 10,000 of the population, the county continues to exhibit one of the lowest levels of children on the child protection register of all local authorities in Wales. The level is also significantly below averages for Wales which sits at 47.</p> <p>Actual figures for 22/23 indicate a further slight increase, with 125 children recorded as being on the register. This is a 22.5% increase on the same time period for the previous year.</p> <p>Recent times have been very challenging for families and staff due to the COVID pandemic. The department is facing the inevitable difficulties of supporting children and families at the end of the pandemic era. Hardships as a result of the rising cost of living are raising stress levels for families.</p> <p>The increasing complexity of cases requires the involvement of the Family Intervention Service, Integrated Family Support and Edge of Care teams to support.</p>

Outcomes we set ourselves

Corporate Strategy Outcomes	Progress during 2022/23	Improved Yes/No?
<p>1. <u>Improved availability</u> of early years education and childcare settings across the county, particularly in rural areas; with a particular focus on providing and strengthening Welsh-medium childcare.</p>	<p>We are continuing to support and encourage the childcare and early years sector to develop Welsh language opportunities and providers have been made aware of all avenues where staff can access Welsh language courses and resources. The expansion of Flying Start programme will also encourage new providers who specialise in Welsh-medium provision.</p> <p>Progress has been slow due to pandemic aftermath and increasing living costs impacting on the viability of the sector. The sector remains under constant pressure to maintain their services for working parents and early years child development experiences for children.</p> <p>There were 90 childminders with 791 childcare places at 31/3/23 (a reduction compared with the same time last year which was 102 childminders with 781 childcare places.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Corporate Strategy Outcomes	Progress during 2022/23	Improved Yes/No?
2. Pupils with Additional Learning Needs are fully supported.	Carmarthenshire has expanded workforce capacity to meet the demands of delivering the new ways of working, especially to support the provision of additional learning provision in mainstream schools. However, the duty to favour mainstream provision will necessitate further growth in central services to strengthen and build capacity in all areas and limit the requirement for growth in specialist setting provision and reconsiderations of school decisions	Yes
3. Increased school attendance rates and access to education for vulnerable pupils.	In the current academic year attendance levels in both sectors are above the level of 2021/22 by 1.6 percentage points in primary and 3.9 percentage points in secondary schools. This highlights that attendance is generally improving, including an uplift of improvement for eFSM learners. There is variation between schools in both sectors with some making considerably more progress than others	Yes
4. Deliver a rounded curriculum raising educational standards.	<p>Support provided to schools for developing the curriculum has improved considerably since January 2023, with the Education and Children’s Services department now playing a lead role in the design and delivery of the curriculum professional learning offer.</p> <p>Engagement of schools <u>has increased substantially from 5 schools per session to 55 +</u>. As a result, there is greater collaboration on understanding the curriculum for Wales, improved sharing of effective practice and a stronger link to authentic learning experiences.</p> <p>Working alongside local developments and businesses we continue to enrich our learning offer to schools, for example, extracting carbon, alongside Swansea University or focussing on the development of the Pentre Awel site</p>	Yes
5. Nutritious free school meals for all primary school pupils.	Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) are being rolled out across the county in line with Welsh Government targets. All pupils up to year 2 currently receive UPFSM meals, with year 3 & 4 going live September 2023 and years 5 & 6 in April 2024	Yes
6. Increased bilingual and Welsh medium education.	<p>The Authority successfully identifies the demand for Welsh medium education and meets this demand and provision in all phases reflects the Authority’s Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Carmarthenshire's WESP is innovative and ambitious and is effectively focused on ensuring Welsh medium education is available to all learners, within reasonable distance from their homes.</p> <p>The plan focusses rigorously on proactively ensuring that all schools can move along the</p>	Yes

Corporate Strategy Outcomes	Progress during 2022/23	Improved Yes/No?
	language continuum, specifically focusing on the advantages of access to learning during the Foundation Phase through immersion methodology. As a result, the supply and demand for Welsh medium education across the authority continues to increase	
7. Improved opportunities for all residents in literacy, numeracy and digital skills to upskill for employment.	We have trained and supported more than 330 people by improving their digital skills (one of the key areas of targeted intervention), in order they are well equipped with better employment prospects.	Yes
8. Schools for sustainable community learning that are fit for 21 st Century	Carmarthenshire County Council has clear priorities for investment via its Modernizing Education Programme (MEP). The Programme is a strategic investment and rationalisation plan to transform school provision. It is kept under review to ensure that its school reorganisation and investment proposals retain flexibility at their core to reflect changing circumstances in a continually developing society and be responsive to changes in the education policy framework.	Yes
9. Keeping children at home with their families whenever possible.	Children’s services provide a range of services and support whose overall aim is to enable children and young people to reside within their own families and within their own communities wherever it is safe to do so, working with others to prevent the number of children who suffer adverse childhood experiences (ACE’s) and prevent the need for statutory involvement. <u>Despite an increase in the number of looked after children Carmarthenshire still has one of the lowest compared to the rest of Wales per 10,000 of the population.</u> Families have struggled in the aftermath of the pandemic and cost of living crisis which has added stress, issues arising increasing risks of abuse and neglect and mental health. Requests for accommodation are made through our accommodation panel to try and ensure alternative support options are considered through teams such as edge of Care, Integrated Family Support team (IFST) and Family Intervention Teams and other preventative services. We are reviewing EOC and IFST to ensure families receive the right help at the right time within their local communities. We are also developing parenting programmes.	
10. Reducing the inequalities faced by children from disadvantaged backgrounds which may affect their later life chances.		
11. Families facing difficulties are supported to provide stable, safe and secure home environments for their children.		
12. Families from disadvantaged backgrounds are able to access health and well-being provision within their local areas.	The Local Authority has a broad range of services that support families to access health and well-being provision. Including:	Yes

Corporate Strategy Outcomes	Progress during 2022/23	Improved Yes/No?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Family Information Service (FIS) is central resource for providing information on services for families and professionals. The Right Help, Right Time Framework helps to navigate the service available across different levels of need. FIS Facebook page has 1,195 followers and 34,390 website hits. • Early Years services include the Flying Start programme and Early Years Cwm Gwendraeth Pathfinder Pilot. These provide multiagency and integrated working in targeted deprived communities, improving health and well-being outcomes for families. <p>A total of 2,356 children received support during 22/23 through the Flying Start programme.</p> <p>The Phase 1 expansion led to a further 127 children benefitting from the service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services 0-25 years The Families First programme is accessible across the County, and provides parenting support, support for young people and disability support. A total of 9,230 individuals received a meaningful intervention in 22/23. Demand and complexity have increased, and the programme is responding positively, 94% of 789 cases closed reported a forward movement . 	

As a Council we focus on the following thematic and service priorities.

WBO1a Thematic Priority: Healthy Lives – prevention /early intervention

WBO1b Service Priority: Early years

WBO1c Service Priority: Education

Thematic Priority 1a - Healthy Lives-prevention/early intervention

In their last Assurance Check, Care Inspectorate Wales found **Children's Social Services had-**

- **Approachable and supportive leaders**
- **A Culture of co-production and personal outcomes being developed with people**
- **Clarity in operational methodology**
- **Strong multi-agency cooperation**
- **Positive integrated approach to a culture of prevention through joint working**
- **Low children looked after population**

Makes a positive contribution to the well-being of people in the pandemic period.

We are continually working to reduce the number of children becoming looked after utilising specialist and preventative teams such as Edge of Care (EOC), Integrated Family Support Team (IFST) and Family Intervention Team (FIT). We continue to face challenges to maintain children safely at home as families have struggled following the aftermath of the pandemic and cost of living crisis with increased hardship with issues arising where risks are high in relation to abuse and neglect, mental and emotional health issues. We work in partnership with families and other agencies to provide the right support at the right time to prevent the need for children to become looked after and to rehabilitate them safely at home wherever possible.




Why this is important?

- ⦿ Giving every child the best start in life, improving their early life experiences, and ensuring they live healthy lifestyles will reduce their risk of facing inequalities later in life and support them to reach their full potential. We recognise that early childhood is a time of great opportunity but also great risk as every interaction helps to shape the way children develop. We will therefore strive to protect children and young people from harm and work to ensure their emotional and physical well-beings are protected and nurtured.


How well are we doing (and how do we know)? ⓘ Sources of evidence

Measuring Progress

The table below shows the overall population indicators and performance measures which will be monitored for the Healthy Lives – Prevention/Early Intervention thematic priority.

Performance Measures		
Measure	Trend	Explaining the Data
Number of children looked after by local authorities at 31 March		<p>A Slight Increase in the Number of Looked After Children but Levels Remain one of the Lowest in Wales</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent covers the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 and shows a changing pattern categorised by slight increases from 2020/21.</i></p> <p>Since the 1980's Wales has consistently had more children looked after (per 10,000 of the population) than the rest of the UK. This is a source of concern given the impact on the outcomes of looked after children with regards to educational attainment, health, unemployment, homelessness and criminal justice.¹ However, in the last twenty years Carmarthenshire has consistently outperformed the rest of Wales with performance that is comparable with the best performing authorities in England.</p> <p>There is a lot of variation at a local authority level with data covering 22/23 for Carmarthenshire indicating 190 children were looked after as at March. The rate per (10,000 of the population) for the county remains the lowest in Wales.</p> <p>Increasing pressure placed on families by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis has seen the demand for services rise following a low of 148 in 2020/21. Challenges in the recruitment of social work has led to a number of vacancies in the service making the intensive work that families need harder to deliver.</p>
Number of children looked after in foster placements at 31 March		<p>A Slight Increase in the Number of Looked After Children in Foster Placements but Levels Remain one of the Lowest in Wales</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent covers the period 2017/18 to 2021/22 and shows a changing pattern categorised by a slight increase from 125 to 145 between 2020/21 and 2021/22.</i></p> <p>The vast majority of the 145 placements were located within the county.</p> <p>The Council continues to develop our fostering and adoption services to meet the needs of children who become looked after and need permanence at an early stage.</p>
Number of Referrals of Children and Young people attending counselling by Area, Year and Gender		<p>An Increasing Number of Referrals for Counselling which Follows National Trends</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent covers the period 2013/14 to 2021/22 and shows a steady increase to 2018/19 and a sharp increase between 2020/21 and 2021/22. This is in line with national trends.</i></p>

¹ [Children looked after | WCPP](#)

		<p>The most recent data indicates that 1,497 children and young people were referred for counselling in Carmarthenshire during academic year 2021/22. This is an increase of 444 children and young people on the previous year.</p> <p>Whilst it is concerning that more children and young people are requiring counselling it is positive to note that more children are receiving the support that they need.</p> <p>For further information, at a Wales level it is reported that 322 children receiving counselling in 21/22 did not identify as either male or female.</p> <p>Furthermore, the number of admissions to hospital for children following self-harm in Carmarthenshire has increased over the last reporting year (Q3 21/22 TO Q3 22/23). This is in line with trends for Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, however the increase in Carmarthenshire is more significant. This data has and continues to be monitored closely since the COVID-19 pandemic, in light of regional concern and anxiety expressed in various forums about the impact of lockdowns on teenage mental health within the context of self-harming behaviour.</p>
Population Indicator		
<p>Live single births with a birth weight of under 2,500g</p>		<p>The Number of Babies Born with a Low Birth Weight is Decreasing</p> <p><i>The trendline adjacent covers the period 2016 to 2021 and shows some fluctuation characterised by a general downward trend from 2019 onwards.</i></p> <p>Babies born with a low birth weight are at an increased risk of developing health problems. It is positive therefore, that generally, the percentage of babies born with a low birth weight has been decreasing in Carmarthenshire.</p> <p>The most recent data for 2021 indicates that Carmarthenshire had the fifth lowest level of low birth weights in Wales.</p>

Progress in 2022/23

Safeguarding Children & young people

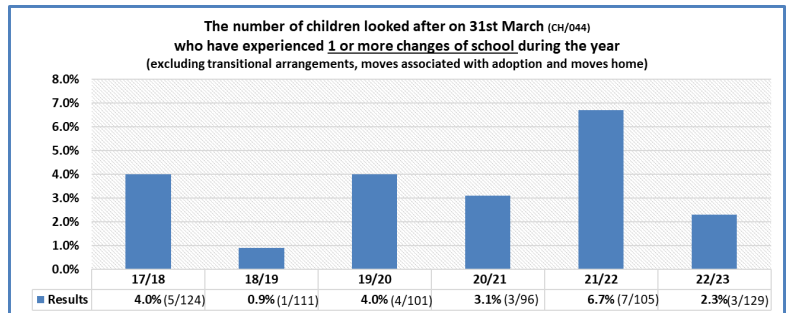
- ⦿ In the aftermath of the pandemic families have struggled especially due to the effects of the cost of living crisis. During the year we have seen an increasing demand for our services and support and has seen the number of contacts to the department continuing to rise along with the need for children to become looked after.
- ⦿ **83% of new assessments for children were completed within the statutory timescales (CH/006a/012).** Assessments are dependent on the availability of relevant multi-agency professionals and family members which can result in some being completed outside of timescales. Some may require a longer period of time ensuring quality and meaningfulness to achieve better outcomes for the child. Monitoring allows managers

to highlight what improvements can be made and further training has been arranged to strengthen the ability of social workers to complete assessments to a high standard.

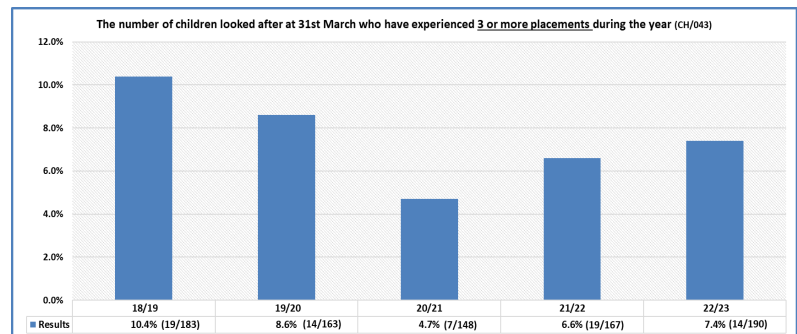
- ⦿ The relationship based systemic approach to delivering social work incorporating signs of safety continues to embed and is being introduced to more teams across children’s services. Training for newly recruited social workers as well as refresher training for more experienced workers has been carried out and will be on-going to strengthen the approach to help improve outcomes for children.
- ⦿ Auditing of assessments and plans has continued to ensure they are developed in partnership with children and families having regard to their wishes and feelings, to set outcomes which are achievable by them, taking into account the five principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act so that families have a voice and control over intervention, focus on well-being, plans are co-produced taking a multi-agency approach, providing early intervention and preventative support to ensure families are supported earlier. Auditing highlights areas for improvement and any training needs.

⦿ **Education stability of Looked After Children remains excellent. (CH/044)**

Figures have historically been very low in this metric. Only 3 children have required a change of school. This result is due to the hard work undertaken with social workers, schools, foster carers and other professionals to maintain children within their original school and community. This provides them with consistency in terms of their education to best meet their needs. Due to the rurality of Carmarthenshire this means that children may be travelling some distances to their schools when appropriate which has an impact on higher transport costs as foster placements may be located across Carmarthenshire.



- ⦿ Of the 190 children looked after up to 31 March 2023, 14 children experienced 3 or more placement moves (CH/043). This is lower than last year of 6.6% with 19 of the 167 looked after children experiencing 3 or more placements. The children who experienced moves had Adverse Childhood Experiences, are less settled and have challenging and complex needs. We continued to focus on maintaining placement stability with good placement support being offered across the service to achieve this.



- ⦿ A development day across the region confirmed multi-agency child protection arrangements are working effectively. Threshold meetings continue to be held quarterly to ensure this is maintained.
- ⦿ 39 out of 110 schools have achieved Phase 5 of the Healthy Schools scheme. The scheme now runs in 110 schools; 95 Primaries; 1 Nursery School; 12 Secondary Schools; and 2 Special Schools. The result is equal to the previous year’s result, as progress in the scheme slowed during the pandemic, with schools having prioritised learning while there was also a delay in Healthy Schools Officers being able to undertake on-site inspections during restrictions. This situation has now improved, and we have seen an increase in the number of schools achieving the higher Phases, with an additional 4 schools achieving Phase 6 and 2 schools achieving the National Quality Award, with further schools working towards the NVQ. (8.3.1.6)

Actif Sport and Leisure

- ! Only **41.5% of children aged 11 can swim 25m** (3.4.2.1). School swimming has struggled to return to pre-pandemic levels with significantly less schools attending (and many not attending for the full 15 session

programme). This means we are not meeting the recommended ability to swim 25m performance target by the age of 11 for almost 60% of children across the County. Financial and time pressures may be affecting attendance, with feedback from schools being gathered to inform future planning. Ongoing dialogue with SwimWales, Welsh Government Sport Policy Unit to try and influence national policy and funding.

- Over **215,000 children** participated in **sport and physical opportunities** facilitated by Actif Communities during 2022/23 (3.4.2.8). With services resuming post-COVID, participations have returned more to normal.
- Assistant Development Officers funded to the end of March 2023 through Sport Wales Rescue Package Funding increased participation in school significantly in Cycling, Athletics and Triathlon. Nearly 61,000 participations in the Couch to 2km programme took place in schools across the county getting children active over an 8-week period.
- The ongoing development of water sports opportunities for children at Llandysul Paddlers has seen over 17,860 participations in 22/23. The sessions range from general activity on the lake or river to Duke of Edinburgh and school residential groups.
- 22/23 saw the launch of a new programme funded through the Child Development Fund called Amser Actif where children have the opportunity to develop basic fundamental skills in community settings such as village or community halls. The sessions run in Cwm Aman, Kidwelly and Gwendraeth have proved very popular with families and initial feedback on improving confidence, competence and motivation to be active, is positive.



Supported Housing

- To support the Cabinet's ambition (CV18) to re-balance the market and take the profit out of children's care we have opened an in-house children's home (Ty Magu) during the year.
- Children's services continue to work in partnership with housing and youth services to develop new improved supported accommodation services with increased support for vulnerable young people aged 16-25 within their home communities.
- The new In-house Supported Lodgings scheme is now up and running and already providing support to 10 young people aged 16-18 to ensure they receive the best start in life and improve their early life experiences including those who have more complex needs.

Fostering & Adoption Support Services

- Mid & West Wales Adoption Service (MWAS) is working in partnership with Reflect to provide improved support to birth parents at earlier stages in the adoption process. A significant level of support is also provided to children and adopters to ensure the right support is provided at the right time by a range of professionals.
- MWAS is working with National Adoption service to embed the Wales Early Permanence framework which will ensure children experience less loss and separation if there is a need to be placed with adopters which in turn will help improve their emotional well-being and outcomes as they develop through their childhood.
- We are working to increase foster placement choice by recruiting more foster carers with the skills and experience to manage children who have more complex needs. This is a key objective for 2023/24 (CV 21).
- Unfortunately, we have seen a reduction in foster carer households across Carmarthenshire this year due to carers retiring or leaving due to personal circumstances, alongside the cost-of-living crisis. This is a national as well as local issue that the department and Foster Wales are trying to improve on by supporting local authorities to recruit and retain more foster carers. WG funding has also been made available for 2023/24 to recruit a marketing officer specifically to the fostering service.

Corporate Parenting & Child Welfare

- ⦿ The Team Around the Family (TAF) co-ordinators ensure there is extensive local community knowledge and engagement and the team continue to focus on early intervention and support for families in their local communities.
- ⦿ Trauma Informed Practice and Attachment Awareness restorative practice is now embedded in the 4-phase inclusive behavioural model in schools.
- ⦿ New membership has been established for the Corporate Parenting Panel and new guidance issued by Welsh Government and a workshop planned to develop a new corporate parenting strategy to be compliant with the expectations of this with an increased focus on accountability from all departments across the council.

Is anyone better off?

Our Young People, Our Futures, Our Communities

Carmarthenshire's new in-house supported Lodgings Service is responsible as a county resource to provide temporary accommodation to support our most vulnerable young people aged 16-18 within Carmarthenshire to gain the independent living skills, they need to ensure the best positive outcomes to empower young people on their journey into independence.



Become a Supported Lodgings provider

Carmarthenshire's young people between 16-18 years **need your help.**

Could you be the **missing piece** to empowering and supporting young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, looked after or seeking asylum on their journey to independent living.

If this is you, please get in touch.
SupportedLodgings@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
Full training and support provided plus a paid allowance.

Our Ethos
Our Young People, Our Futures, Our Communities

carmarthenshire.gov.wales

The logo for Carmarthenshire County Council, featuring a stylized dragon and the text 'Cyngor Sir Gâr Carmarthenshire County Council'.

What and how we can do better

See our delivery plan to achieve this objective in Appendix 7

Governance Arrangements

- Corporate Parenting Panel
- CYSUR Audit & Evaluation Multi-agency group
- Accommodation Panel
- Multi-Agency Forum for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (MALAC)

1b - Service Priority-Early Years

Flying Start is expanding in a phased approach across the county.

Phase 1 of the expansion is already complete, and Phase 2 is due to commence in April 2023 to reach a target of 249 children aged 2-3 years by 31st March 2025. Once fully rolled out all families with children aged 2-3 years will be eligible for 12.5 hours of funded, high-quality childcare for 39 weeks of the year.

The 'Summer of Fun' and 'Winter of Well-being' funding enabled approximately 15,000 children and young people aged 0-25 to benefit from free activities across the county.

Why this is important?

- ⦿ Protecting children who are experiencing, or are at risk of abuse, neglect, or other kinds of harm is our priority. Our focus is on early intervention / prevention to ensure all children can reach their full potential and be healthy, happy, and safe. Helping to give every child the best start in life and improve their early life experiences is our key aim.

How well are we doing (and how do we know)? ⓘ Sources of evidence

Success Measures / Explaining the Results

- ! We had **72.5% attendance at Flying Start** settings for 2022/23 (9.1.8.1), this did not meet our target of 80% and is slightly below last year (72.6%) and pre-COVID figures (79.2%). On a positive note, the % of **unauthorised absence** (9.1.8.8) are at their lowest at **1.36%**. We continue to work with families to overcome some of the anxieties. Getting families to report absence is an achievement and therefore it's encouraging to see families that are engaging well with the childcare settings and reporting absences.

Progress in 2022/23

- ⦿ **Flying Start** – The Flying Start App is integral especially during the FS expansion, in reaching families, providing key messages, such as health, language and play, safety messages, information, and links to the support services. Due to the digital officer's post being filled the App has been developed and further utilised to reach families e.g. families can book onto courses and have updates on their child when in childcare.
- ⦿ **Summer of Fun / Winter of Well-being** – Welsh Government funding (£270,000 and £434,689 respectively) enabled a significant package of support to be provided designed to help children, young people, and their families recover from the pandemic to ensure no child was left behind. Grants were allocated to play providers across the county and funding directly linked to the gaps identified within the Play Sufficiency Assessment.
- ⦿ **Families First** – early intervention support services for disadvantaged children, young people and their families have developed in line with the Family Support Strategy. During 2022-23 outcomes have been very positive:

- **9,230** individuals supported from the Families First (FF) programme, of which 6011 (65%) were new individuals.
 - **4,621** families supported from the FF programme, of which 2881 (62%) were new families.
 - **798** single agency Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF's) were closed with a forward movement of 749 (94%) on the distance travelled tool.
 - **25** cases were stepped up to Social Services, and 145 cases were stepped down from Social Services to the FF programme.
- ⊙ **Family Information Service (FIS)** have ensured families and professionals have received updated information on services, resources, and developments. FIS Facebook page has 1,195 followers and 34,390 website hits.
 - ⊙ **30 hours Childcare Offer National Digital Service** - promotion and support has continued to ensure eligible parents and childcare providers are familiar with the process. 522 parent applications were received and processed between 1st January to 31st March 2023 and 149 childcare providers have completed their on-line registration. £1,694,077.50 has been paid to local childcare providers in Carmarthenshire to eligible children during the year (1st April 2022 – 28th February 2023).
 - ⊙ Our most recent **Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-27**, which was submitted to Welsh Government in June 2022, did not indicate any quantitative or qualitative sufficiency pressures for Foundation Learning funded 3-year-old places within approved Childcare settings across Carmarthenshire. Several approved Childcare Providers reported having vacant places in Autumn 2021 which would suggest we had surplus places in certain locations throughout Carmarthenshire.

Scrutiny Task and Finish Review	<p><u>Education and Young People and Welsh Language Scrutiny = Task and Finish</u> <u>A review of the current provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities.</u></p> <p>In 2018/19 the Education & Children Scrutiny Committee completed a Task & Finish Review of the current provision for early years education, childcare and play opportunities.</p> <p>One of the conclusions identified in the report was that the Authority's 'Rising 4s' policy is markedly different to other neighbouring local authorities and that the 'Council undertakes a formal review of its current admissions policy for full time education for 4-year-olds (the rising 4s policy). A project group has completed a review of the 'Rising 4s' Policy (pupils admitted to primary schools' full time the term of their 3rd birthday) with a view to rationalising provision of full-time education for 4-year-olds in Carmarthenshire as part of the Admissions Policy and to bring it in line with other neighbouring authorities.</p> <p>The authority is due to consult on the proposals in the Autumn Term 2023 with a view to implement at the start of the academic year 2025/26</p>
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- ⊙ The 2022 **Play Sufficiency Assessment** identified a need to work in partnership with Education Officers and schools to ensure children have access to rich play environments both during and outside of teaching hours. This work is developed and delivered in partnership with Education Support Advisors and Healthy Schools officers.
 - A Quality Assessment framework for play provision is in development and will be utilised as a framework to quality assure the play opportunities provided within settings and communities.
- ⊙ **The Regional Maternity and Early Years** Strategy has been finalised. Both the regional steering group and the local operational groups continue to meet regularly implementing priorities. The Early Years Integration Team has been successful in being part of the Save the Children Better Start research project and accepted as part of the Save the Children Ehangu project for 2023/24.

Is anyone better off?

Expansion of the Flying Start early years scheme



Flying Start is expanding in a phased approach across the county. Welsh Government have announced a continued commitment to the Flying Start Programme, which historically has supported 36,000 children aged 0-4 years and their families living in some of the most deprived communities across Wales. In line with the co-operation agreement with Plaid Cymru this commitment has been extended to deliver a phased expansion of early years provision to include all two-year-olds with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh-medium provision.

This expansion of early years provision will be delivered across Wales through the Flying Start Programme. Flying Start Carmarthenshire will continue to use a geographical approach highlighting those communities most in need.

Carmarthenshire expanded their programme initially with an additional 127 families in September 2022 which is now complete. Flying Start Carmarthenshire will commence the second phase of an expansion for childcare only in April 2023 to reach a target of 249 children aged 2-3 years by 31st March 2025.

Once the Flying Start scheme has been fully rolled out, all families in Wales with children aged 2 to 3 years will be eligible for 12.5 hours of funded, high-quality childcare for 39 weeks of the year.

To meet this target, existing Flying Start childcare providers will be supported to expand their reach, with work ongoing to encourage new providers, including those who specialise in Welsh-medium provision, to offer the programme.

What and how we can do better

See our delivery plan to achieve this objective in Appendix 7

Governance Arrangements

Childcare and Early Years Steering Group
Play Sufficiency Steering Group
Regional Maternity and Early Years Steering Group

1C - Service Priority-Education

Overall, pupils are happy, safe, thriving and are fulfilling their personal, social, and learning potential.

Pupil surveys show Health and Wellbeing is generally good across all our schools.
Overall, outcomes for GCSE in 2022 are higher than 2019 when exams were last sat.
We have enhanced support for pupils with Additional Learning Needs and vulnerable learners.

Why is this important?

- ⦿ We will support all Carmarthenshire learners. The future direction of Education Services will focus on supporting learners to become:
 - Ambitious, capable learners, ready to learn throughout their lives.
 - Enterprising, creative contributors, ready to provide a full part in life & work.
 - Healthy and confident individuals, ready to learn fulfilling lives as valued members of society.
 - Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world.



How well are we doing (and how do we know)? ⓘ Sources of evidence

Success Measures / Explaining the Results

1.9% year 11 pupils &
3.8% year 13 pupils
are **Not in Education,
Employment or Training (NEET)**

(Previous year - Yr 11: **1.1%** &
Yr 13: **2.7%**)



The % of Year 11 and Year 13 pupils that are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) have increased (worsened) during 2022. With **Year 11** pupils increasing from **1.1% (21/1,885) to 1.9% (36/1,914) (PAM/009)** and **Year 13** increasing from **2.7% (18/678) to 3.8% (26/691) (5.1.0.2)**. Despite this, the Year 11 result when compared other authorities, has moved from 18th in the previous year to 10th in 2022, the Welsh average has also increased from 1.6% to 2.1%. We have remained in 15th place for Year 13, but the Welsh average has increased from 2.3% to 2.8%. The Youth Support Service has delivered the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework though out the last year. There has been work undertaken to ensure that knowledge of the framework is understood within Education and Children`s Services Department. Last Autumn, secondary Schools and other key stakeholders were surveyed on their views of the delivery of Vulnerability Assessment Profile Meetings (which are part of the framework). All European Social Fund projects linked with the Youth Support Service have now been successfully completed in 2023 and have ended. Work continues to identify replacement funding for ESF projects, and we are liaising closely with WG on this matter.

- ⦿ A consultation conducted with our residents in 2022 indicated that there was overall agreement from the 2,195 respondents that local schools provide children and young people with a good education with an Average Index Score (AIS) of 0.52. *See Appendix 6 (page 204) on Average Index Score*

- An inspection will take place in July 2023.
- The Council has prepared a self-evaluation against the inspection framework.
- 'Inspectors should evaluate whether corporate and other strategic plans are consistent with each other – such as this Well-being Objective priority.

Progress in 2022/23

Education Outcomes

Standards of learning and progress overall

GCSE 2022

- ⊙ Most pupils achieve good progress in their maths, numeracy, literacy, language and communication and digital skills overtime.
- ⊙ Overall outcomes for GCSE in 2022 are higher than 2019 when exams were last sat, but lower than 2021, when we had CDGs (Centre Determined Grades).
- ⊙ Overall standards at the end of Key Stage 4, in the three years prior to the pandemic, were high. Outcomes for pupils in Carmarthenshire's secondary schools were strong and generally above or well above Welsh averages.

Pupil Results

% 5 or more A*-G		
Category	2021 (Centre Determined Grades)	2022
Non -Free School Meals	97.5%	96.9%
Entitled to Free School Meals	88.6%	84%
Difference	8.9%	12.9%
% 5 or more A*-C		
Non -Free School Meals	85.5%	81.5%
Entitled to Free School Meals	59.4%	51.5%
Difference	26.1%	30%

A gap exists between the achievements of those entitled to free school meals and those that are not.

A Level 2022

- ⊙ Overall outcomes at A Level in 2022 are higher than 2019 when exams were last sat, but lower than 2021, reflecting national trends.
- ⊙ In the 3 years prior to the pandemic the % of pupils attaining the Level 3 threshold remained above national averages for 2 out of the 3 years, dropping very slightly below national averages in 2018/2019.
- ⊙ The percentage attaining A* at GCSE has increased significantly from 7.3% in 2019 to 11.4% in 2022. The percentage attaining A*-A at GCSE has increased significantly from 21.3% in 2019 to 27.3% in 2022. The increase was reflected nationally.
- ⊙ At A Level, the percentage attaining A* has increased significantly from 8.4% in 2019 to 17.2% in 2022. At A Level, the percentage attaining A*-A has increased significantly from 24.9% in 2019 to 40.1% in 2022. The increase was reflected nationally.

Additional Learning Needs

- ⊙ There are currently 7,126 learners with Additional Learning Needs (25% of the cohort), and most are making progress in mainstream and specialist settings. We support the largest percentage of ALN pupils in Wales, 11.6% above the last recorded Welsh Average (Pupil Level Annual School Census 2023).
- ⊙ Most pupils with additional learning needs are making good progress in line with their baseline assessments and expectations.
- ⊙ Most pupils within 'specific groups' are achieving suitable progress in line with their range of complex, individual needs.
- ⊙ Schools receive high quality support for ALN (Additional Learning Needs) transformation.
 - Carmarthenshire has expanded workforce capacity to meet the demands of delivering the new ways of working specially to support the provision of additional learning provision in mainstream schools. However, the duty to favour mainstream provision will necessitate further growth in central services to strengthen and build capacity in all areas and limit the requirement for growth in specialist setting provision and reconsiderations of school decisions.
 - A recent review of additional learning provision has resulted in the creation of a four-phase model recognising the importance of strengthening schools universal learning provision and ALP underpinning inclusion and equity for all identified need.
 - Impact of ALN school quality assurance visits is evidenced through good outcomes in ESTYN inspections indicating that schools are well prepared and effectively embedding the new ALN system.

Children Looked After

- ⊙ Factoring in cohort size and the pandemic, there has been a **marked improvement in Children Looked After** attainment.

Year	A*-G%	A*-C%
2014/15	28	5.5
2017/18	72	44
2018/19	86	26
2019/20	100	90
2020/21	83	56
2021/22	50	17

79% of our Carmarthenshire care leavers are engaged in education, training or employment. This is an improvement on previous years (20/21 – 75%; 21/22 – 74%)

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

- ⊙ Health and Wellbeing is generally good across all schools. Pupil wellbeing has improved since their return following COVID with most learners feeling safe and happy at school.
- ⊙ Attitudes towards learning is generally good in nearly all schools, with most pupils demonstrating good engagement and respect towards their peers and adults.
- ⊙ Behaviour is generally good in all schools and pupils are developing as respectful, ambitious, and capable citizens.

Carmarthenshire ESTYN inspections note that the wellbeing landscape is consistently good post Covid which demonstrates the impact of the greater focus on Wellbeing since March 2020

- ⊙ The Local Authority makes effective use of pupil surveys to gauge the views of learners. A thorough analysis of 1700 learners in 2022 provided clear intelligence which was used effectively as part of our forward

planning. For example, only 62% of pupils informed us that there was acceptable behaviour at breaktime. This was clear data used to support our 'Your behaviour impacts everything and everyone campaign' and led to an addition £500k investment in our secondary schools.

- 71.8% of pupils like school most of the time or better whilst 87% of pupils feel safe in school and often feel very safe (42.2%). This is confirmed by parents, 87.5% of whom agree or strongly agree that their child is safe in school.
- Safeguarding is strong in nearly all schools. In the very few schools where Estyn have identified a Health and safety issue pertaining to car parks, the LA is working with Governing Bodies to resolve these.

Attendance


- In the current academic year attendance levels in both sectors are above the level of 2021- 22 by 1.6 percentage points in primary and 3.9 percentage points in secondary schools. This highlights that attendance is generally improving, including an uplift of improvement for eFSM learners. There is variation between schools in both sectors with some making considerably more progress than others.

Exclusion

- The fixed term exclusion rate in Carmarthenshire is rising in line with Welsh data (once the effects of COVID-19 and lockdown periods are taken into account). Whilst rising, this compares favourably with Welsh Data, our figures are still below national average data.

Education Services

How regulators have judged our schools:

	<p>Few or our schools require follow up after inspection.</p> <p>Summary of Estyn Outcomes 2017-23 Based on published reports</p> <p>Since March 2022 there is a new inspection framework and Estyn no longer provide summative judgments for individual inspection areas. Inspectors can still place a school into Estyn Review if they judge that the school would benefit from a short period of time to improve a few aspects of their work. The two statutory categories of follow up remain unchanged. This is where schools need significant improvement or require special measures.</p>
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We want to reduce the proportion of schools requiring follow-up activity following an Estyn inspection.

Academic Year	Number of schools inspected	No Follow up	Estyn Review	Significant Improvement	Special Measures
2017-18	17	13	3	1	
2018-19	14	5	6		3
2019-20	13	7	6		
2020-21 (Covid)	No inspections				
2021- 22 Inspections Re -start New Framework	13	11		1	1
2022-23	8	7	1		

Since Estyn have started to inspect schools post Covid in March 2022, many of our schools have had no follow up or very few in a category. In nearly all cases there is close alignment between Estyn outcomes and the departments understanding of school's strengths and areas of improvement.

An additional five schools were inspected in March -April 2023 -but their reports are not yet published. Coedcae / Mynydd y Gareg / Penygaer / Pontyberem / Llangadog.

Support for school improvement

- ⦿ The school improvement team has effective systems to monitor the challenge, support and interventions in all schools, utilising information from across the Department. The school improvement team focuses well on ensuring differentiated support, impacting positively on schools causing concern.
- ⦿ Most headteachers agree that the local authority knows its schools well due to the consistently rigorous and collaborative approach to school improvement across the education department, alongside our schools, pupil referral units and specialist settings.
- ⦿ Most headteachers agree that the local authority challenges and supports them on their performance, providing effective interventions to improve outcomes for all learners.
- ⦿ The directorate's senior leadership team meets Chairs of governing bodies each term collectively, addressing key strategic issues. Feedback from the governing body training and development programme and briefing sessions is positive, as areas of focus directly align to national priorities and to the analysis of need following monitoring visits.

Support for vulnerable learners

- ⦿ There is a strong network of support to help schools improve and manage behaviour.
- ⦿ Following a behaviour review undertaken across all schools a model was agreed to address providing equitable and consistent behaviour support services. The new service delivery model has doubled the number of staff on the Behavioural Support Community Team. Qualitative data collected provides a very positive response regarding the support of the team and the impact they are having in the training provided.
- ⦿ To enhance the specialist BESD support available in schools, the Local Authority listened to the concerns of Headteachers in Secondary Schools and agreed to provide funding to each school to employ an additional member of staff to support vulnerable learners demonstrating BESD. (£500k)
- ⦿ There is a strong service to support schools in managing and improving attendance.
 - LA and school-based attendance data is shared routinely with the Departmental Management Team to identify monthly trends in sectors and to identify schools where there may be cause for concern. This data is further shared with schools' Education Support Advisors as part of their support and challenge to schools.
- ⦿ The Youth Support Service works effectively with a range of partners to ensure that children and young peoples' needs are met and that they are safeguarded well.
 - The service has received several national and UK-wide accolades and ensures a Youth Worker for every Secondary school as well as universal and targeted provision. The LGBTQIA+ work is highlighted as 'sector leading' within the Youth Work Quality Mark report.
- ⦿ The Carmarthenshire Youth Council provides robust, meaningful opportunities to seek and respond to the views of our young people.

Admissions

- ⦿ The authority manages admissions to its schools well, and in line with statutory requirements, enabling most learners to obtain places at their first-preference school. The percentage of successful first choice applications to date for the normal round 22/23 for Primary is 80.64% and is 88.44% pupils for Secondary Schools.

Modernising Education Programme (MEP)

- ⦿ We have completed projects at Ysgol Rhys Prichard, Ysgol Pum Heol, Ysgol Llangadog and Ysgol Gorslas. Ysgol y Castell Phase 1 (new school building) was completed in November 2022 with Phase 2

(Demolition/MUGA/Sports pitch) due for completion in Summer 2023. Work continues on site to provide Ysgol Pembrey with a new school building with Phase 1 occupation expected in November 2023.

- ⦿ A review of school catchment areas across the Authority will align with the ongoing review of the Modernising Education Programme (MEP) to reflect potential changes to the overall school footprint across the Authority.
- ⦿ Carmarthenshire County Council is currently updating data on the suitability, sufficiency and condition of its schools including PRU's and specialist settings. Having been identified as a corporate risk, a rolling programme of suitability assessments, and a rolling programme of condition surveys has been implemented for all non-housing building stock including schools and PRUs
- ⦿ Carmarthenshire County Council has clear priorities for investment via its Modernising Education Programme (MEP). The Programme is a strategic investment and rationalisation plan to transform school provision. It is kept under review to ensure that its school reorganisation and investment proposals retain flexibility at their core to reflect changing circumstances in a continually developing society and be responsive to changes in the education policy framework.

<u>School Organisation Consultation Process</u>	
Scrutiny Task and Finish	In 2021 the Education and Children Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to review the current consultation process for school organisation changes, including changes in linguistic provision and closure of schools. Several recommendations were made and accepted by Cabinet and are being implemented into the process where appropriate

- ⦿ In 2019, we undertook a survey of school sites in relation to pedestrian and vehicular health and safety. As a result of this, highest risk sites were highlighted for investment. This survey is currently being repeated.

Welsh Medium Education

- ⦿ The Authority successfully identifies the demand for Welsh medium education and meets this demand and provision in all phases reflects the Authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Carmarthenshire's WESP is innovative and ambitious and is effectively focused on ensuring Welsh medium education is available to all learners, within reasonable distance from their homes.
- ⦿ The plan focusses rigorously on proactively ensuring that all schools can move along the language continuum, specifically focusing on the advantages of access to learning during the Foundation Phase through immersion methodology. As a result, the supply and demand for Welsh medium education across the authority continues to increase.
- ⦿ It is noteworthy that, since 2016, eight primary schools have positively changed their linguistic categorisation, providing increased opportunities to learn through the medium of Welsh.

Self-evaluation and improvement planning

- ⦿ Improvement planning is firmly based on the analysis of a broad range of data.
- ⦿ A notable feature of departmental structure is the Strategic Focus Groups, which provide important opportunities to strategically improve key issues for the education system based on local and national priorities.
 - A biennial Headteacher questionnaire provides important feedback and constructive suggestions for adapting and developing future service delivery. Pupils and parents are also consulted, and all information is cross-referenced and triangulated against corporate priorities, against information gleaned from focus groups such as several Headteacher fora, unions, and officer staff groups.

Safeguarding arrangements


Corporate Safeguarding

- ⦿ The newly revised [Corporate Safeguarding Policy](#) provides a framework for every service within the Council setting out responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and protecting children and adults at risk as well as the methods by which the Council will be assured that it is fulfilling its duties. This is supported by a robust Business Plan addressing identified priorities. The Corporate Safeguarding Officers Group, which consists of key representatives from a range of Departments and Chaired by the Statutory Director of Social Services, has a clear Terms of Reference and has overview of the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and monitors the implementation of the Safeguarding Action Plan. Reports are presented to CMT. Key safeguarding indicators and risks have been identified and are reported on regularly as part of the corporate Performance Information Management System (PIMS).

Safeguarding in schools

- ⦿ Safeguarding training for schools and for Designated Safeguarding Persons is kept updated on a termly basis, in response to emerging themes, trends, guidance and changes in legislation, and is also reviewed annually.
 - Feedback from course participants indicates that these updates ensures that the training continues to be highly relevant to the needs of schools and to the safeguarding of learners.
 - The training for schools and DSPS is provided on a regular, rolling programme. School staff and staff from the Music Service, TADG, Child Protection Officers, Residential Child Care Workers, MEAS and Area 43 counsellors have received training ensuring that they are up to date with consistent training, in line with the timescales in Keeping Learners Safe guidance.
- ⦿ In nearly all schools, learners are confident with online safety and share strategies for staying safe online. However, a very few settings needed to establish a program of regular online safety lessons. Interacting and collaboration occurs in a minority of schools and mainly with older learners.

Use of resources

<p>Internal Audit</p> 	<p>Schools Expenditure (Final Report Issued: 4th April 2023)</p> <p><u>Objective of the review:</u> The review sought to provide assurance that schools' expenditure is appropriate and has been committed in line with the Authority's Financial Procedure Rules for Schools and other relevant policies. The review covered the controls and procedures in operation.</p>	<p><i>Assurance Rating</i></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>High</i></td> </tr> <tr style="background-color: #FFD700;"> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Acceptable</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Low</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>High</i>	<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Low</i>
<i>High</i>					
<i>Acceptable</i>					
<i>Low</i>					

- ⦿ The Council's allocation of resources reflects the priority afforded to education services. The local authority spends above the indicator-based assessment for education services and has in recent years increased and protected schools' budgets against a backdrop of financial pressures across the Council.
- ⦿ The Council has protected/prioritised school funding despite need to find larger budget reductions across other services. This has meant that school budgets are higher than would have been the case if they had been treated on an equivalent basis.
- ⦿ Additional funding is provided every year to departmentally resourced education services for demand/legislative or unavoidable service pressures identified.
- ⦿ The authority has a comprehensive range of good value Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in place with nearly all schools buying into all the SLA's.

- ⦿ In 2022/23 Carmarthenshire delegated 87.9% of the education budget (excluding school transport) to schools which was above the Welsh average of 86.8%.
- ⦿ The authority is aware of current financial risks and those on the horizon and we recognise that it will be necessary to respond to increasing challenges, including potential increases in costs relating to staff pay and pensions, energy and transport.

Healthy Eating And Living And Making Healthy Choices

- ⦿ Nearly all pupils have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and have a solid understanding of the importance and benefits of eating and drinking healthily along with undertaking physical exercise
- ⦿ Engagement in sporting activities both within and outside school hours is increasing and, where numbers are low, schools are responding creatively with innovation. For example, having learners to design their own PE kit, giving the bronze ambassadors more responsibility, arranging specific Health and Wellbeing days in the outdoors.
- ⦿ The percentage of participation in physical activities and sport across Carmarthenshire (41%) is higher than the national average (39%)

School meals

- ⦿ Monitoring visits are ongoing. All Catering assistants have completed the Food safety and Allergen training with only a handful of breakfast staff to complete. These are employees with limited IT skills or no access to computers who our Catering managers have had to support directly. Training and induction will be rolled out to all new starters and mobile catering officers.

Sport and Leisure

- ⦿ In response to local and national insight the **Actif** Communities team have rolled out a '*Physical Literacy*' programme to improve the quality of school sport and physical activity. This is being achieved through a whole-school approach via a package of school staff training, mentoring and support. Since the programme's inception in September 2022, 24 Schools have received training for their entire staffing workforce as well as follow-up mentoring session to embed the learning and provide further support. Initial impact assessment demonstrates increased confidence and competence levels of school staff with improved understanding the importance of physical literacy and increased knowledge of resources to further enhance the quality of delivery.
- ⦿ The *Young Ambassador Programme* in Schools continues to go from strength to strength with over 400 Ambassadors leading and inspiring the next generation to be more active. Around 25,000 participations were recorded in 22/23 lead by Ambassadors on their school yards or halls.
- ⦿ The *Actif Communities' Intervention and Engagement* programmes have seen targeted support provided across Carmarthenshire's secondary schools for young people who are disengaged or struggling to take part in regular school sport and PE. Following the 10-week programmes pupils are re-introduced to school sport and PE with heightened levels of confidence, competence and motivation. 365 Children across the county benefited from this initiative with plans to develop the programme further to develop the way in which we measure and demonstrate the impact this has on young people.
- ⦿ *Actif Anywhere Schools* was launched in January 2023 with a free trial period for schools to take part in the initiative. Actif Anywhere Schools provides live-streamed activity straight into classrooms across the county as well as a bank of on demand sessions. As well as the physical benefits of being active, the sessions help improve mood, concentration and memory of the children.



- ⦿ We will work in partnership to look at the issue of around a third of our children and young people being classified as overweight or obese in the County, with the figure being one of the highest in Wales. This is a wider public health issue, and the Council will have a significant contribution through school dinners and leisure. A scrutiny task and finish working group has been established to review this issue during 2023-24, with work already underway. This area will continue to be a key focus for our prevention and early intervention work and affect better life-long habits for our residents.

What and how we can do better

See our delivery plan to achieve this objective in Appendix 7

Governance Arrangements

Cabinet Advisory Panels

- **Corporate Parenting And Safeguarding Panel**- The Corporate Parenting Panel provides a level of scrutiny, monitoring, oversight and challenge as to how well the Council is doing in meeting the needs of looked after children and care leavers.
- **School Improvement Panel** - The School Improvement Panel was established to enable the County Council to effectively discharge constitutional and statutory responsibilities for monitoring school performance, constantly striving to improve educational outcomes for our pupils
- **Education Admissions Forum**- The Council is required under The Education Act 2002 to establish an Admission Forum which has the power to advise the Local Authority on matters connected with the determination of admission arrangements.
- **Welsh In Education Forum** - The WESP sets out a requirement for each local authority to establish a Welsh Education Forum In legislation the Forum is described as follows-Welsh medium education forum” (“fforwm addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg”) means a body established by a local authority for the purpose of improving the provision of Welsh medium education the members of which consist of local authority officers and such other persons as the local authority considers appropriate.

Education, Young People and the Welsh Language Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member for Education and Welsh Language

8 Education Strategic Focus Groups