Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2025/2026

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Cyngor Sir Gâr
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County Council

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- H&SS Scrutiny - 8th June, 2026 - (deadline 27th May, 2026)
- Cabinet – 27th July, 2026 - (deadline 15th July, 2026)
- Council – 9th September, 2026 - (deadline 1st September, 2026)

Introduction

I am delighted to present this, my first annual report as the Statutory Director of Social Services in Carmarthenshire. The Local Authority Social Services Annual Report for 2025/2026 sets out how Carmarthenshire County Council has delivered its statutory social services and related functions, and the impact that these services have had on the well-being of people who need care and support, their carers, and Carmarthenshire's local communities. It provides transparency on how public resources have been used and how services have performed, ensuring that service users, carers and the wider public can understand what the Council has done, how well it has performed and how it is responding to identified needs and pressures.

The report presents an overview of leadership, workforce, finance, service performance and improvement, and strategic progress and developments during the year. It is intended to support elected members and those involved in scrutiny by providing clear evidence of positive progress; setting out the various challenges we face in the service, along with their impact; and to assist partners across the public, private and third sectors in understanding the Council's priorities, objectives and role within the wider health and social care system.

In line with statutory requirements, I am required to report annually on our performance to demonstrate both the improvements achieved and the challenges faced during 2025/26. The report also supports assurance and oversight for regulators and inspectorates, including the Wales Audit Office (WAO), Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Social Care Wales (SCW) and Statutory Commissioners, and provides Welsh Government with clear evidence of delivery against national expectations and priorities.

The report will set out our priority actions for 2026/27. As in previous years, it remains in draft form while we engage with staff, elected members, partners and citizens to ensure that their perspectives and feedback prior to formal approval.

Director's Summary

At the point of delivering this report, I have been director for just 6 months having joined Carmarthenshire County Council in October 2025. Carmarthenshire is very close to my heart as the place I grew up, where much of my family still live, and as the place where my social care journey started out as I worked in adult services over 30 years ago. I have had the great privilege in that short time, of observing some of the amazing work that my department does for the people of Carmarthenshire and have seen first-hand what a dedicated and resilient workforce we have in the directorate.

My first six months in post has focused on gaining operational oversight and reviewing governance and performance management arrangements, with a clear emphasis on

improving outcomes for people. This has involved building effective relationships with the workforce, elected members, partners, and regulators; developing a strong understanding of service pressures; and identifying opportunities for service improvement, innovation and sustainable change. I have also spent a lot of time trying to meet as many of the teams within my service as possible: with a long list of teams and services, these visits will continue into the rest of my first year as director, and beyond.

To begin with Children and Families: this department was, until September 2025, located within the education directorate. Since this date, it has been a part of the wider Social Services and Housing Directorate, a decision that was made in order to better align services to vulnerable people, and those in need of care and support under one directorate. At around this time, the department said farewell to its then Head of Children's Services, and we currently have an Interim Head of Service who will occupy the post until a permanent replacement can be recruited into the role later in 2026.

As was the case with the former director's final annual report, Children's Services has continued to experience acute service demand and financial pressures. Referrals into the service have increased, leading to increases across nearly all measures in the service. In particular, the numbers of children looked after have increased, with particular financial pressure being seen as a result of increases in externally commissioned residential placements for children with complex needs. Additionally, the numbers of children on the child protection register have steadily increased over the year. Nevertheless, Carmarthenshire still has the lowest numbers of children in care per head of the population in Wales.

Our newest residential home for children – 'Yr Hafan' in Johnstown – received its first inspection during 25/26 since being registered in January 2025. The inspection was extremely positive with the service receiving 'Good' ratings across all 4 domains that are inspected, under the new rating system implemented by CIW. Plans to develop a new-build children's home in Llanelli, to reflect the demand in this area, have continued, with a planning application due to be heard in the early part of 26/27. If progressed, this will see an additional 4 beds for children who require residential care being developed within Carmarthenshire, thus allowing us to keep even more of our children in their home county, close to their families and their communities. Developing our residential portfolio for children will also mitigate against the feared loss of providers as a result of Welsh Government's 'not for profit' agenda as set out in the new Health and Social Care (Wales) Act 2025. As of the 1st April 2026, no new 'for-profit' providers will be able to register to provide care in Wales. We have also been preparing to launch a newly improved offer to the county's foster carers, again to assist with retention and recruitment, and to mitigate against any changes as a result of the new legislation. Our foster carers provide an essential and valuable resource to our most vulnerable children, and we are committed to improving the financial support they get from us.

Key in the transformation of the department's fortunes in the coming years will be a shift to a wider offer of preventative and early help services, that will seek to provide support to families far earlier, thereby preventing their needs escalating to statutory services. An escalation to statutory services increases the risk of those children entering the care or child protection systems. Understanding what the data is telling us in respect of our front-door approach in children's services, and in respect of our application of thresholds and

our adherence to practice guidance and legislation will be key to this effort. For this reason we have engaged external social work academics for 26/27 who will support a review of our front-door and assessment approach, with a proven model that has seen referrals, numbers of children in care and numbers of children on the child protection register reduce in other local authority areas. We will also finalise an Early Help and Prevention Strategy for children that will strive to swing the pendulum of intervention safely from protection to prevention.

The children's services transformation board has been reviewed during this year and its areas of reporting refreshed to ensure it remains useful to the senior management team, only uses the data it needs to in order to inform improvements, and to ensure that it provides the right information to allow full scrutiny of its work across the Council's political and corporate management reporting structures. I will continue to chair this board at least until a new permanent Head of Service is appointed.

Carmarthenshire continues to lead on the Diogelu LINC Safeguarding project. This project that is led by our Senior Manager for Performance and Digital Transformation, is developing a digital tool that allows agencies to combine their information about vulnerable young people, allowing pro-active responses to concerns. A collaboration with Pembrokeshire children's services, police and health colleagues, this innovative project promises to revolutionise how we share information across agencies within Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, and will enable us to better protect those most in need. We hope to see a working prototype early in 2026/27. The project may also provide future opportunity for wider adoption across Wales if successful.

Our adult services have seen some excellent successes during the last year with excellent inspection reports for its Tir Einon respite unit for adults with disabilities; for its Home Care Service; and for the Community Team for Learning Disabilities (CTLD). We are providing ever higher rates of home care, with a corresponding decrease in the number of residential beds being utilised. Whilst lower occupancy comes with its own challenges, the good news story is that more older people are being enabled to remain in their own homes, living independently and with minimal support. We continue to have an ambition to increase our share of the home care market to 50% though this remains challenging. We will be reviewing how home care calls are structured in 26/27 in order to ensure we are maximising our capacity whilst balancing our flexibility, and without threatening what is currently assessed by CIW as being an 'Excellent' rated service across all 3 domains of inspection.

We know already that our older population is predicted to grow, with spikes anticipated both in 2027 and again in 2030. This will add even more pressure to a system already facing huge demand. We are however progressing with plans to move forward the phase 2 development on the flagship Pentre Awel site, along with developing plans at the old Plas Y Bryn site in Cwmgwili, Ammanford. Both sites will provide additional capacity for older adults to live in and be supported in as they age. A key challenge remains in the required recruitment for such developments with the working-age adult population projected to shrink as the numbers of those older adults who are living longer and therefore requiring care increases. We are currently working on projections for staffing requirements that will inform our recruitment strategy across social care.

Unfortunately, Carmarthenshire has seen an increase in incidences of suicide in the last year, which aligns with an increase in demand for mental health services in the county. The department has however carried out a lot of work on suicide prevention especially as a result of the appointment to a grant-funded post dedicated to delivering in this area. We have direct links with the national lead for suicide and self-harm and are committed to providing the support required to people who are in mental distress. We are also a directorate – and a council - that is committed to providing a comprehensive well-being offer to our staff, some of whom are exposed to distressing and stressful work at times. Carmarthenshire also leads on the regional Rapid Response to Suicide work, offering swift support to those directly impacted by such tragedies.

Our 'Hospital At Home' service along with our Intermediate Care Multi-Disciplinary Team (ICMDT) - both integrated services with our health colleagues - continue to provide essential services to elderly and vulnerable people in our communities, along with supporting our hospitals in ensuring patients are not admitted unnecessarily, or to support them being discharged as swiftly as possible when they are admitted. Our advanced nurse practitioners within integrated services, provide specialist support that allows ambulances to be stood down and conveyances to hospital prevented. This provides much needed support to our colleagues in Wales Ambulance Services Trust (WAST). Llesiant Delta Wellbeing – the local authority's long-arm trading company, also supports this work with its Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) Service, as well as its response and its monitoring services.

The final word in this my first annual report, must though be reserved for the directorate's workforce, who are without a doubt its most valuable resource. Having worked in social care for 30 years, with 26 of those as a qualified social worker in children's services, I have never seen pressures as acute as they have been for the last few years. And yet still our staff turn up, day in day out, and provide compassionate, empathetic care, with a level of dedication and resilience that is humbling and inspiring in equal measure. It is an immense privilege to be the steward to such an amazing group of staff and I hope to be able to support them to bigger and better things in the coming years.

Darren Mutter

Darren Mutter
Statutory Director of Social Services

Leadership

Carmarthenshire County Council is structured into several departments, each responsible for different areas of service. These departments include:

1	**Chief Executives**: Handles corporate strategy, democratic services, legal services.
2	**Education & Leisure:** Focuses on education, schools, community learning, sport and leisure, cultural services and public protection.
3	**Corporate Services**: Manages finance, procurement, payroll and pensions.
4	**Social Services and Housing**: Covers Adult Social Care, Children and Families Services, Integrated Social Care and Health Services and Housing Services.
5	**Place, Infrastructure, and Economic Development**: Deals with planning, transport, waste management, property assets, highways and regeneration.

Carmarthenshire County Council is made up of 75 elected Councillors, representing 51 electoral Wards. These Councillors are responsible for making decisions about local services, budgets and policies.

The Cabinet is made up of 10 members, including the Leader of the Council. Each Cabinet Member oversees a specific portfolio, such as education, social care, transport, or climate change. The Lead Member for Social Services is Councillor Jane Tremlett (see picture)

In 2025/26 the Social Services and Housing Directorate was led by:
Head of Integrated Services (Interim) This is a post that is joint funded with Hywel Dda Health Board **Joanna Jones**
Head of Adult Services **Kate Burton**
Head of Children's Services (Interim) **Gill Adams**
Head of Strategic Joint Commissioning (Jointly funded with Pembrokeshire) **Chris Harrison**
Head of Housing **Jonathan Morgan**

Management Structure: Social Services and Housing Directorate

Workforce

Our workforce sits at the heart of Social Services and Housing, and the current position reflects both remarkable commitment and resilience, along with significant challenge. Every day, our practitioners, support teams and frontline managers work with empathy, compassion and professionalism to safeguard vulnerable children and adults, promote independence and strengthen the wider well-being of our communities. Their dedication often under complex and emotionally demanding circumstances remains our greatest organisational strength.

Yet the pressures facing the social care workforce continue to intensify. We are navigating a highly competitive labour market, national shortages of qualified social workers and increasing demand across both children's and adults services.

Recruitment and retention challenges persist in critical roles, including occupational therapists, domiciliary care staff and residential care teams. However, we have seen success as a result of our Care Academi, with projections for our in-house social work trainees suggesting extremely low vacancy rates for qualified social workers in the year 26/27. This position is contrary to the regional picture. At the same time, we are experiencing the effects of an ageing workforce and the need to develop a pipeline of new talent equipped with the skills and resilience required in modern practice, to ensure we have robust succession plans in place.

These realities underline the importance of a long-term and agile workforce strategy: one that not only addresses immediate operational pressures but builds sustainable capacity for the future. Our vision is for a confident, skilled and supported workforce who are empowered to deliver high-quality, relationship-based practice to all of our residents.

To achieve this, we will continue to invest in:

- **Professional development and career pathways,** ensuring practitioners have access to high quality training, progression routes, and opportunities to develop specialist expertise.
- **Wellbeing, supervision, and reflective practice,** recognising the emotional toll of our work and the need for robust support structures.
- **Growing our own workforce,** through apprenticeships, traineeships, student placements, and strong partnerships with education providers.
- **Digital tools and modern ways of working,** enabling staff to spend more time with people and less time on administrative burden.
- **Inclusive and flexible workplaces,** where staff feel valued, respected, and able to thrive at every stage of their career.

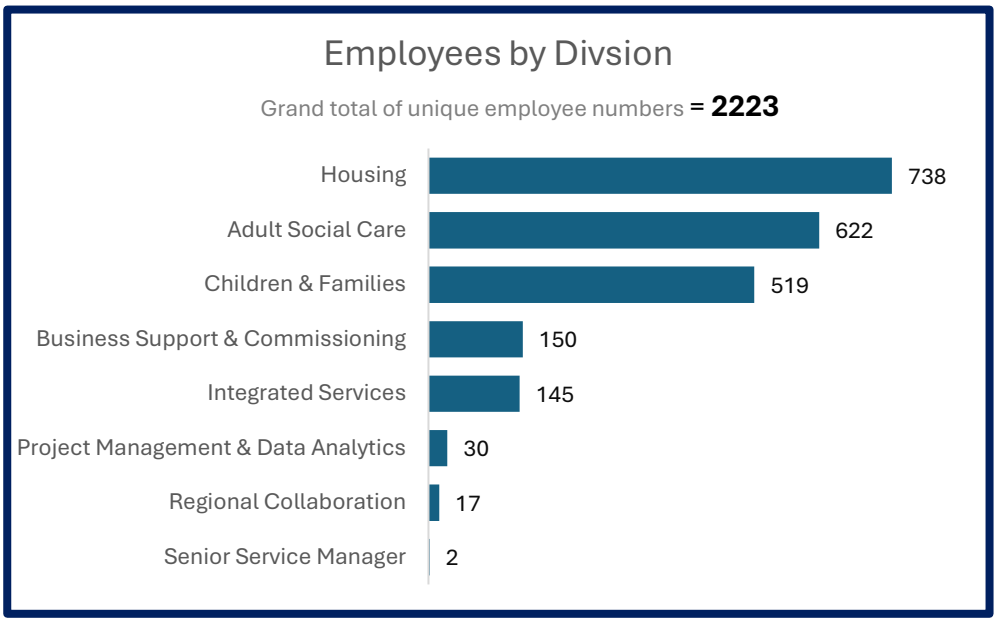
Looking ahead, we want a workforce that is diverse, resilient and representative of our communities; one that embraces innovation while maintaining the values and integrity central to social care practice. And we want our workforce to feel supported through the complex and demanding work that they carry out for the people of Carmarthenshire.

By aligning our workforce planning with the long-term needs of the population and the aspirations of national legislation, we will ensure that our services remain safe, sustainable, and person-centred.

While the challenges ahead are substantial, I am confident that with continued investment, innovation, strong leadership, and a collective focus on attracting, retaining, and developing our people, we can build a workforce capable of meeting both current and future demands. Together, we will create the conditions for excellence in practice and deliver the best possible outcomes for the individuals, families and communities we serve.

Employee numbers

The Social Services & Housing directorate has **2223** employees. (Please note these figures include casual employees).



Training Data and Information

Our Learning and Development colleagues have continued to deliver a comprehensive training programme during 2025/26, including on topics such as Trauma Informed Practice, Neurodiversity, legal updates for AMHPs, Best Interest Assessments, as well as Deprivation of Liberty and the legal framework for under 16's. Completion rates of e-learning modules, covering statutory subjects such as Safeguarding, provided via the new learning management system ThinQi, are continuing to increase. The number of learning modules available in this format to Social Care staff is also increasing, covering some of the more specialist areas of practice.

Additionally, the professional development aimed at aspiring and current managers, offered via the Leadership and Management Academy, has again seen a good take up from Social Care staff. Many of the candidates have progressed to enrol and complete ILM qualifications, now including up to Level 7, delivered in partnership with the local college.

Care Academi and Social Work

The Care Academi, the first programme of its kind in Wales, is now well established and continues to play a critical role in developing a sustainable future social care workforce. To date, 18 individuals have been supported through the programme, with four currently progressing through a Social Work qualification, directly contributing to longer-term workforce capacity and succession planning within social care.

Our 'grow our own' strategy continues to be a success through supporting individuals to pursue part-time Open University Social Work Degrees and fulltime Masters Programmes at Swansea and Cardiff Universities, with 34 expected to qualify as social workers over the next 12 months.

Work Experience

We actively support individuals in gaining work experience in social care, promoted through the dedicated work experience page on the Carmarthenshire County Council website, recognising the vital role these opportunities play in inspiring future professionals and enhancing skills within the sector.

In addition, we are also supporting a targeted “Real World of Learning” project in partnership with Ysgol Dyffryn Aman. As part of this initiative, Year 10 pupils attend work experience placements aimed at completing a structured project. Pupils can choose social care placements based in the Ammanford area and include settings such as Ty Dyffryn Extra Care Scheme and Manor Road Day Service.

The project enables pupils to develop practical skills, gain sector-specific knowledge, and improve their understanding of professional expectations within health and social care. This approach ensures that young people gain meaningful, hands-on experience while supporting their learning, confidence, and future career aspirations.

We are also working in partnership with Coleg Sir Gar to offer pupils valuable work experience opportunities in Social Work settings, further broadening their exposure to the sector and enhancing their career prospects.

Financial Resources

	2024-25	2025-26	Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Children and Family Services	41,186	44,694	3,508
Service strategy – adults social services	892	792	-100
Older people (age 65 and over) including older mentally ill	66,470	66,472	2
Adults aged under 65 with a physical disability or sensory impairment	7,480	9,031	1,551
Adults aged under 65 with learning disabilities	45,443	50,405	4,962
Adults aged under 65 with mental health needs	8,855	10,397	1,542
Other adult social services	1,376	1,421	45

Overall, the council has invested significantly in the directorate, over the last few years, additionality that is partly reflected in the need for increased council tax rates in the authority. This is partly reflective of the demand profile across social care but also reflects changes such as National Insurance employer contributions. The directorate continues to have responsibility along with the other directorates, for identifying and delivering on efficiency savings, in the context of continued challenging budgetary circumstances for the authority. In 25/26 we have struggled to deliver on some of our commitments, especially in the face of rising operational demand and complexity. Moving into 26/27 we will once again identify opportunities for efficiencies, innovation and improvement with the dual aim of providing better services for our customers and achieving better value for money for the public purse.

Performance

Highlighted below is the Performance Framework for Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services, which sets out the information we monitor and report to Welsh Government on throughout the year, in line with statutory requirements. The table below presents the end-of-year position for each measure.

Adult Services

Measure Ref	Measure	End of Year Figures
AD/001a	The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year.	17,729
AD/001b	The number of new contacts received for adults by statutory Social Services during the year.	14,891
AD/002	The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided.	2,092
AD/004	The number of new assessments completed for adults during the year	5,913
AD/005a	Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan	1,723
AD/005b	Needs were able to be met by any other means	3,548
AD/005c	There were no eligible needs to meet	642
AD/012a	The number of adults with a care and support plan on 31 March	3,301
AD/012b	The number of adults with a care and support plan on 31 March and a carer support plan where the adult has both their own care and support needs and responsibilities as a carer.	58
QS1	The number of adults who completed a period of re-ablement	698
QS2	The number of adults who completed a period of re-ablement and have a reduced package of care	424
QS3	Average age of adults entering residential care homes	86
QS4	The percentage of adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales	92.45%

Children and Families Services

Measure Ref	Measure	End of Year Figures
CH/001	The number of contacts received for children by statutory Social Services during the year	22,431
CH002	The number of contacts for children received by statutory Social Services during the year where advice or assistance was provided	5,730
CH/006	The number of new assessments completed for children during the year	2,157
CH/007	The number of assessments completed for children during the year where: a. Needs were only able to be met with a care and support plan b. Needs were able to be met by any other means	 515 1249
CH/015	The number of children with a care and support plan on 31st March 2026	929
QS1	The percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales	58.7
QS2	The percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority child protection registers	8.5
QS3	Percentage of looked after children who, during the year to 31st March have experienced one or more changes in school during periods of being looked after that were not due to transitional arrangements	4.2
QS4	The percentage of looked after children who returned home from care during the year	14.5
QS5	The percentage of all care leavers who have experienced homelessness during the year	2.7

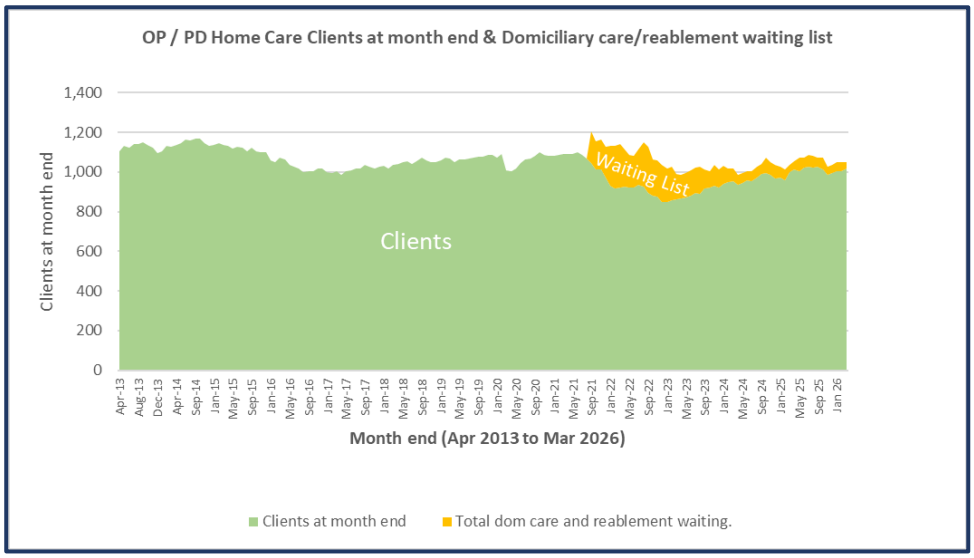
End of Year Data

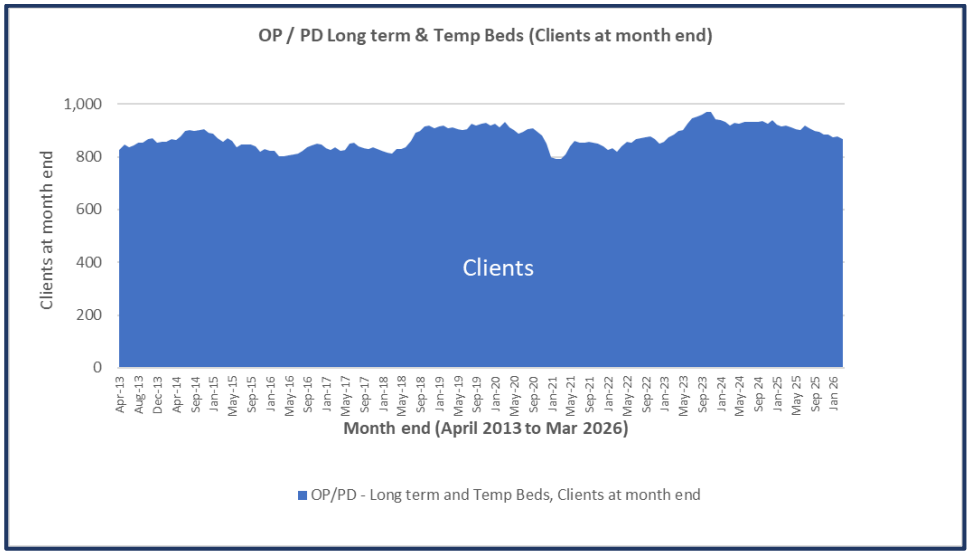
The following section presents a range of key activity metrics relating to commissioned and statutory social services. These indicators provide important information about service demand, delivery and reach, and help illustrate how social services are supporting people to achieve improved well-being outcomes.

Together, these measures offer valuable insight into trends over time, levels of need and the scale of services provided. The illustrations that follow have been included to support transparency and accountability, demonstrating how social services resources are being deployed and where pressures, changes in demand and priority areas are emerging.

Commissioned Services

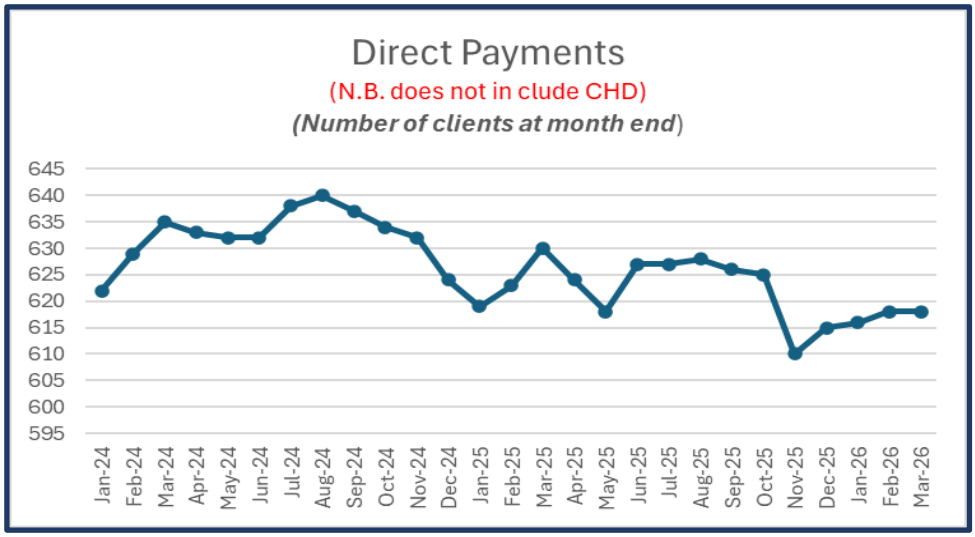
Note the graph below is up to the 31st March the scale of the graph is over a 13 year period.



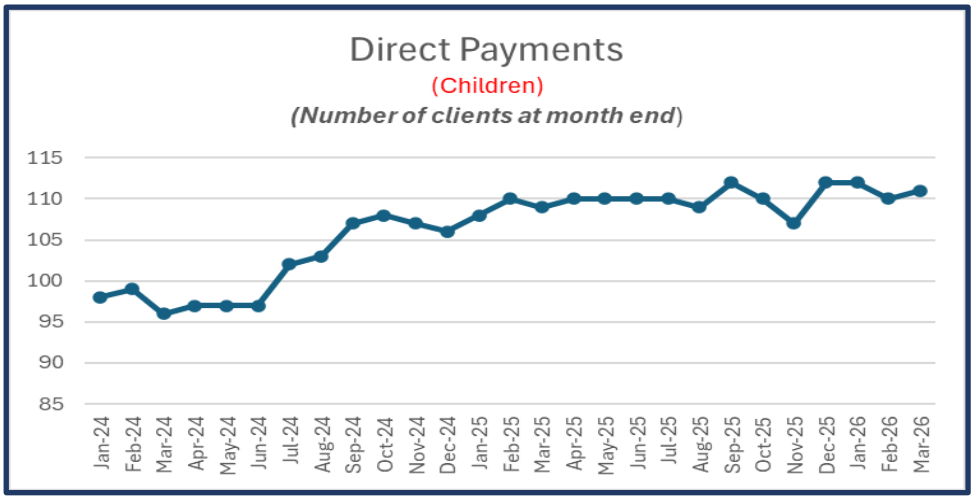


The two graphs above show how over the last 4 years we have gradually increased the amount of home care we are providing which corresponds with a decrease in the number of people occupying care home beds. This means that we are supporting more and more people to live in their own homes, maintaining levels of independence thus supporting their dignity and wellbeing.

The illustrations below demonstrates the number of adults and children in receipt of a Direct Payment.



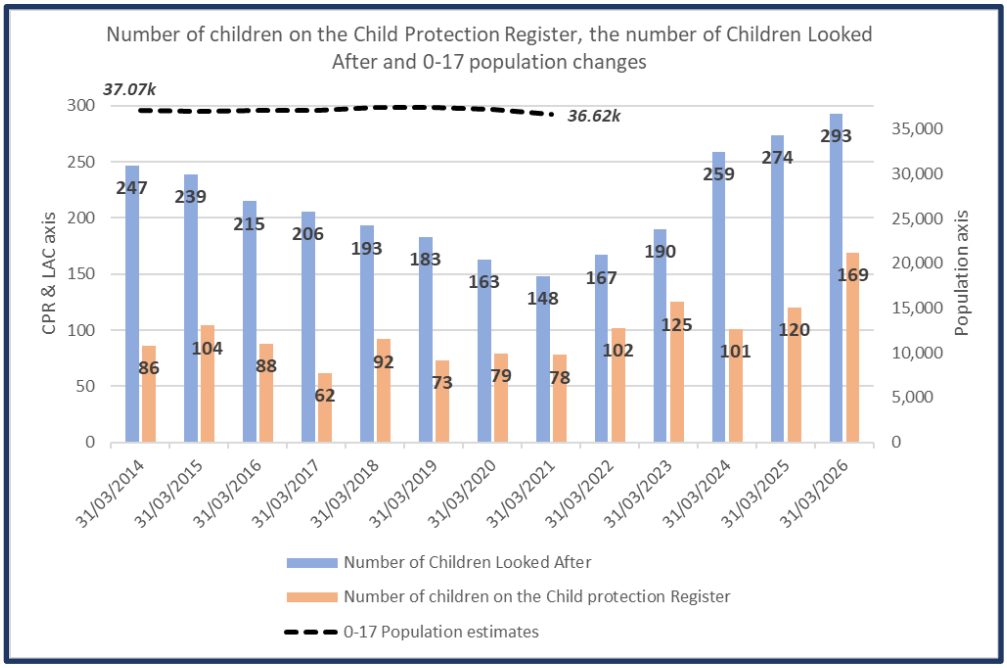
In respect of adults, during the months of October to December 2025, we noticed a number of packages that had terminated due to clients becoming deceased and decommissioning of package and services no longer required. There has been a slight decline in the number of Direct Payments. This is due to the location of the client within rural areas and the number of hours that are required in order to find a suitable Personal Assistant (PA). Alternatively where there has been large packages of a Direct Payment within the urban areas we have been more successful in recruiting PA's. The number of referrals for Direct Payments have been a steady flow, and capacity within the team in processing has been a challenge.



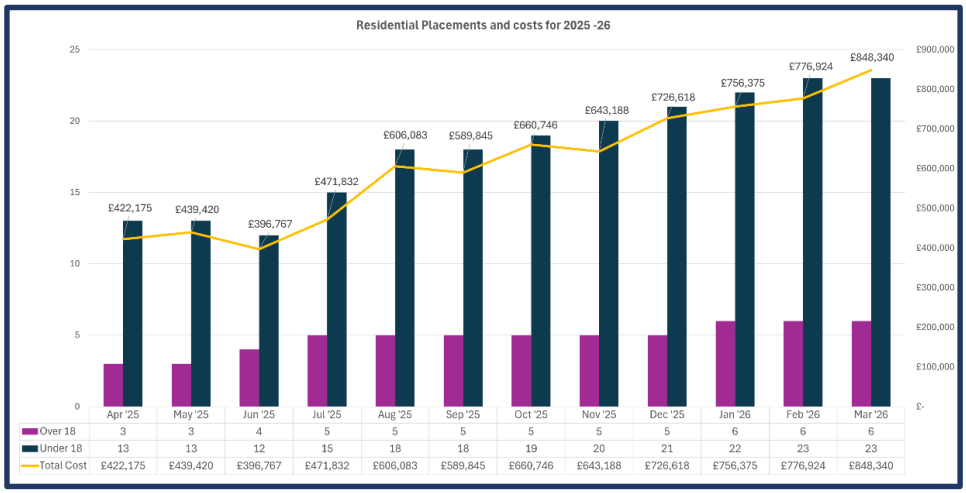
With regard to children, the data tells us that we are supporting more and more children with disabilities and their families with direct payments, enabling greater choice and flexibility in the care and support that they receive, improving independence and providing much-needed respite and support.

The graph below demonstrates the numbers of Children Looked After, and the numbers of Children on the Child Protection Register. There has been a steady and sustained

increase in the numbers of children looked after since 2021/22, and this is reflective of a national trend in Wales, as demand at the front door increases, complexity of need increases and so it follows that the number of children in care, or whose names are added to the child protection register also increases. It remains the case that Carmarthenshire has the lowest ratio of children in care per head of population in Wales.



The graph below evidences the number of residential and supported living placements that we provide and commission for children and young people. The monthly cost of providing these placements has doubled in-year and this is placing significant pressure on the directorate's budget. Placements for the most complex children and young people can cost in excess of £10,000/week, with some placements on rare occasions far exceeding that cost. Such placements usually sees the authority having to make short-term emergency arrangements, whilst deploying agency staff, all of which comes at an inflated cost to the directorate.



Summary of Feedback and Actions

In line with our commitment to transparency and accountability, we set out our key goals and objectives for 2024 to 2025. This section summarises the commitments made during the year and the progress achieved.

	We Said:		We Did:
C&BS	We will continue to work with housing and other partners to develop a range of accommodation offers to support people to live well, with models of care & support which has promoting independence & outcomes at its core.		In partnership with housing, care management and external care and support providers, we have developed 6 new properties which provide 36 units of accommodation. The implementation of the new framework for care and support has enabled providers to deliver outcome-focused and personalised services. The needs data within the accommodation plan has been updated to reflect new demand and emerging developments. Furthermore, the commissioning team has strengthened relationships with the Planning department to support a suitable pipeline of new properties, that aligns with the needs profile within Carmarthenshire's accommodation needs plan and the Market Stability Report for West Wales.
C&BS	We will actively contribute to the development of a regional carers strategy and associated local action plan of implementation		The Regional Carers Strategic Plan has been completed and published on the West Wales Regional Partnership Board website. Locally, each partner has developed an implementation and action plan to scope and measure activity to achieve the strategic priorities. Progress is captured routinely by the West Wales Carers Development Group which includes representation from CCC

			Commissioners, a representative from Care Management and the Carmarthenshire Carers Forum.
C&BS	We will actively contribute to the development of a prevention Strategy for Social Care by continued implementation of the third sector framework which has created five community hubs. This will include development of community transport.		The Strategy is completed and in the final stages of publication. The strategy reflects local arrangements in situ and development aspirations. The Community Preventative Services Steering group tracks progress and opportunities to achieve the strategic intentions at an operational level, with input from third sector partners, citizen representatives and stakeholders.
IS	To develop a single point of access for urgent care and crisis response, that will be available 7 days a week. (8am - 8pm)		There are some elements of services that are part of the single point of access that operate on a 7 day a week basis. Work is progressing, led by the Health Board to develop a fully operational, single point of access across 7 days a week. This will include an Advanced Paramedic Practitioner, Advanced Nurse Practitioners & some Therapy cover in addition to what is currently in existence. The full business case was presented to Public Health Board in early 2026 for consideration and the required investment was agreed to run these 7 day services.
IS	We will develop a robust Workforce Development Plan across Health and Social Care.		Workforce plans have been developed and are monitored by the services quarterly along with the business plan monitoring cycle. Further work will be done into 26/27 to consider the ongoing role of our Care Academi and to consider the challenges that lay ahead, enabling planning to take place to meet those workforce challenges.

ASC	We will increase the number of accommodation units by 15% within the next 12 months to meet our new demand and support people stepping down from residential care.		The Commissioning Team has worked closely with internal and external housing providers to develop properties in line with the needs identified within the accommodation plan, supporting people to step down from residential care. This collaborative approach resulted in 11 new units becoming available.
ASC	We will establish 6 new supported living facilities by the end of March 2026 providing additional accommodation, care and support for a further 25 people.		6 new properties have been developed which provide 36 units of accommodation. 3 of the properties are occupied with the remaining 3 properties due to be occupied as soon as assessments are completed.
ASC	We will grow a sustainable In-house Home Care Provision across population groups by recruiting and training 25 new home care workers by Sept 2025.		Since April 2025, we have recruited 55 new staff to work within our in-house home care service. Of these, 48 have commenced in post and 7 are currently going through pre-employment checks. 30 staff have left post in this time period. Therefore, there has been a net gain of 25 staff.

Key:

C&BS – Commissioning & Business Support
IS – Integrated Services
ASC – Adult Social Care

Review of Services Provided / Promoting and Improving the well-being of Those we Help

Adult Social Care

Within the Adult Social Care division, our vision is to enable people to live independent, fulfilling lives within their own communities. We strive to reduce reliance on residential care wherever possible, focusing instead on tailored support that empowers individuals to remain in their own homes. This approach reflects our commitment to dignity, choice, and inclusion. We are driving forward projects that strengthen community-based support and improve outcomes for people with learning disabilities and mental health needs. Through collaboration with housing, commissioning, and health partners, we have already developed innovative accommodation schemes and have an ambitious programme for the years ahead.

We recognise the challenges in domiciliary care and are committed to growing the workforce to ensure timely, safe support for vulnerable adults. This is central to reducing hospital delays and improving community safety.

Key Achievements in 2025/26

Mental Health Services

The Community Mental Health Service has embedded an open access Prevention and Wellbeing service, which provides early intervention and support to people. The service will be collaborating further with the NHS over the next year as they develop their open access model. Transition Social Workers are in place within the Community Mental Health Teams to improve the pathways for young people moving into adult mental health services. There is a well-staffed Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) team in place, which is moving into a new model of operation as an AMHP Hub.

Adult Social Care has a strong and well-established quality assurance framework to ensure services are safe, effective, and continuously improving. This includes regular audits of practice and casework, performance monitoring against statutory and local indicators, and thematic reviews to identify learning and areas for improvement. Quality assurance activity is supported by clear governance arrangements, with senior leadership oversight and routine reporting to management forums. Feedback from people who use services, carers, and partner agencies is actively gathered and used to inform service development, alongside learning from complaints, compliments, safeguarding activity, and external inspections. Together, these processes provide assurance that services remain person-centred, compliant with legislation, and focused on delivering positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

Suicide Prevention and Rapid Response

Adult Social Care has introduced a rapid response protocol for suspected suicide, ensuring immediate outreach and support for individuals and families that are impacted by suicide. The division leads regional collaboration on the rapid response protocol.

Funding is secured until March 2027 for a dedicated Suicide Prevention Coordinator to lead on Suicide Prevention work across the Local Authority. The Suicide Prevention Delivery Group is well established, and the division leads multi agency work in response to locations of concern and community support.

Safeguarding

The Adult Safeguarding team leads on an expanding range of responsibilities including Carmarthenshire's Adult Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS), and Carmarthenshire's Corporate Safeguarding arrangements. The service has significantly reduced the numbers of people waiting for a DoLS assessment this year and has improved safeguarding processes and increased the number of safeguarding referrals completed within 7 days, despite receiving increased numbers of referrals.

The team also lead Carmarthenshire's Statutory Channel arrangements, which are part of the UK Prevent Strategy (ensuring early multi agency support for individuals susceptible to being drawn into terrorism, and addressing radicalisation). The team makes a significant contribution to the work of the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Board and takes an active role in all its associated subgroups and workstreams, in some instances leading those groups.

Carmarthenshire established its Mid and West Wales Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Local Operational Group in 2024 to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling all forms of domestic abuse, and to provide support to survivors. Looking ahead the group will focus on developing a local delivery plan which will support the regional VAWDASV strategy.

0–25 Disability Service

The 0–25 Disability Service has a strong focus on prevention through early intervention, family support and approaches designed to reduce escalation into statutory services. Early help is central to the service's model, ensuring children and young people with disabilities, neurodivergence or complex needs receive timely, proportionate support. The Early Help Team, strengthened through the Neurodivergence (ND) Pathway Project, provides advice, targeted 1:1 support, group work and practical assistance to build family resilience, reduce isolation and prevent crises. The introduction of ND Intervention Workers and the rapid allocation of 40 individuals within the first month demonstrate proactive action to address backlogs and prevent delays that can worsen individual circumstances. This approach supports better outcomes by reducing the need for specialist education placements, lowering the risk of family breakdown and addressing needs earlier and more holistically.

Progression and Review Team

Over the past year, Adult Social Care in Carmarthenshire has strengthened the use of technology within existing care packages, to ensure support is proportionate, outcomes-focused and sustainable. The Progression & Review team is a small multi-disciplinary team who support with ensuring packages of care are appropriate and proportionate for service users, whilst maximising independence. The team focuses on improving service user outcomes through reviews, and by providing recommendations, whilst seeking to reduce costs.

Technology has been deliberately embedded as part of assessment, progression planning and review, rather than used in isolation, supporting a shift towards greater independence and a more accurate alignment of care with need. A targeted programme involving 15 individuals in supported living demonstrates the impact of this approach. An investment of approximately £15,000 in technology has delivered at least £120,000 in realised benefits, primarily through reduced reliance on paid care, fewer unnecessary routine and night-time visits and more responsive support arrangements.

In 2025/26 the team has supported 32 people to achieve personal outcomes, including:

- transitioning from residential care to supported living
- stepping down into independent living in their own homes
- reducing 1:1 hours, with 268 hours saved

Individuals have reported increased confidence, autonomy and reassurance, while care packages have moved away from static models towards progression-based support. This work provides clear evidence that combining technology with strengths-based reviewing and professional oversight can improve outcomes for individuals while delivering significant financial and system benefits.

The approach supports the Council's wider priorities around prevention, independence and effective use of resources, and provides a scalable model for future service development.

Investment in Carers

The service has a strong commitment to Carers, with teams achieving or working towards the Investment in Carers Awards, and Carers assessments being routinely offered. Every team now has at least one Carers Lead, responsible for championing carers' issues, cascading information, and ensuring teams remain responsive to carers' needs. These leads meet bi-monthly alongside representatives from the Health Board and the third sector, creating a robust multi-agency platform for improving unpaid carer support, strengthening consistency, and sharing best practice. Carers are routinely involved through both formal and informal engagement mechanisms, ensuring their voices influence strategic planning and frontline practice. Evidence highlights the use of carers' events, coffee mornings, and structured engagement forums, providing accessible opportunities for carers to share experiences, shape services, and contribute to solution-focused discussions.

Workforce Development

Adult Social Care is now in a strong position with regards to recruitment and retention across all teams, which is testament to the focus we give this through the Care Academi, 'Grow Your Own' programme, improved induction, ongoing professional development and ensuring a supportive culture in our teams. Whilst future projections of numbers of working-age adults may impact on the workforce pool, currently the service is in a good place in terms of its staffing vacancy rate.

Digital Transformation

The Social Work teams have worked with colleagues to implement new digital AI tools to improve record keeping and save professional time. Pilots of 'Magic Notes' and 'Sgript' have evidenced a 30% reduction in time taken to complete assessments, with a detailed evaluation of its benefits to staff underway. Time spent by staff on administration and record-keeping – while essential – is time spent not working directly with service users. Whilst AI promises to deliver significant efficiency savings, key for our social care workforce is its potential in improving the time we spend with our service users, building relationships and supporting positive outcomes.

West Wales Shared Lives (WWSL)

West Wales Shared Lives provides flexible, community-based support as an alternative to more traditional service models, contributing to both positive outcomes for individuals and wider system sustainability. The service is delivered via carers who are assessed and approved to provide a range of care and support options from their own homes.

During 2025, a review of Shared Lives carer fees, including board and lodge and management fees, was undertaken. Increases were implemented to better recognise the responsibilities of carers and to support the long-term sustainability of the scheme. The service identified considerable efficiencies through early intervention and creative use of Shared Lives provision. This enabled the prevention of more costly residential or supported living placements by offering appropriate alternative accommodation for individuals requiring long-term support.

WWSL also supported a number of emergency placements, managed flexibly to meet urgent need while maintaining a focus on positive and sustainable outcomes. Where appropriate, arrangements progressed into longer-term placements or supported individuals to return home or explore alternative options.

Quality Standards	This section demonstrates delivery against Quality Standards 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, with particularly strong evidence in relation to prevention, safeguarding, mental health, independence and community-based support. (Further detail regarding Quality Standards can be found in Appendix 1)

Integrated Services

Over the past year, Integrated Services has experienced a notable surge in demand for community services, accompanied by increasing case complexity, due to an ageing population with multiple health conditions. The challenge of supporting complex adults living with frailty, to maintain independence at home remains central to our approach. In response, we are committed to enhancing our Intake and Long-Term Assessment Model, focusing on reducing waiting times for social work assessments in both hospital and community settings. Prioritising home-based assessments and early discharge planning is expected to further decrease the number of people waiting for domiciliary care and reduce admissions to residential facilities.

Innovation continues to drive our efforts to manage demand, mitigate risks, and ensure the safety and sustainability of our services. Our integrated partnership between Carmarthenshire County Council, the Health Board, Delta Wellbeing, the Welsh Ambulance Service (WAST), and third sector partners is pivotal in developing both preventative and long-term community care solutions. Our approach actively contributes to a reduction in pressure on our hospitals and on WAST.

Key Achievements in 2025/26

Further development of our Home First Hub - our multi-disciplinary team supporting admission avoidance & early supported discharge – took place with the roll out of our ‘Virtual Ward’ in Carmarthenshire. We have established and matured the Virtual Ward model, enabling safe transfer of patients from acute hospitals and avoidance of admission via the WAST 999 ‘stack attack’ by providing community care. This has reduced the numbers of people waiting in hospital and avoided unnecessary admissions through proactive clinical monitoring and home-based care. This reduces the numbers who could de-condition following admission and lengthy stays, and who would thereafter require long term social care.

We have worked proactively with care homes to provide advice and guidance for residents who may experience a fall, ensuring Advance Care Plans are in place, to keep people at home where it is safe to do so and avoid conveyance to hospital.

We have developed our Home-Based Reablement and Trusted Assessor Programmes, by realigning resources to strengthen reablement services and deliver specialist training for new staff. We also introduced Trusted Assessor training for NHS staff, improving assessment efficiency and integration across health and social care.

We have transformed bed-based therapy provision at Amman Valley Hospital and Llandovery Cottage Hospital, reducing lengths of stays and improving recovery outcomes through integrated, therapy-led care.

We have expanded internal training pathways in social work via the Care Academi and Progression Framework, to address workforce shortages, improve retention, and create clear career progression, also deploying the grow your own model, and we currently have 8 students who we are funding to undertake a social work degree. The Care

Academi will be reviewed during 26/27 to ensure it remains an effective and financially sustainable programme for workforce development.

Our Releasing Time to Care Programme (RTTC) has released 1354 hours of domiciliary care back into the system by promoting independence and reducing reliance on care & support.

We have proactively influenced Welsh Government policy on Direct Payments for health and established strong governance frameworks through the Direct Payments Operations Group.

We have successfully reduced the numbers of people going into both long term and short term residential placements and supported them to remain independent and in their own homes and communities.

We have initiated a review of our Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) which is the front door to community services and we have commenced a re-design of the service. The focus will be on streamlining pathways and process to make access easier for the public and for professionals, whilst developing preventative content on our website. This will ensure our professional advisors are focused on providing advice and assistance, with information being far more readily available.

Our Integrated Community Equipment Service continues to deliver the actions identified from the transformation review. We have implemented 37 of the 67 actions so far, strengthening service resilience and alignment across the region. Our same/next day delivery project has enabled urgent equipment provision for palliative care, hospital admission avoidance, and discharge facilitation. With the assistance of our colleagues in the West Wales Care Partnership, we have been able to demonstrate how much cost is avoided by the equipment service, savings resources for the local authority, the health board and WAST.

We have successfully defined and agreed on the Living Well in Carmarthenshire 10-year prevention strategy[1], ensuring it addresses the needs of all age groups. Action plans and implementation groups will be developed to drive the ambitions set. This will be embedded into service delivery in partnership with the Health Board, third sector and the community.

The Visual Impairment Team continues to make significant strides in supporting individuals with visual impairments, despite maintaining a long waiting list for VI assessments. Notably, we have been successful in securing funding that allows us to purchase a wide range of life-enhancing equipment for those with VI. This includes innovative devices such as Meta Glasses, talking microwaves and Alexa units, all of which contribute greatly to improving independence and quality of life. These advancements emphasise our ongoing commitment to removing barriers and fostering accessibility within our community (see case study on Appendix 2). We have also invested in the team and have successfully appointed two trainee rehabilitation specialists.

[1] https://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=96459

Quality Standards	This section demonstrates delivery against Quality Standards 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, with particularly strong evidence in relation to prevention, safeguarding, mental health, independence and community-based support. (Further detail regarding Quality Standards can be found in Appendix 1)

Children and Families Services

Within Children and Families, we are focused upon ensuring that where safe to do so, children and young people remain living with their families and within their communities. Our department is committed to delivering high-quality services that support and empower families, ensuring that every child and young person can thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

Our business plans for the upcoming year will continue to place emphasis upon innovation and collaboration, and will prioritise early intervention, prevention, and family support. We recognise that timely support can significantly alter the trajectory of a child, young person and family's situation and outcomes. We will continue to collaborate closely with our partners both across the local authority and within the directorate, seeking out new opportunities to support families to stay together.

Key initiatives include:

- 'Growing our own' social care workforce as part of a longer-term plan to ensure that we have the right number of staff to support the increasing demand for services;
- Working to utilise digital solutions to support our staff to do the things that matter the most in supporting families;
- Working towards enhancing our assessment processes. This will support our ability to better identify the needs of children and families at the earliest stage.
- Expanding our range of support for families and further investing in training and development for our staff to ensure that the workforce feels supported and equipped to support families to overcome challenges and barriers.

We are also committed to listening to the voices of children and families, ensuring that their feedback informs our service delivery and improvement plans. By fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation, we aim to create a responsive and resilient service that can adapt to the evolving needs of our community.

Key Achievements during 2025-26

The past year has been marked by significant progress and innovation across our services, reflecting our unwavering commitment to improving outcomes for children, young people, and families. Through a combination of strategic initiatives, workforce development, and collaborative partnerships, we have strengthened our ability to deliver high-quality, person-centred support.
Our focus has included enhancing leadership capability and embedding best practice models that respond to the evolving needs of our communities. By prioritising early

intervention, workforce resilience and service transformation, we have continued to deliver measurable improvements that make a real difference.

We have:

- Maintained the top position in Wales for the lowest Children Looked After Population, which evidences our continued commitment to work with children and young people to manage risk and make changes so that children and young people can remain with their families.
- Achieved positive inspection results for Llys Caradog short breaks children's home, with high ratings for wellbeing, care and support and environment.
- Launched a Team Manager Development Programme, enhancing leadership skills and professional growth within the service.
- Realised efficiency savings in the Home Office budget, enabling better support for the UASC Team and young people.
- Seamlessly transitioned to the Eclipse electronic management system, improving information management and service delivery.
- Established the Early Help Service, strengthening partnerships and providing timely support to prevent escalation to statutory services.
- Developed practice guidance and delivered Trauma Recovery Model training to support effective work with teenagers.
- Expanded Supported Lodgings, creating nearly 30 placements to offer young people safe alternatives when they cannot remain with their families.
- Successfully rolled out the Flying Start, Phase 3 Childcare expansion, exceeding our target of 250 children accessing 12.5 hours childcare per week.
- Achieved positive inspection results for Hafan Children's Home with 'good' rating across all four inspection domains.

Commissioning

Key Achievements during 2025-26

Commissioning

Commissioning, business support and finance are central to the effective delivery of services across the Social Services and Housing Directorate, with a strong emphasis on prevention, early intervention and the development of active, connected and resourceful communities. This approach focuses on maximising people's independence, enabling individuals to do for themselves wherever and whenever possible. Where longer-term care is required, services are designed to ensure people have a greater voice, choice and control over how their needs are met.

In line with the National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support, we have implemented the new [2]Commissioning Standards Code of Practice into our practices within commissioning. National framework for commissioning care and support: code of practice | GOV.WALES

A requirement of the statutory Code is to report compliance within the Directors annual report. Carmarthenshire's commissioning team have completed their first self-assessment against the commissioning tool, in order to consider its achievements and to identify areas of further development. A training needs analysis has also been completed to ensure that all staff receive the appropriate training and guidance to support the implementation of the framework and its provisions.

We continue to work with housing and other partners to develop a range of supported accommodation that will enable people to live independently. Six new schemes offering a total of 32 units have been developed. We have also developed and implemented a new accommodation standards agreement which sets out expectations of landlords when providing accommodation for vulnerable adults.

We have undertaken a full commissioning review of housing related support services funded by Welsh Government Housing Support Grant (HSG). A new Housing Support Model has been developed which aligns with Carmarthenshire's Housing Support Programme Strategy and Rapid Rehousing Plan. A full tender exercise was completed, and a new contract and service specification has been implemented.

Further to the above, a commissioning review programme is underway for supported accommodation services that receive funding from the HSG. A project group is established and timescales for work have been agreed. This work aims to conclude in December 2026, with recommendations taken forward for the following financial year.

In line with our commitment to support and develop a diverse market, there has been considerable growth with the development of micro-care and social enterprises across the region. There are 165 micro-care services in the region, delivering over 3700 hours of support per week. These services enable people to access a wider choice in how their well-being needs are met. Furthermore, it is estimated that there is a cost avoidance of £299,187pa for Carmarthenshire.

We have contributed to the development of the prevention strategy. The strategy reflects current local arrangements and development aspirations. The Community Preventative Services Steering group tracks progress and opportunities to achieve the strategic intentions at an operational level, with input from third sector partners, citizen representatives and stakeholders. The work achieved during this process has enabled us to identify key priorities which are noted in the above section.

Building on the development of five virtual community hubs and our wider preventative work with the third sector, we have sourced additional funding opportunities to the value of £94,000 to meet emerging demand through our micro commissioning agenda. In addition to this, a grant allocation of £1,000,000 has been secured for community

[2] https://www.gov.wales/national-framework-commissioning-care-and-support-code-practice

transport in Carmarthenshire, with input from Dolan Teifi and partners of the Community Preventative Services. The following are additional services developed during 2025-2026:

- Suicide and Self-Harm Prevention Service – developed in line with the Welsh Government's Understanding: Suicide Prevention and Self-Harm Strategy for Wales (2025–2035), ensuring local delivery reflects national strategic priorities.
- Financial Wellbeing Support Service – which takes a coordinated approach to help individuals manage personal budgets, offering both immediate crisis-support and longer-term skills development to build confidence, resilience, and sustainable financial wellbeing.
- Positive Relationships Service – delivering conflict resolution and early intervention support to help citizens sustain their homes and routines, preventing crisis and disruption through practical guidance and mediation.
- Remodelled early intervention Community Home Support Services – Short term practical support to facilitate a smooth transition from hospital to home or to prevent a person from needing hospital admission and or escalation for statutory care.

We remain committed to ensuring that we develop our teams to ensure we have the right people with the right skills, also ensuring that staff feel supported in their role. A successful team activity was held earlier this year which provided an understanding of functions, roles and responsibilities across the department. Staff feedback was very positive. We have also reviewed our current management structure and implemented changes to ensure that areas of responsibilities align with the core activities within staff teams.

We have developed a ten-year sustainability plan for adult social care services in Carmarthenshire. The Sustainability Plan has been informed by the Population Needs Assessment (PNA) and Market Stability Report (MSR). The strategic plan aims to bring together a high-level supply & demand position statement in relation to the care and support for older people and working age adults. It considers our current supply and demand profile, outlines the challenges in meeting these demands, and the potential market risks, as well as outlining a range of proposals to mitigate market pressures. The market shaping proposals are intended to ensure we have sufficient supply as well as a balanced market: that is, that we have an appropriate balance of in-house and independent sector provision (both not-for-profit and for-profit), to meet our future demands, and to mitigate any risks of market-driven behaviour. We will be developing this plan to cover children and young people and will be refreshing the data within the plan during 2026/27.

With regard to fee rates and inflationary increases for 2026/27, we have engaged and consulted with the care and support sector in relation to inflationary pressures. Unit cost models have been developed for Older Peoples Care Homes, Domiciliary Care and Supported Living Services. Fees are reviewed annually. The unit cost models are utilised to capture inflationary changes (both up and down), with costs being updated based on known cost pressures, inflationary indices (e.g. CPI), occupancy rates etc. This exercise is undertaken with the sector and includes engagement to seek associated evidence, which is then subject to consultation across all the sectors.

Regional Commissioning

Part 10 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) requires Local Authorities to commission Independent Professional Advocacy and to promote access to a range of advocacy provision. Advocacy has an important role to play in relation to voice and control and underpins the wider requirements of the Act in terms of well-being, safeguarding and prevention. It can greatly assist people to express their views and make informed choices, thereby ensuring they have access to relevant services and that their legal and human rights are observed.

The strategy [3]Adult Advocacy Strategy – West Wales Regional Partnership Board (wwrpb.org.uk) identifies five key priority areas, work within the West Wales Advocacy Network has contributed to significant progress being made.

Notable highlights include:

- Clear established links between commissioners and providers, for example, through attendance at West Wales Advocacy Network meetings
- Regular production and consideration of Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) contract and commissioning data to inform improvements. This includes evaluation of user feedback and case studies
- Annual survey exercises to gauge improvements in collaborative commissioning
- A continued rolling programme of awareness raising sessions and briefings for staff to promote the 'active offer'
- The production of a self-advocacy toolkit as well as easy read in advance stages
- All advocacy providers in the region maintaining the Quality Performance Mark for advocacy services and ensuring their team members undertake the nationally accredited independent advocacy qualification.

Our next key priority will be to refresh the advocacy strategy and its associated priorities.

We have made a significant contribution to the [4] Regional Population Needs Assessment and [5] Market Stability Report (MSR) which have both been refreshed. These have informed our strategic priorities, and we are developing a commissioning data portal initially focused on older people's services to shape our future commissioning arrangements.

The commissioning portal will be developed to include working age adults and children and young people. We will use the portal to ensure our market intelligence and data is utilised, including, trend analysis data to inform our future commissioning decisions, both locally and across the West Wales region.

We have developed a regional career pathway for commissioners and secured Social Care Workforce Development Partnership (SCWDP) funding to implement a training programme aligned to an assessed set of development needs. The pathway has been

[3]https://wwrpb.org.uk/adult-advocacy-strategy/
[4] https://www.wwrpb-data.org.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/population-needs-assessment-revision-v2-final-v3-accessible-final.pdf
[5] https://wwrpb.org.uk/wwrpb-market-stability-report-2022/

well received, and we are actively supporting commissioners locally and across the region to develop their skills, knowledge and commissioning competence. Our next steps will be to progress areas of need which have been identified from a training needs analysis, and we will be prioritising in 2026/27.

The West Wales Regional Partnership Board has set out its strategic capital intentions to support this agenda ([6]Capital Strategy – West Wales Regional Partnership Board) which is a critical enabler to us achieving our ambitions to provide a range of accommodation needs to support people to live, and age well in Carmarthenshire. The Welsh Government has two main funding streams to support, regional to strategically shape the market for care and support. These are the Housing with Care Fund (HCF) and the Integrated Rebalancing Care Fund (IRCF).

Through Welsh Government's HCF and IRCF funding, our Rebalancing Programme is supporting the development of in-house care homes, both Plas y Bryn - which will be a dual registered care home - and Pentre Awel - which will see the development of residential care beds, extra care, supported and assisted living accommodation developments - strengthening market resilience and providing a range of accommodation options. Plas Y Bryn will become the first Local Authority run nursing home in Wales. Planning consent has been secured and construction will commence in 2026 with a view to the home opening in 2028 following an 18-month construction programme. We also have an ambitious programme to reduce our reliance on residential care and promote more independent living models for working age adults.

A regional commissioning programme is underway to develop an integrated framework for adult (18-64) care homes. This is a clear example of commissioners taking a collaborative approach to commissioning with our other local authority and health partners. This builds on successful work to date including the development of a Pre-Placement Agreement (PPA) for older peoples care homes. The has been coproduced with Care Forum Wales, our providers and our partners, and will provide a consistent set of terms and conditions, service specification and quality assurance framework across the region. The next steps will be to consult on the final agreement with a view to implementation early into 2026/27 financial year.

We have actively contributed to the development of a Regional Carers Strategic Plan which is published on the West Wales Regional Partnership Board website [7](West Wales Strategic Plan for Unpaid Carers 2025 – 2030 – West Wales Regional Partnership Board). Locally, each partner has developed an implementation and action plan to scope and measure activity to achieve the strategic priorities. Progress is captured routinely by the West Wales Carers Development Group which includes representation from CCC Commissioners, a representative from Care Management and the Carmarthenshire Carers Forum. The plan has shaped the design and implementation of a range of support services funded through the Regional Integration Fund and Unpaid Carers 'Amser' Fund.

[6] https://wwrpb.org.uk/capital-strategy/
[7] https://wwrpb.org.uk/west-wales-strategic-plan-for-unpaid-carers-2025-2030/

Following the opening of Canolfan Pentre Awel in Llanelli in October 2025 - an integrated hub for health, wellbeing, education, business, innovation and research- work has commenced on further scoping of the Assisted Living elements of the wider Pentre Awel project. Plans include an Assisted Living complex comprising a nursing home, rehabilitation beds, extra care and assisted living flats to rent and to buy. Concept designs have been drafted and work has now started to progress the designs and explore feasibility further.

Also, following securing of funding under the Welsh Government IRCF programme, the Council is redeveloping the former Debenhams site in St Catherine's Walk Carmarthen into an integrated health and wellbeing hub. The development, now known as Atriwm, is currently under construction and due to open to the public in early 2027.

Unpaid carers

There are an estimated 21,000 unpaid carers in Carmarthenshire. While caring can be deeply rewarding, it can also be physically and emotionally demanding. Carers can experience exhaustion, isolation, and financial strain. Many people do not identify themselves as "unpaid carers". They see themselves simply as a partner, parent, sibling, friend doing what needs to be done. This can create a barrier to accessing help, as individuals may not realise that support is available to them in their own right. Navigating health and social care systems, managing reduced income, and balancing competing responsibilities can become overwhelming without the right advice and early intervention. To address this, Carmarthenshire County Council commissions a broad range of services to support unpaid carers, recognising both the value of their contribution and the pressures they face. These include:

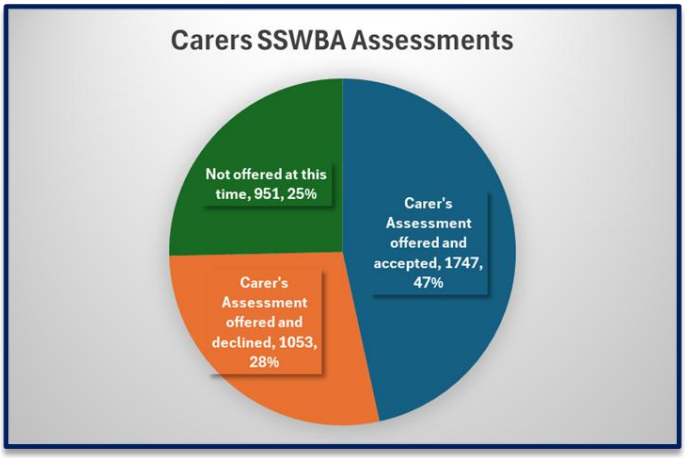
- Overnight stay opportunities for the carer and the cared for at Y Caban, providing a planned short break in a supportive setting.
- 'People Speak Up' home delivery service offering meaningful activities such as creative writing, storytelling, art and crafts, delivered within the home. This supports both carers and those they care for, helping to reduce anxiety, loneliness, and social isolation.
- Passport to Leisure, enabling unpaid carers to access exercise and leisure facilities to support their own physical and mental well-being.
- Targeted support for carers of individuals affected by substance misuse, delivered in conjunction with Dyfed Drug and Alcohol service (DDAS), recognising the additional complexity and emotional strain associated with this role.
- Short breaks funded through Amser, offering carers time away from their caring responsibilities to rest and recharge, via Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales (CTCWW).
- Carers Exceptional Circumstances Direct Payments, providing flexible financial support where unique or urgent needs arise. (carers assessment required by social work team)

- The Financial Well-being Support Service, helping carers to access the correct benefits, maximise income and manage financial pressures.
- Information and support services via Adferiad, offering timely information, practical guidance and personalised support to help them understand their rights, access appropriate services and navigate the system. The service plays a key role in early intervention, ensuring carers receive the right support at the right time, helping to prevent escalation of need and reduce longer-term crisis interventions.
- Targeted financial support to unpaid carers, improving or enhancing the caring environment to promote safe and suitable caring environments (Housing with Care fund)

Alongside commissioned provision, carers are supported through co-production and engagement activity. Carers' forums provide opportunities for individuals to share their experiences, influence service development and ensure that their voices are heard within strategic planning. Support for young carers is also a key priority with 30% of available grant funding received by Adult Commissioning allocated to Children's Services to strengthen provision for young carers. This includes targeted support and social opportunities such as the Moments Club, which promotes social interaction and reduces isolation for young people with caring responsibilities or complex needs within their families.

In addition, carers continue to benefit from wider provision delivered by 3rd sector partners in Carmarthenshire, like Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales, the Carers Information and Support Service, the Emergency Card scheme and access to Carer's Assessments.

Collectively, this range of services reflects a strong commitment to recognising and sustaining unpaid carers. However, given the scale of caring across the county and the increasing complexity of need, continued focus on early identification, partnership working and accessible support remains essential to ensure carers feel valued, supported, and able to maintain their own well-being alongside their caring role.



Delta Wellbeing

Delta Wellbeing continues to strengthen its role as a trusted provider of preventative and responsive services. The focus remains on enabling independence, reducing avoidable demand on statutory services, and delivering measurable social and financial return for partners and communities.

Delta's CONNECT service has continued to provide a single, accessible route for residents to receive timely advice, reassurance and practical support, helping individuals to remain safe, independent and well at home. It delivers effective early intervention by addressing concerns before they escalate into crises requiring statutory health or social care responses. Support includes technology enabled care packages, wellbeing checks and response service, as well as signposting and coordination with wider services, ensuring individuals receive the right help at the right time.

The Response Service plays a vital role in preventing unnecessary hospital attendances and admissions, providing timely, on-the-ground support to individuals experiencing non-medical incidents, particularly falls. The team has attended a total of 21,836 callouts since April 2022, including 8,020 falls, with only 11% escalated to emergency services. This compares to pre-CONNECT escalation rates of approximately 47% for falls, demonstrating a substantial reduction in pressure on ambulance services, emergency departments and acute care.

The hospital-based Blue Army provides vital support, supporting patient flow, preventing delayed discharges and helping individuals transition safely from hospital back into the community. It directly contributes to earlier discharge outcomes, on average 4 days earlier than those without equivalent support. Figures show a total of 43,470 hospital bed days avoided, as well as an estimated 265,936 care hours avoided on discharge, further reducing demand on statutory services.

The Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) service also continues to demonstrate strong preventative impact, with over 40% of individuals supported requiring no further statutory intervention following initial contact.

With grant funding coming to an end in March 2027, Delta Wellbeing is moving towards a more sustainable and flexible delivery model. Delta Direct builds on the success of CONNECT and will enable support to be shaped around individual circumstances and levels of need, as well as changing demands over time and local priorities. Its aim is to maximise impact and value, ensuring people receive appropriate support while maintaining cost-effectiveness and adaptability.

Case Study

Delta Wellbeing Case Study

S and W story illustrates how Delta CONNECT provides vital support for people caring for loved ones with dementia, enabling improved safety and wellbeing.

- **Challenges of dementia care:** Wyn, living with Parkinson's disease dementia, would often leave the house unexpectedly, causing distress for S who had to search for him and involve the police.
- **Delta CONNECT support features:** The service includes sensors on doors, a red button lifeline, a pendant, a response team, and monthly wellbeing calls to assist both W and S.
- **Benefits for the carer:** S values the support as it allows her to continue working and provides emotional relief through regular wellbeing calls with a supportive contact named T.
- **Emergency response and respite care:** The response team is familiar with W, providing prompt help when he falls, and they encourage S to take breaks to avoid burnout, contributing to their positive relationship.

"Having this help means I can still work," said S. I'm a lunchtime supervisor at a local primary school and a cleaner at a secondary school. Work for me is a release. If you have a bad day, especially with the dementia side of things, you have that bit of independence and you're back being yourself."

*"**Calm and understanding** — it makes such a difference in stressful moments."*

*"Thank you for helping us keep our mum **safe and independent** — it meant so much to her and to us."*

*"I really looked forward to the calls — they **cheered me up** and made such a difference."*

The call handler was **empathetic, kind, and considerate** — it was really reassuring to listen to."

"You have made a huge difference to her life and recovery."

Divisional Business Support Unit (BSU)

During 2025/26, the Divisional Business Support service successfully delivered the final phase of its comprehensive restructure, marking a significant milestone in our journey towards a next-generation business support service. This restructure was designed to achieve substantial cost savings—realising an annual saving of approximately £90,000—primarily through a reduction in posts and more efficient use of resources, while ensuring no redundancies for existing staff. The new structure introduces clearer management lines, with dedicated team leaders for each operational area, and creates a more agile, digitally skilled workforce. It also enhances career progression opportunities, with new senior and apprenticeships, supporting both retention and talent growth within the team.

Reducing Workload and Backlogs in High-Demand Areas

The BSU's support for the IAA and Delta teams has been instrumental in reducing backlogs in the IAA mailbox by supporting triaging and directing referrals/emails to the right teams.

Critical Support in High-Risk Areas

In Adult Social Care, particularly in DoLS, safeguarding, and Mental Health, the BSU's work is highly valued and regularly praised by senior managers. Our team ensures statutory deadlines are met, accurate data is reported, and frontline staff are able to concentrate on complex, high-risk casework. This support is fundamental to legal compliance, operational continuity, and the protection of vulnerable adults.

Staff Induction

The Executive Support team has delivered a highly successful staff induction event, which have received excellent feedback from new starters. These inductions have helped new staff gain better understanding of the department and feel connected to the organisation, fostering a positive workplace culture.

Digital Champions

BSU staff across all teams have embraced the role of digital champions, supporting colleagues with digital systems, data input, reporting, and training. This has driven service improvement, modernisation, and greater confidence in the use of technology throughout the organisation.

Finance Team

The finance team has achieved a wide range of improvements, including meeting all 2025/26 efficiency targets and contributing to wider directorate savings, such as supporting fee negotiations with the adult residential care sector.

The successful implementation of the new Charging Policy has generated additional income to help stabilise the social care budget.

Significant digital and process enhancements were delivered, including rolling out Govmail to reduce printing and postage costs, trialling an online Declaration of Means form to provide a more secure and efficient way for service users to submit financial information, and developing an RPA solution for four-weekly residential invoicing to free staff capacity and strengthen debt recovery.

The team has also strengthened governance and financial controls by implementing a more robust process for Additional Cost Contributions in older people's residential care and improving debt recovery rates through the newly established Debt Recovery Team, which works closely with Legal to secure outstanding debts.

Operational improvements include streamlining payment processes within the Payments Team, progressing the transfer of Shared Lives payments into CareFirst, and completing a full re-tender of Public Health funerals to ensure dignified services at the agreed cost.

In addition, the introduction of a pilot pre-paid card scheme for clients under Appointeeship has replaced the previous petty cash system, improving security, compliance with Financial Regulations, and clients' independence while enabling better oversight of spending.

Quality Standards	This section supports delivery of the Quality Standards by strengthening governance, safeguarding, financial resilience and system efficiency. In particular, it contributes to Quality Standards 1, 3 and 6 by enabling timely, lawful and sustainable services, while supporting Quality Standard 2 through improved access, responsiveness and prevention. (Further detail regarding Quality Standards can be found in Appendix 1)

Performance and Digital Transformation

Performance and Digital Transformation plays a central enabling role across Social Services, providing the Director and services with strong performance management, high-quality data and insight, and leadership on digital change that directly supports service delivery, assurance and improvement.

Throughout the year, the team has supported the directorate to meet statutory and corporate requirements, including performance returns, the delivery of the Director's Annual Report, self-assessment processes and inspection readiness. The service has coordinated business planning and risk management activity, ensuring a clear line of sight between strategic priorities, operational delivery and performance assurance. The performance framework has been strengthened to provide robust, timely oversight, enabling leaders to identify risk, target support and focus on improvement.

Alongside this, the team has driven practical digital transformation, working closely with services to design and implement systems and data solutions that reduce administrative burden, strengthen governance and improve decision-making.

This integrated approach ensures that performance information is accessible, timely and meaningful, and that digital developments are clearly linked to service improvement, workforce capacity and better outcomes.

Over the past year, the team has delivered significant progress, including:

- Building a skilled and resilient Performance and Digital Transformation team, strengthening project, data and analytical capacity to better support services.
- Implementing the Eclipse system across Children's and Adult Services, improving data quality, reporting capability and statutory compliance.
- Delivering a strengthened performance framework, supporting effective scrutiny, assurance and informed leadership decision-making.
- Introducing and embedding digital tools such as Magic Notes and Sgript, reducing administrative burden, improving recording quality and supporting workforce capacity.
- Leading and progressing 'Safeguarding LINC' which is a multi-agency safeguarding initiative that securely brings together safeguarding relevant information from statutory partners to provide a timely, child focused view of risk, support proactive alerts, and enable strategic analysis to strengthen safeguarding decision making.
- Improving complaints handling and supporting key strategic and operational boards, ensuring performance insight informs service improvement and governance.

A short video clip was produced to capture staff feedback and experiences of using Magic Notes within their roles.

Priorities for 2026/27

Our focus for the year ahead:

- **Performance:** Enhance dashboards, introduce Statistical Processing Charts that will support performance improvement, meet statutory deadlines for complaints and performance reporting.
- **Systems:** Review systems and platforms, deliver the CX Housing system and Eclipse Financial system, deliver Safeguarding Linc Phase 1 and maintain strong data governance.
- **Projects:** Deliver priority projects, support digital pilots and strengthen project management tools.

This plan positions us to drive service improvement, optimise systems, and embed innovation across the organisation.

Quality Standards	As an enabling function, Performance and Digital Transformation underpins delivery of the Quality Standards by strengthening safeguarding, governance, financial sustainability and system responsiveness. In particular, it supports Quality Standards 1, 3 and 6, while enabling improved prevention and risk management in support of Quality Standard 2. (Further detail regarding Quality Standards can be found in Appendix 1)

Mwy Na Geiriau / The More Than Just Words Framework

The More than Just Words Framework is a Welsh Government strategic plan designed to mainstream the Welsh language into health, social services, and social care across Wales. Recent iterations set out legal and policy obligations under the Welsh Language Standards and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

Key requirements include:

- Appointment of a senior officer as Welsh Language Champion
- Mapping and auditing Welsh language service provision
- Recording language needs and staff skills
- Making the ‘Active Offer’ of Welsh language services. The 'Active Offer' concept is a key component of the "More than Just Words" Framework developed by the Welsh Government. It refers to the proactive provision of Welsh language services, ensuring that individuals are offered services in Welsh without having to request them.

The framework is crucial for ensuring that individuals receive person-centred care that respects their linguistic needs. It recognises that an individual's language can significantly impact the quality of care, especially during vulnerable times when the individual may be experiencing emotional distress. By fostering a bilingual health and social care system, the framework aims to improve overall service delivery and outcomes for Welsh speakers.

Our Work So Far in Carmarthenshire

Governance and Leadership: As a keen learner of Welsh, the Director has agreed to become the Welsh Language Champion and will also Chair the Departmental Welsh Language Board to oversee the implementation of a renewed approach to learning and will enhance the use of the Welsh language in the directorate in 2026/27.

Skills and Capacity Mapping: Initial work has been undertaken to capture staff Welsh language skills and community profiles. However, recent data (January 2026) demonstrates that gaps still remain in our data. We will ensure that this dataset is refined and updated.

Active Offer: Services have been encouraged to provide Welsh language options proactively, aligning with the framework's principles.

Policy Integration: Welsh language considerations embedded in workforce and service planning. The Language has also been integrated into client management systems and client assessments.

Key Recommendations

- Reconvene Internal Group: Ensure the group meets regularly and reports back to DMT to maintain oversight and accountability.
- Workforce Skills Audit: Undertake a comprehensive review of staff Welsh language skills using ResourceLink data to identify gaps and opportunities.
- Training and Development: Map current training opportunities, identify new programmes, and develop a strategy to promote Welsh language training across the department.
- Monitoring and Reporting: Implement a structured reporting mechanism to track progress against framework objectives and share updates with DMT quarterly.
- Develop a communications plan to promote training opportunities and reinforce the Active Offer principle across the Department.
- Provide the 'Leading in a Bilingual Country' development programme to DMT and all senior managers.

What People Say / How are People Shaping Our Services

This section outlines the quality and impact of Carmarthenshire County Council's services, supported by independent inspection findings, service-user feedback, and awards achieved by staff and services. Inspection and assurance activity provides strong external validation of effective leadership, person-centred practice, and positive outcomes.

Inspection and Reviews Feedback

As part of its regulatory role, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) undertakes inspections and improvement checks each year to ensure health and social care services deliver safe, high-quality support that promotes people's wellbeing. This includes joint inspections with Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW), where services span both health and social care. During 2025–26, five inspections were completed across our services and the results are below:

Adult Social Care

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection

In house Domiciliary Care, July 2025

Carmarthenshire County Council's In-House Domiciliary Service provides support to people who need assistance to live independently in their own homes. The service provides both long term care and support in the community and within two Extra Care Schemes, a short term Reablement service and an integrated Health and Social Care Home First Service.

A Care Inspectorate Wales inspection carried out in **July 2025** found that the service was performing at an **excellent** level across all inspected domains.

Wellbeing - **Excellent**
People's views and preferences are actively sought, respected and acted upon. People are protected from harm by highly dedicated and comprehensively trained and well supported staff teams.

Care and Support - **Excellent**
People are at the heart of a high quality and innovative service. There is exceptional collaborative working with a range of multi-disciplinary professionals to achieve the best possible outcomes for people.

Leadership and Management - **Excellent**
The service is led by an inspirational Responsible Individual [RI] and management team who are greatly respected by staff and continuously strive to improve the services provided."

Services users said:

I feel safe with the carers calling, they are trustworthy. They are very gentle with my personal care and respect my dignity. They always knock on the front door before entering my flat.

"I have no complaints at all, if I did, I would speak to one of the carers or seniors and I know they will sort things out, I have no concerns at all. If I did, I would speak to one of the managers and we have absolutely no concerns at all. I know if we did, they would be listened to and acted on

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Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – Tir Einon, January 2026

Tir Einon is a small care home on the outskirts of Llanelli town that offers short stay support for adults with a learning disability.

The inspection found the service to be performing strongly across all domains, with three areas rated Excellent and the environment rated Good.

Well-being – Excellent
People are treated with dignity and respect and are supported to identify and achieve their health and well-being outcomes. Individuals have choice and control over their day-to-day lives and are actively involved in decisions that affect them. People feel safe, are protected from abuse and neglect, and benefit from highly effective risk management arrangements. The service promotes independence, meaningful experiences and strong relationships with staff and peers.

Care and Support – Excellent
People receive high-quality, personalised care from a skilled and passionate staff team. The service undertakes comprehensive assessments and works closely with other professionals to ensure care is well planned and responsive. Care planning is creative and outcome-focused, empowering people to achieve new goals. Communication is a particular strength, with a range of accessible methods used. Medication management, infection prevention and hygiene practices are all delivered in line with national guidance.

Environment – Good
The environment is welcoming, vibrant and homely, supporting people to feel comfortable and relaxed during their stay. Communal and private spaces promote independence, dignity and choice. The building is safe, well maintained and accessible, with effective risk management and security arrangements in place. Outdoor spaces and adapted equipment further support people's wellbeing and enjoyment.

Leadership and Management – Excellent
The service benefits from strong leadership and effective management oversight. The Responsible Individual is well known, visits regularly and actively seeks feedback from people and staff. Robust audit and quality assurance processes inform continuous improvement. Staff feel well supported through regular supervision, training and development opportunities, and there is a positive culture focused on delivering excellent, person-centred care.

Joint HIW and CIW Assurance Check

Learning Disability Services – November 2025

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) concluded a joint assurance check of Carmarthenshire Learning Disability Services in November 2025.

They said:

- CCC and HDUHB staff say Carmarthenshire is a good place to work.
- Practitioners across health and social care are confident they have access to appropriate training.
- Many people say practitioners are helpful, friendly, supportive and provide personalised support.
- Staff consider people's communication needs and promote the active offer of the Welsh language.
- There are examples of people's language needs being accommodated with interpretation being used.
- At an operational level, people are included in decision-making, and their preferences are respected.

Children and Family Servies

Yr Hafan - February 2026

Yr Hafan Children's Home provides a safe and supportive environment for up to four children.

Well-being – Good
Children experience positive well-being in a safe and supportive environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. They feel listened to, are supported to make choices about their daily lives, and develop trusting relationships with care staff. Children are encouraged to engage in education, build life skills and take part in activities that reflect their interests. Safeguarding arrangements are effective, and the home provides a comfortable setting where children feel settled and supported to achieve positive outcomes.

Care and Support – Good

Children receive good quality care and support from staff who know them well and understand their individual needs and routines. Care is guided by strengths-based, child-centred plans that are regularly reviewed, with support delivered using trauma-informed and positive behaviour approaches. Children are supported to attend education, build independence and maintain important relationships, with staff working closely with families and professionals. Health needs, including medication, are managed safely and effectively, and children report feeling cared for, respected and supported, contributing to positive progress and stable care experiences.

Environment – Good

The environment provides a safe, secure and welcoming setting that supports children's well-being and daily routines. Purpose-built accommodation offers a range of communal and private spaces, enabling children to socialise, spend time alone and personalise their bedrooms. Health and safety arrangements are well managed, with regular checks and prompt maintenance contributing to a safe living environment. While some specialist design features reflect the home's crisis-intervention purpose, staff use the space sensitively to create a child-centred atmosphere. Outdoor areas further enhance well-being, offering opportunities for play, fresh air and structured activities, with ongoing improvements demonstrating a commitment to maintaining a positive living environment.

Leadership and Management – Good

Effective leadership and management support children to experience positive, consistent care. Leaders foster a supportive culture where staff feel valued, well-guided and confident in their roles, contributing to stable relationships and good-quality support for children. Governance and oversight arrangements are robust, with regular monitoring, quality reviews and CIW notifications used to drive continuous improvement. Staffing and training arrangements are well managed, and strong communication with professionals, children and staff helps ensure care is safe, coordinated and responsive to children's needs.

Llys Caradog - July 2025

Llys Caradog provides care and support for children with learning disabilities, offering personal care within a registered care home setting. The home is registered for up to five children.

Well-being – Good

Children are supported to achieve positive well-being outcomes through compassionate, kind, and caring staff relationships. They are given clear information about the service in accessible formats, with further development planned to enhance understanding. Children are offered meaningful choices in leisure activities and supported to develop independence, including daily living skills. Healthy, balanced meals are provided with flexibility to meet individual preferences and communication needs. Strong support is in place for children's education, health, and development, including transport, Personal Education Plans, and access to healthcare. Families provided positive feedback about the quality of care, and the service offers support through the medium of Welsh where preferred.

Care and Support – Good

The provider completes thorough assessments to identify wellbeing outcomes, with personalised plans written in the child's voice and regularly reviewed. Risks are well managed, daily records maintained, and consistent support is now in place, addressing previous inspection requirements. Staff demonstrate strong understanding of children's needs, safeguarding responsibilities and medication is safely managed by trained staff.

Environment – Good

The service provides a comfortable, welcoming, and well-equipped environment where children feel at home. Bedrooms are personalised and accessible, with shared spaces offering a range of activities to support play, relaxation, and sensory needs. The kitchen is clean and organised, with balanced menus shaped by children's preferences, and outdoor areas provide opportunities for play and social interaction. Health and safety arrangements are robust, with up-to-date servicing, fire safety measures, and clear evacuation plans in place. A maintenance system is used to monitor the condition of the property, with some redecoration identified and scheduled for completion.

Leadership and Management – Good

The Statement of Purpose has been updated to reflect current service delivery, addressing a previous inspection requirement. However, emergency placements have reduced short-break availability, impacting some children and families. Governance and oversight arrangements are effective, with regular RI visits informing improvement. Staffing arrangements are largely strong, though some training requires strengthening. Feedback about staff commitment is positive, but around half of families reported difficulties due to the lack of overnight short breaks.

Complaints and Compliments

Complaints are a very important source of intelligence as to how our services are delivering for the people of Carmarthenshire, as crucially they help to expose those areas of our work where we may need to improve. Our directorate is one that under my leadership will demonstrate an ethos of continuous learning and transparency, both crucial elements of a service that works with members of the public, often at times of great difficulty and sensitivity for them. Currently our process of managing complaints is not consistent across adults and children's services, and this is reflected in the performance data that follows. As a result of this I have asked our colleagues in internal audit to include complaints as a specific area of audit activity on their plan for 26/27, thereby affording us the opportunity to understand how we can improve in this critical area of work. How we manage our complaints says a lot about how we respect our customers, and also says a lot about our willingness to be held accountable for what we do. My ethos in this regard is clear: we say sorry where we get something wrong and we do everything we can to put it right and prevent similar mistakes being made in the future.

Similarly, compliments that we receive provide important information about what we are getting right and therefore what we should continue doing, and, where opportunity allows, to expand the application of complimented activity more widely across the service. Since beginning in this role, I have requested that all formal and informal compliments are sent to me regardless of their origin and I have been humbled by the level of commitment and compassion from staff in all areas. It is vital that if staff are to feel valued in their work, that we acknowledge and recognise when they have gone above and beyond in their work, in support of our residents.

Adult Services Compliments

Compliments received
152

Top 3 Areas

- 28 System Flow and Urgent Care
- 27 Long Term Care
- 24 Prevention and Wellbeing

Adult Services Complaints

Complaints received
62

- 48 Stage 1
- 14 Stage 2
- 65 Redirect/NFA/On Hold

1 complaint was accepted outside the 12 months timescale

1 was declined

7 complaints went to the Ombudsman
0 Accepted
5 Declined
2 Early Resolution

Stage 1

Nature of Complaint - Top 3

- 16 Quality of service
- 15 Lack/Delay of service
- 7 Financial matters

Acknowledged within timescale

90%

Responded to within timescale

79% Statutory | Corporate 100%

Stage 2

Nature of Complaint - Top 3

- 8 Quality of Service
- 3 Process of assessment/intervention
- 2 Financial matters
- 2 Lack/Delay of service
- 2 Staff conduct

- 6 Upheld
- 7 Not Upheld

100% Responded to within **6** Months

Training

- 4 Training sessions delivered
- 39 Staff attended

Examples of Compliments from Adult Social Care

"She stated the delivery driver went above and beyond and helped her to change a light bulb and stated both times he visited he was excellent"

"I want to sincerely thank you for the compassionate & considerate approach you have shown throughout this difficult time. Your empathy & professionalism in your dealings with both us made a real difference, and for that, I am truly grateful."

"Just a note to thank you for the support you gave to enable mum to continue living independently in her own home.

I've had contact with several of your staff over the years and I've always been impressed with the humanity with which you strove to provide the support needed, against the need to manage expenditure prudently.

Few people reach 103 and fewer of them in their own home. It would have been impossible without the package of support coordinated by yourselves."

"I too must also add how much it has been a pleasure meeting and working with you. You have been most approachable and friendly as a person, and thoroughly professional in your knowledge and advice about help and procedures. In what is essentially a sad situation requiring solutions that I have not been able to navigate alone, I have deeply appreciated your help and support. From a personal perspective, it is a shame our paths may not cross again but I'm glad they have this far."

Fel teulu, hoffem ddiolch i ti am yr holl help a chyngor y gwnes ti ei roi I ni I cael y gofal gorau I mam am y dyfodol.

Doich hefyd am ymweld o mam tra roedd yn ysbyty. Fi'n gwybod fod mam wedi joio gweld wyneb cyfarwydd yn enwedig gan ei bod heb dy weld ti ers llawer dydd. Diolch"

Children and Families Compliments

Compliments received
10

Top 3 Areas

- 4 Support and Safeguarding
- 3 Early Years and Commissioning
- 2 Family Support and Resources

Children and Families Complaints

Complaints received
70

- 56 Stage 1
- 14 Stage 2
- 54 Redirect/NFA/On Hold

2 complaints were accepted outside the 12 months timescale

1 was declined

16 complaints went to the Ombudsman
1 Accepted - Upheld
8 Declined
4 Early resolution
3 Matters ongoing

Stage 1

Nature of Complaint - Top 3

- 18 Staff conduct
- 9 Lack/Delay of service
- 8 Lack of info/communication

Acknowledged within timescale

89%

Responded to within timescale

48% Statutory | Corporate 75%

Stage 2

Nature of Complaint - Top 3

- 6 Staff conduct
- 5 Quality of service
- 2 Issues with information recorded / Not following due process

Stage 2 Concluded

11	Statutory	Corporate	5
3	Upheld		3
8	Not Upheld		2
91%	Responded to within **6** Months		60%

Examples of Compliments from Children and Family Services

"I am writing to formally submit a compliment regarding the support provided by the social worker to my grandson and our family during a time that was extremely upsetting and difficult to navigate. In particular, I would like to recognise the guidance and care we received throughout the Special Guardianship Order (SGO) process. This was a very challenging and emotional time for us all, and the process itself was not always easy to navigate due to the intrusive nature of this assessment. However, the social worker supported us with patience, professionalism, and genuine compassion every step of the way. She took the time to explain procedures clearly, listened to our concerns, and ensured that we felt supported. Her reassurance and commitment made a significant difference to our family during what was an overwhelming experience. Most importantly, the support provided resulted in the right outcome for my grandson, and for that we are deeply grateful. It is clear that she is dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for the children and families she works with. We would also like to take this opportunity to wish her a successful career. We have no doubt that she will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of many young people and families in the future

"We just wanted to take a moment to thank you and your team for all the support you have given us throughout this journey. We are so grateful for the trust you have placed in us, and for giving us the privilege of welcoming [the children] into our family. We truly appreciate the care, guidance, and dedication you and your colleagues have shown every step of the way. It means a great deal to us to know that you believed in us and supported us in this process, and we feel incredibly fortunate to be able to provide a loving and secure home for the children.
With heartfelt thanks"

"I am very proud of myself! thank you for the opportunity and for supporting me throughout. I haven't felt this sense of achievement in a long time and i think i really needed it. Just wanted to say thank you, you have been my anchor when I've needed you and I'll forever be thankful for you and the opportunities you've given me and my children xxx"

The child said that the social worker "seems to really understand" and he can "actually talk to him and be honest with him." He also mentioned that because of his past involvement with social worker, he felt like he couldn't be open and honest but now feels comfortable doing so. Additionally, he expressed that he has "a lot of time" for the social worker and appreciated his support.

Example of Complaint recommendations and lessons learned Adult Social Care

Statutory Stage 1

Complaint
Concerns regarding the quality of care received by the domiciliary care service.
Recommendation
Arrange a Senior to be allocated to relook at the paperwork in the file to discuss how the complainant would like their personal care to be carried out and also look at their food preferences making sure these are documented correctly
Action
Completed by Senior Carer.

Statutory Stage 2

Complaint
Unhappy with the care provided to a relative.
Recommendation
To advise all other agencies that when completing the risk assessment, greater details needs to be included on the person's wishes in 'medical emergency' and staff should encourage the individual to give alternative emergency contacts numbers.
Action
Risk Assessments featured within the Audit Programme for services commissioned from the Community Based Services and Domiciliary Support Services frameworks during 25/26. Staff scrutinised individual risk assessments through sample collection, for each provider by service type, in addition to verifying processes and procedures at an organisational level.

Example of Complaint recommendations and lessons learned Children and Family Services:

Statutory Stage 1

Complaint
Regarding the process and treatment experienced during the adoption application.
Recommendation
A follow-up face to face visit will be arranged to explore the concerns around family contact and assess the implications of the complainant's diagnosis.
Action
Follow up meetings completed, assessment progressing through the relevant channels.

Statutory Stage 2

Complaint
Regarding concerns about Children's centre provision
Recommendation
To establish a working group within the facility and for the complainants to be invited onto that working group
Action
The complainants were invited onto a working group to which they agreed

Care and Support Survey

The Care and Support Survey is a key method for gathering feedback from people who receive social services, and from carers about their experiences of delivering care and support. It provides insight into whether people feel treated with dignity and respect, whether they feel listened to, and whether they feel supported in the language of their choice, as well as their experiences of making contact with services, accessing timely support and the quality of communication with services.

In January 2026, a Care and Support Survey was undertaken with a sample of approximately 1,200 service users who had received a Care and Support Plan since April 2025. For the first time, a digital survey link was used, marking a move away from the traditional paper-based approach. This new method generated a total of 73 responses, including feedback from 53 service users and 20 carers, providing valuable insight into their experiences.

Service Users	Carers	
52%	90%	found it easy to make contact with Social Servies
68%	80%	found the information advice or assistance offered by social services useful
86%	100%	felt that they were mostly treated with dignity and respect
76%	95%	felt they were listened to when contacting social services
86%	100%	communicated in the language of their choice
83%	100%	knew how to contact social services if their circumstances changed
88%	100%	knew how to contact their care provider

Whilst many of the responses show a positive position, especially with regard to the experience of carers, there is clearly work to be done in respect of our service users and in particular in relation to contacting us and in relation to the offer of Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA). Whilst not a decision that is directly linked to the results of the survey, an internal review of our IAA service was started in May 2025 and achieved positive change with more work yet to be done. Additionally, an external review is being planned of Llesiant Delta Wellbeing (where our IAA services are hosted and delivered) which will provide even greater insights into the service delivery with a view to addressing the significant proportion of people who say they either find it difficult to contact us, or who do not find the information advice and assistance provided useful.

Staff Views

Corporate Staff Survey 2025

The Corporate Staff Survey provides annual insight into staff experience and engagement. The 2025 survey ran from 9 June to 18 July 2025 and received 549 responses, representing around 27% of the Communities workforce (now known as Social Services and Housing). It covered six themes:

Working for Us
Wellbeing (new for 2025)
Communication
Learning & Development
Expectations & Recognition
How is My Service Performing?

Overall engagement across Communities is positive. Staff report pride in working for the Council, strong team culture, and supportive line management. Wellbeing and flexible working are valued, and staff feel encouraged to learn and develop, including through access to learning in their preferred language. Local teams and line managers are consistently identified as key strengths.

The survey also highlighted challenges, particularly around internal communication, workload pressures and recognition beyond immediate teams. Some staff raised concerns about burnout, office environments, and whether survey feedback leads to visible change. Addressing communication, recognition and follow-through at senior and corporate levels is a key focus going forward.

Internal Communication

Internal communication emerged as a key issue, leading to a follow-up survey in March 2026 with 521 responses. Staff feel well informed about day-to-day operational issues, with line managers, email and face-to-face communication rated as most effective. However, staff reported poor visibility of corporate priorities, leadership messages and recognition, alongside information overload and inconsistent cascades. Frontline and non-desk-based staff are less likely to receive timely updates.

Staff want clearer, plain-language communication, more consistent cascades with written follow-up, better targeting to reduce overload, greater leadership visibility, improved access for frontline staff, and clearer information on roles, structures and responsibilities.

Awards

Our work has been recognised through a range of awards and accolades, reflecting the quality of services delivered across the Council. These acknowledgements highlight our ongoing commitment to supporting people effectively and making a positive difference in our communities. They also recognise the dedication and professionalism of our staff and support our continued focus on improvement.

Social Care Wales Accolades 2025

Working in Partnership	**Connecting Carmarthenshire** Social Care Accolade for Working in Partnership in April/May 2025 Recognised for strong collaboration, transparent partnership working, and delivering positive outcomes for Carmarthenshire residents.
Inspirational Leadership Award	**Avril Bracey, Head of Service for Adult Social Care** Awarded the Inspirational Leadership Award at the Social Care Wales Accolades on 1 May 2025 for her outstanding leadership within Adult Social Care.
Outstanding partnership Work	**Delta Wellbeing, in collaboration with Carmarthenshire County Council and Hywel Dda University Health Board** Has been **highly commended** at the Social Care Wales Accolades 2025 for its pioneering Delta CONNECT service.

West Wales Health and Social Care Awards March 2026

West Wales Health and Social Care AWARDS 2026

Carer of the Year

Nominees:

Wendy Pett
Pat Harvey
Kim Bone
Meinir Howells

Winner: Pat Harvey

Pat was recognised for her exceptional commitment, kindness, and the positive difference she makes to everyone she supports since 1996!

Inspirational Leader Award

Shortlisted: Gail Sinclair.

Investors in Care Award

Team / Service	Award Status
Community Inclusion Managers Connecting Carmarthenshire Social Work Teams	**Silver**
Homecare Day Services (Pending)	**Bronze**
CTLD Teams	**IiC Award Completed (level not specified)**

Celebrating Excellence:

Homecare Achievement Awards 2025

During the winter period, the Homecare Service celebrated the exceptional dedication, compassion and professionalism demonstrated across Homecare. The awards recognised team members who go above and beyond every single day, supporting individuals, uplifting colleagues and embodying the very best of homecare.

Cllr Jane Tremlett, Cabinet Member for Integrated Health & Children & Adult Social Services, highlighted the remarkable work carried out by the Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care Services Teams throughout 2025/26. Over the year, teams consistently exceeded expectations, taking on challenges with dedication and delivering strong outcomes for the people of Carmarthenshire.

Children's Residential Home Managers

Eclipse Team

Next Steps 2026/27

Our Priorities for 2026/27 are set out in detail within our departmental business plans. The business plan sets out the key actions and measures that will deliver our priorities in practice. During the year, we will focus on the following strategic objectives:

	Adult Social Care
1	We will gather feedback from adults at risk and their carers to evaluate the outcomes of safeguarding interventions and identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement.
2	Within Day Opportunities, we will extend service hours to offer greater choice and flexibility for attendees, and to increase capacity to meet the needs of young people transitioning from children to adult services.
3	We will expand respite accommodation in Carmarthen by developing new facilities and increasing capacity, ensuring high-quality, accessible support for people with Profound Learning disabilities and people with high complex needs.
4	We will diversify the West Wales Shared Lives scheme by offering placements beyond learning disability. Actively explore new opportunities to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions for older people or people with mental health needs.
5	We will work in partnership with commissioning and housing teams to increase the number of accommodation units with projected demands within the next 12 months to meet our new demand and support people stepping down from residential care.
6	We will work with commissioning, children services and housing to deliver the accommodation and support plan for young people with complex needs transitioning from children's services.
7	We will continue to grow a sustainable In-house Home Care Provision in line with the Social Services Sustainability Plan.
8	We will work with Health partners (where relevant) to expand an early intervention/prevention service in Adult Social Care.
9	We will make data driven decisions to support the different models under the 'Grow your own' strategy linked to the Workforce Plans.
10	We will lead on the Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements, ensuring the Council meets its obligations to protect adults and children at risk. Our

	approach will make safeguarding a shared responsibility across the organisation
11	We will fulfil the Local Authority section 36 CTSA 2015 duty to ensure that there is an effective local Channel Panel in place to assess, and provide support, to people who are susceptible to being drawn into terrorism.
12	We will work with the Regional Safeguarding Board to develop a set of appropriate measures to capture and evaluate feedback from Service Users.
13	We will comply with the Home Office with the new Channel Assurance Framework to evidence compliance

	Integrated Services
15	Implement the action plan written following the assessment of the availability of Dementia services in Carmarthenshire and the identification of the deficits in provision.
16	Implementation of the action plan following delivery of the Carmarthenshire Integrated Community Equipment Service (CICES) Review.
17	We will develop a formal agreement between the Local Authority and Health Board, outlining collective responsibilities whilst agreeing a new staffing structure in Integrated Services to support our approach to develop strong communities, help people help themselves and provide support when is needed.CV12
18	We will support and implement the Living Well in Carmarthenshire 10 year Prevention Strategy encompassing all ages. An action plan and implementation groups will be developed to drive the ambitions set out in the document. This will be embedded into service delivery in partnership with the Health Board, third sector and the community.
19	We will support the Health Board implementation of a 7 day single point of access to prevent admission to hospital & early supported discharge from a social care perspective.
20	Following a review of IAA/Front door into Adult Services, we will develop a robust implementation plan to deliver a programme of redesign, embracing digital transformation & AI opportunities to ensure early intervention and prevention for our population

	Children and Family Services
21	Continue addressing the gaps in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022-27, including promoting and further developing Welsh Medium childcare.
22	Implement the Play Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan to ensure children and young people have access to wide and varied play opportunities and experiences.
23	Implement phased expansion of Flying Start in line with Welsh Government guidance.
24	Expand our Early Years Integration model through closer collaboration with the Health Board to deliver more coordinated, preventative support for children and families.
25	Review supported accommodation provision and carry out a joint procurement exercise with the Adult Commissioning Team to secure sufficient, high-quality accommodation.
26	Co-produce bespoke short-break provision with children, young people, and their families, ensuring services are shaped around their strengths, preferences, and goals. Maximise the use of community assets to deliver high-quality, low-cost support that is sustainable and locally rooted.
27	Undertake our Engagement Authority duties by promoting and publicising the Childcare Offer to eligible parents within Carmarthenshire.
28	Deliver the four elements of the Flying Start service to 1959 children across deprived areas of Carmarthenshire in line with Welsh Government guidance
29	Develop services which meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people (UASC) within the Home Office budget

	Commissioning and Business Support
30	We will work with others to develop and implement the new system- Finance Module for charging. (Social Care)
31	We will explore how different forms of technology can improve our systems efficiency and effectiveness. (eg payments and charging)
32	Development of the BSU workforce to focus on digital skills and supporting the services to improve processes and systems through the use of AI,RPA etc
33	We will develop a regional commissioning workforce development framework, ensuring we have the capacity and skills to strengthen competence and build confidence.
34	We will implement the Sustainability Plan for Adult Care by shaping and influencing the market strategically to meet future needs, ensuring a sustainable social care system and sufficient supply to meet demand.
35	We will work with providers on continuing to set appropriate care rates for each service type, and developing appropriate costing models to support the setting of these rates.
36	We will undertake a commissioning review of our current arrangements and service delivery models to enable us to reshape the provider market, ensuring that the right services are available to meet the current and future needs of the population.
37	We will continue to maximise income recovery within the department and reduce levels of debt.
38	We will review transport arrangements for social care.
39	We will review Commissioning and Finance & Business support, associated with new Directorate make up
40	Implement the Code of Practice (Sept '24) through a joint statutory duty with Health and social care. Complete self-assessment and action plan to ensure compliance, and equip commissioning staff with the knowledge and skills required to meet standards.

Appendix 1

Quality Standards Alignment	
The activity and achievements set out in this section demonstrate strong delivery against the national quality standards for well-being under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.	
✓	**Quality Standard 1** Working with People to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
✓	**Quality Standard 2** Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being
✓	**Quality Standard 3** Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm
✓	**Quality Standard 4** Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
✓	**Quality Standard 5** Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic , family and personal realtionships
✓	**Quality Standard 6** Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Appendix 2

Case studies

Integrated Services Case Study

Releasing Time to Care (RTTC) and Care Assessment Service (CAS)

Right-sizing double-handed care

Following discharge from Prince Philip Hospital, an individual receiving four double-handed care calls per day was referred to RTTC and CAS. An Occupational Therapy review assessed the use of a Stedy transfer aid and focused on maximising independence.

Through rehabilitation, the individual demonstrated improved transfers, enabling care to be safely reduced from double-handed to single-handed support. A Social Work assessment updated the care and support plan and Individual Service Agreement to reflect assessed need.

As a result, care was reduced to two daily calls with one carer. This achieved the least intrusive care package, reduced risk of deconditioning, improved wellbeing, and promoted independence. Commissioned care reduced by **18 hours 40 minutes per week**.

The individual, supported via body language and translation tools, expressed that they were happy and grateful for the changes.

Shared Lives Case Study

Case Study: Progression to Independence through Shared Lives

X, a man with learning disabilities, was referred to Shared Lives West Wales in 2015 due to vulnerabilities linked to social isolation, exploitation risks and limited independent living skills. Shared Lives provided a stable, family-based environment where X could safely develop confidence, skills and resilience while working towards his long-term goal of independent living.

Over a sustained placement, X made significant progress across daily living tasks, including personal care, cooking, laundry, budgeting, shopping and using public transport independently. Proportionate, strengths-based support enabled risk management without reducing autonomy. X also developed strong community connections, attending Mencap projects, maintaining relationships and managing responsibility for his pet cat, which supports his wellbeing.

Independent living remained a clear, shared long-term outcome throughout reviews. After approximately ten years, X successfully moved into his own flat with low-level, planned weekly support. He continues to live independently, demonstrating effective step-down planning and the positive impact of long-term, relationship-based Shared Lives support in promoting independence, wellbeing and reduced reliance on services.

Community Inclusion Case Study

Community Connector

X was referred to the Community Connector by his CTLD social worker due to significant social isolation linked to autism, dyspraxia and high anxiety, which meant he did not access community activities independently and remained mostly at home. Following an introductory home visit with X and his parents, opportunities aligned to his interests were identified, including creative writing, pool and neurodiversity-focused groups, with initial support provided by his father. X engaged positively with the *Story Care & Share* group at People Speak Up, a local pool group, and the T.R.A.I.N group at the Railway Goods Shed, gradually building confidence, relationships and routine. Over time, X began attending groups independently, developed friendships, expanded into a gaming group, and started meeting peers socially outside sessions, reporting "I feel I have got friends now."

Outcomes included improved confidence, self-esteem, personal care, mental wellbeing and daily structure, alongside increased community participation and emerging independence, with future plans for travel training to further reduce reliance on family support.

In conclusion, this case demonstrates the impact of person-centred community connection, early intervention and strong partnership working in reducing isolation and supporting gradual, sustainable independence, with both X and his family reporting significant positive life changes.

Children's Services Case Study

SUPPORTED LODGINGS

X was 17 when he presented at Llanelli HWB asking for support regarding his homelife.

X was studying for his A levels and was struggling due to his parents chaotic and often controlling lifestyle. After an assessment from a Social Worker, it was agreed that X should be supported to live somewhere he felt safe. X moved into a supported lodgings placement close to his college in September 2024.

This placement gave him the opportunity to concentrate on his studies and enjoy having friends, something he wasn't allowed to do at home. He also told us he felt safe, the first time in a long time. Not having to worry about finances, X worked part time saving a large sum of money to enable him to aspire to live and study in London.

X received 4 A Levels at A-B grade securing a place in the University of Middlesex to study international finance. He was supported to move to London by his supported lodgings support worker

Children's Services Case Study

SUPPORTED LODGINGS

X was adopted as a young child. He had a positive family life with lots of support from the Dinefwr childcare team.

When X left education, he struggled with the lack of structure and routine school offered him. His new peers in college took advantage of his vulnerabilities and he became involved with substances and anti-social behaviour.

His parents struggled to cope with the sudden changes and police involvement and following a family altercation X became homeless in March 2025 at the age of 17 and moved into a Supported Lodgings placement shortly after.

Living apart from his parents helped X gain independence, seek specialist support, and address his challenges openly. This process gradually allowed him to rebuild trust and strengthen his relationships, leading to healthier connections with his family, which he now sees regularly and is in contact with daily.

X is hoping to move to a shared training flat in the next few weeks, where he will live independently with 3 fellow Young People.

Adult Social Care Case Study

Reablement Case Study

Mrs X, an 88-year-old woman, was admitted to hospital following a fall that resulted in fractured ribs and a loss of confidence with mobility. She became reliant on a standing aid and was initially considering residential care; however, this was not suitable. Due to her multi-level home and limited mobility, she transferred to Amman Valley Hospital for rehabilitation, followed by a period of reablement.

Prior to discharge, reablement staff met with Mrs X to agree goals focused on regaining confidence with personal care, walking and transfers, and managing meals independently. With support from reablement staff and physiotherapists, Mrs X progressed from using a standing aid to mobilising independently with a Zimmer frame. This enabled her to manage personal care and prepare simple meals, helping her regain independence and confidence.

Staff also supported Mrs X's nutritional needs and wellbeing, while encouraging her social interests, faith and hobbies. During reablement, Mrs X moved into an extra care housing scheme and initially felt isolated. A social engagement goal was added, with staff supporting her to attend communal meals, social groups and meet other residents.

Mrs X was discharged from reablement two weeks later with no ongoing support required. She continues to live independently, actively participates in community activities, and maintains strong social connections.