

**Health and Social Services Scrutiny Committee**  
**17<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**SUBJECT:**

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

**Purpose:**

Provide an update on the progress of the Children and Families Services Transformation Programme.

**THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-**

Review and assess the information contained in Report and provide any recommendations, comments, or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

**Reasons:**

To formulate views for submission to the Cabinet / Council for consideration.

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-**

**Cabinet Member for Health and Social Services – Cllr Jane Tremlett**

**Directorate:**

Education and Children's Services

**Name of Head of Service:**

Jan Coles

**Report Author:**

Jan Coles

**Designations:**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health and Social Services Scrutiny Committee  
17<sup>th</sup> October 2024

## SUBJECT: CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – UPDATE

### 1. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.








To update Members on delivery to date against the Children and Families Transformation Programme plan and programme measures. The service has developed a vision and principles required for a modern children's social services function.

A series of workstreams have been developed to ensure the Division is delivering an effective, high functioning service which is able to meet the challenges within budget.

## Children & Family Services: Vision & Principles

Our vision is: Keeping children safe and families together

### Our principles:

 Support	 Alongside	 Placements	 Pathways	 Connected	 Workforce	 Resources
Ensure children, young people and their families can access the right support, when and where they need it, preventing statutory intervention.	Work alongside children, young people and their families, listening to them, building on strengths and finding solutions together so that families can achieve their goals.	Ensure a sufficient supply of placements to meet the diverse range of needs and circumstances of children and young people, so that they can grow up in their communities, maintaining connections to family and friends.	Provide clearly planned pathways through care into adulthood for children who cannot live with their families, strengthening connections that will support throughout their lives and achieving the best possible outcomes.	Enhance connections between community services, education, health, statutory social work, and wider partners to develop new ways of working together to deliver better and more seamless services	Ensure an effective, stable workforce who are qualified, equipped, supported, and valued as they deliver high quality services to children and young people.	Effectively plan, manage and govern the service to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and their families through services that are run efficiently and delivered equitably.

### Workstreams

**Early Help and Assessment.** This area is on track. The work is progressing well and is on target to establish an Early Help approach where statutory and third sector partners work closely together to support children, young people and families with the right help at the right time for them. This shared approach will minimise duplication and gaps in support.

### Key achievements:

- Early Help Hub has been established using existing Children and Families Services resources.

- Step-Up, Step-Down Team is in the process of being recruited to.
- A 14+ pilot consisting of a wrap-around/immediate response team co-located within Housing and Children and Families Services is generating positive feedback to date on targeted assessment of care and support cases. Multi agency team pilot is currently being established using existing resource from Children and Families and Housing
- Assessment teams staffing is stabilised
- Re-assessment rates from April – June is an average of 7.3%

#### **Areas of focus:**

- Substantial input from Senior Manager to address insufficient throughput in assessment teams with assessments for too many children taking longer than 80 days to complete and close.
- Ensuring data regarding assessment timescales is available to managers is an urgent priority
- Audit of assessments is planned in October to consider the quality of assessments
- Systems thinking review taking place in September to inform the work of the Early Help Hub through strengthening our approach.

**Family Support and Resources.** Good progress being made in this area with most elements on track. This area is broadly on track to deliver a set of coordinated, responsive services that provide an effective resource for Social Workers to draw on.

#### **Key achievements:**

- Systems thinking review of Family Support teams in Children and Families Services completed and next steps developed.
- People appointed to new posts to address shortcomings in practice in fostering, including Panel Adviser and Marketing and Communications Officer and Fostering Independent Reviewing Officer recruitment underway.
- We continue to perform well against national targets for foster carer recruitment although there is still a significant shortage of foster placements.

#### **Areas of focus:**

- Implement the required changes in Family Support teams following the systems thinking review to establish a Family Support Service which responds to the needs of children and families and support Social Workers to deliver Care and Support and Child Protection plans. They will support families to make the changes they need so that children can remain with their families and/ or return to their families from local authority care.
- Undertake the formal process to restructure the existing Fostering Team to create a Family Placements Team. This will deliver better support to connected carers and Special Guardian carers preventing breakdown of these arrangements and keeping children out of local authority care.
- Consultation with foster carers on proposed changes to the payments framework and take the proposal through governance process to implement by next financial year.
- Implement the foster carer recruitment plan.

**Children's Homes.** This area is not on track, and this is reflected in the £2m overspend forecast in the Q1 budget report. This is an area with multiple complex challenge and holds considerable risk all of which change quickly and require urgent, creative responses.

**Key achievements:**

- 75% of posts for our new children's homes (Hafan and Ross Avenue) are in post
- Team managers appointed for both homes, one internal appointment is in post, one external appointment to take up post in October.
- The staffing structure at Garreglwyd has been reviewed and confirmed and recruitment to additional posts taking place.
- Registration application for Hafan submitted to CIW

**Issues:**

- Continued requirement for 'secure' placements in excess of planned budget. Two unavoidable secure placements have needed to be made in Q1; this is over and above the planned budget for placements.
- Underestimation of the administrative required to deliver these very complex and technical developments which are the most highly regulated of any area of children's services.
- Some regulatory shortfalls in delivery of registered care requiring an urgent response.
- Delays in registration of Ross Avenue due to mains electricity cable. Reliant on the National Grid to undertake works to move the cable.
- Delays in increasing the capacity of inhouse provision as the Glyn Mwrwg property cannot be used to develop a children's home.
- Currently there is a lack of move on accommodation to meet demand including supported accommodation for care leavers, however we are working with housing to look at opportunities to expand provision.
- Carmarthenshire has not provided inhouse children's homes for many years and there is limited experience of this highly specialist discipline in the Council.

**Areas of focus:**

- Recruit to the additional posts in Garreglwyd. This will reduce the extensive use of agency workers in the home. It will also enable five young people to live in the home, reducing the use of commissioned placements from private providers.
- Recruit to the 25% of vacant posts for Hafan and Ross Avenue
- Provide sufficient, experienced, operational management capacity to safely manage the OWR arrangements
- Exploring options for providing supported accommodation for young people to enable us to meet the accommodation needs of care leavers and 16-17 year olds in need of support.
- Provide sufficient administrative capacity to ensure regulatory requirements are met
- Provide sufficient business support and project management capacity to the residential services manager to support the development and establishment of the new homes including staff training and development, and all aspects of good practice within the homes.
- Identify a property or land for the next children's home, as Glyn Mwrwg cannot be progressed as a children's home
- Prepare a bid to WG capital funds to either purchase a property or land that can be used for supported accommodation

**Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and Young People.** This area is on track.

**Key achievements:**

- Five properties in Carmarthenshire set up from scratch with 10 young people living in them.

- No commissioned placements being used for any new referrals from the national transfer scheme. This has been an enormous challenge, but the teams are delivering.
- Practice guidance and processes are in place to support the work of the teams.
- Notice being given to end all commissioned placements for young adults aged 18 and over who choose to remain living out of County.

**Areas of focus:**

- Ensure a sufficient supply of properties to ensure young people can be transferred quickly from Kent to Carmarthenshire, maximising the Home Office funding available to support the work.
- Work with other local authorities in Wales to ensure consistent policies to guide the approach to young people whose asylum claims have not been processed by Home Office or who have not been granted 'leave to remain'.
- Work with third sector organisations to build up the networks of support available to the young people settling here in Carmarthenshire

**Support for Disabled Children and Young People.** This area is on track.

**Key achievements:**

- Additional POD in the 0-25 Social Work team established and operational
- Additional posts in Tim Camau Bach (early help for disabled children) to ensure children and their families get the right help at the right time
- New post so that carers assessments are undertaken in Tim Camau Bach is operational
- Recruitment underway to new posts to support the development of a neuro diverse (ND) pathway

**Areas of focus:**

- Work with partners to develop the ND pathway so that children experiencing long waits for clinical assessments and diagnoses receive good support
- Complete the analysis of current support (community support, direct payments and overnight short breaks) to disabled children and their families and how this would change for each individual under the proposed resource allocation system
- Consult with families on the proposed policy change for allocation of resources to support disabled children and their families
- Take the new policy proposal through internal Council governance process.

**Workforce and Business Enablers.** Good progress being made in this area with most elements on track.

**Key achievements:**

- Grow our own Social Workers initiative is on target to deliver 5 newly qualified social workers this year and a further 31 over the next 3 years.
- We have appointed to 10 Master's degree and 3 Open University route, Trainee Social Worker posts.
- Plan to reduce use of agency Social Workers in place.
- Audit plan for the year in place.
- 'Go live' date for migration from CareFirst to Eclipse set for February 2025. Preparation plan for this is on track.

- A new PowerBI dashboard created to track the transformation programme measures in a timely way. Additional progress made on developing a more accessible way for senior managers to access data to enable them to better manage performance.

**Areas of focus:**

- Further development of the mechanisms to provide essential data to managers.
- Complete the work to review the practice model and implement the training matrix for all staff
- Develop accurate reports so that caseloads can be monitored and managed.
- Further work needed to reduce the number of children’s cases being held by Team Managers, Assistant Team Managers and Child and Family Practitioners. The work to add capacity to the teams will impact on this.
- Training for teams on key practice areas such as supporting teenagers, child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Deliver deadline of February 2025 to remove agency Social Workers from social work teams.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**Yes: PowerBI report:** [CMT Measures Power BI Report - Power BI](#)



Dashboard  
screenshots 10.9.24.p

# IMPLICATIONS

ALL IMPLICATIONS REQUIRE SIGN OFF BY THE DIRECTOR OR HEAD OF SERVICE

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: 

Head of Children and Families

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets	Bio-diversity & Climate Change
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>

**2. Finance**

The Transformation Programme sets out how the additional funds agreed for Children and Families Division will be used to manage the increased and changed demand and deliver a balanced budget.

**5. Risk Management Issues**

There are risks associated with unmanaged demand in Children and Families Services including risks to children and young people, reputational risk and risks to the Council budget. The Children and Families Transformation Programme puts in place measures to effectively manage current and future demand safely and effectively.

**6. Physical Assets**

The Transformation Plan includes the implementation of a Strategic Programme for Residential Services which includes the acquisition, refurbishment and development of new children’s homes.

**7. Staffing Implications**

The Transformation Plan makes recommendations to increase the capacity of Children and Families Services to manage the increased demand. This includes creating and recruiting into new roles.

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed:



Head of Children and Families

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

YES

**Include any observations here**

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**