



# Transforming Social Care in Monmouthshire

# Director's Annual Report 2012



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

# Social Services in Numbers: 2011/12

## Children and Young People in Monmouthshire



20,370  
Population  
aged 0 - 19



665  
Children  
In Need



109  
Looked  
After



76  
On Child  
Protection  
Register

93%  
of adults are satisfied with  
the services they receive

2,699 adults  
received an  
assessment in  
2011/12



## Growth in the number of people aged 65+

2012  19,090

2020  24,260

2030  29,660



54% of people were fully  
independent following  
reablement and did not  
need long term care



21 delayed transfer of  
care for social care reasons

## Percentage of Core Assessments Completed within 35 days

58

2010/11

73

2011/12

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Cover Image.

A visualisation of the words in this report produced using an online tool: [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net)

# Introduction

A year ago I wrote in my first Annual Report that here in Monmouthshire we were re-framing the questions we ask ourselves to focus on the big questions such as “what matters to the people we work with?” and “what sorts of lives do they want to live”.

The answers to these questions are not always easy. People become involved with social services at points in their lives when things need to change. They may be seeking support to stay safe, remain in control of their lives or manage a significant transition. When working with people in need it is tempting to concentrate on problems and areas in which an individual or family are not coping well.

But my fundamental belief is that people in need also have strengths, relationships and their own story to tell. Thus the starting point for us is to listen to the person in order to understand what they want, what matters to them and what skills, ideas and resources they each bring.



These conversations are the heart of good social work and will be as much about friendship, meaning and community as about services and support.

My purpose in writing this Annual Report is to lay out our direction and priorities as a service and also give my judgement on how we have done over the previous year.

The final part of this report lays out my 6 priorities and the actions that we shall be carrying out during 2012 to start to achieve these. I have limited myself to six in the belief that *“if everything is a priority nothing is a priority”*. So if you don’t find mention of your particular area of interest that doesn’t mean there is no activity going on.

I have drawn on the detailed reports prepared by Julie Boothroyd (Head of Adults) and Vanessa Glenn (Head of Children) in section 3 of this report and their reports can be accessed [here](#). In these reports you will find the full range of actions that teams will be focusing on during 2012/13.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon Burch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Simon Burch**  
**Director Social Care and Health**



## Our Direction – Focussing on What Matters

During a period of financial austerity and increasing demand we need to be very clear about our strategy as an organisation if we are to flourish and improve services.

I believe there are three broad options available to us:

- Restricting access to services by tightening [eligibility criteria](#) (“doing less”);
- Securing significant additional funding to manage growth in demand (“spending more”);
- Changing how we work in partnership with people to achieve outcomes in more creative and cost effective ways (“doing better”).

In my view the first of these is not morally acceptable and the second is not realistic. Over the past year we have been exploring what “doing things better” looks like and confirmed our purpose, vision and values.

### Our Purpose

To support people to live safe and fulfilled lives within their communities.

### Our Vision

We have developed a vision of how social services in Monmouthshire will be in 2015.

- Vulnerable people and children are supported to live safe and fulfilled lives. They are able to live “ordinary lives” as full members of their community;
- We work alongside service users, their families and others. As our statutory responsibilities become more focused on those at risk we redouble our efforts to strengthen involvement and communities’ resilience and capacity;
- We build on our individual and organisational strengths, attracting and nurturing those who share our vision and values;
- We are open and pragmatic in how we achieve our goals;
- We collaborate and work in partnership whenever this is in the interest of our service users and us as an organisation.

### Our Values

Teamwork: Working positively within our organisation and with any other partners with shared goals and values.

Flexibility: Exploring new ideas and possibilities and looking for creative solutions;

Fairness: Seeking to strike the balance between person centred working and equality of approach.

Openness: Key to this is focussing on outcomes and relationships and being open to new ways of working.

Our recent [CSSIW inspection](#) of adults and children's services described us as a values-based organisation. Changing approaches in the way our HR service operates as a result of a System Thinking Review will see this become integral to the way we recruit new staff and develop our workforce.

"Staff and managers of all levels consistently employ a person centred approach. Services are provided in ways which promote the best interests of the service user, whether a child, young person or adult."

(CSSIW Inspection Report, May 2012)

## Our Approach

If these are our purpose, vision and values statements how do we deliver these in our day to day work? In adult services we have adopted new operating principles:

- We will listen to understand and communicate clearly
- We will work with you and bring together only those people who can help you live your own life
- We will be sensitive to where we listen to you
- The focus of our intervention will be to facilitate solutions
- We will take responsibility for the appropriate pace and continuity of our interventions
- We will actively engage with our local communities, support networks and other sectors to develop alternative opportunities for people
- We will only capture information once which is appropriate and relevant to our purpose and our IT system will support us to help people live their own lives
- We will respect and trust the judgement of our frontline staff
- We will apply the value steps to the development of frontline practice
- We will measure how we meet our purpose
- We will work creatively and equitably within our resources
- We will actively help our partners remove barriers to delivering our purpose

We will soon be beginning a review of systems and processes in children's services with a view to adopting a similar approach.

## **Our Strategy 2012 – 2015**

The principles and values described above, alongside the factors in the next section has lead us towards a three year strategy for improving and sustaining social services in Monmouthshire. This can be expressed as three inter-related themes and six priorities.



### **Theme One: Changing Practice, Changing Lives**

Monmouthshire is a well-run social services department that delivers good services most of the time. But more of the same is not the way to manage the challenges ahead and we are going to radically change the way we work. This means focusing on practice at the front line, supporting staff to build effective relationships and working with people to find imaginative solutions. By listening, concentrating on what matters to citizens and engaging communities in supporting individuals and families we believe we can help people find lasting solutions. And if that sounds familiar it's because this is reclaiming some aspects of social work values and practice which have been underused in recent years.

## **Theme Two: Safeguarding People**

Working to keep children, young people and adults in need safe will always be a key priority for us. The way in which we work with others to safeguard people is crucial and we want to get better at how we listen to people and give them as much control as possible of the processes and decisions that affect them.

## **Theme Three: Working with and through others**

We can't achieve any of our objectives unless we are skilled at working effectively with others. This includes citizens, carers and a range of local, regional and national organisations. We need to concentrate on what we want to achieve and build good relationships with the right partners. On a typical day I will have colleagues managing difficult conversations with families whilst others of us will be discussing strategy with Chief Executives and politicians. We need to be skilled and effective in all these situations.

Over the next three years we will be focusing on six priorities in order to deliver the strategy.

### **Priority One: A focus on families**

Outcome: Families are supported during key transitions or times of stress.

We will:

- Intervene earlier to support families.
- Work closely with other agencies.
- Engage with young people.

### **Priority Two: Doing what matters**

Outcome: People are supported to “live their own life”

We will:

- Change how we work to ensure that we listen to what matters to people and help them find solutions.
- Design systems that free-up staff to do an excellent job.
- Be creative and open to new options and ideas.
- Work with people to build on their strengths

### **Priority Three: Finding integrated solutions**

Outcome: Services are built around the needs of the individual and deliver “what matters” to them.



- We will:
- Develop shared cultures, leadership and systems.
  - Collaborate whenever it is in the interests of our citizens.

#### **Priority Four: Strengthening communities**

Outcome: People are engaged in, and supported by their communities and not dependant purely on statutory services.

- We will:
- Build local networks and services.
  - Encourage individuals to re-engage with the community and build on strengths and existing networks

#### **Priority Five: Building new safeguarding and protection systems**

Outcome: People are protected and that this is achieved in ways which will empower the individual to sustain/regain control of their life.

- We will:
- Ensure safe and effective multi agency systems.
  - Focus on the wishes and desired outcomes of the individual.
  - Create robust regional and all Wales systems and processes.

#### **Priority Six: Developing our people**

Outcome: All our staff are trained and motivated to deliver excellent person-centred support.

- We will:
- Provide a culture and environment which values initiative, creativity and appropriate risk taking.
  - Have clear performance systems that provide clarity of objectives and support.

These list the broad activities we will be undertaking over the next three years. Section 4 gives the more detailed actions we will be concentrating on in 2012-13.

# The Context in which we Work

We are operating in a fast moving environment which is exciting and challenging. Having laid out our strategy in the previous section here are the key factors that we need to engage with and influence to achieve our objectives.

## National

- The publication of “[Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action](#)” and the closely related [Social Services \(Wales\) Bill](#) consultation document are a once in a generation opportunity to influence the delivery of social care in Wales. I welcome the focus on outcomes, confirmation of the role of social services within Local Government and the emphasis on families and citizen centred services. There are also issues such as regional safeguarding structures which, whilst positive, require careful thought and collaboration to deliver them effectively.
- There are other key legislative changes including new Carers and Mental Health measures.
- The continuing UK wide economic climate has an impact in two ways:
  - The recession and the UK wide response to this is likely to place the families we work with under increased stress and consequently increase demands on social services; we continue to monitor this situation;
  - Whilst the Council has protected services for vulnerable people within the 2012/13 budget setting process there have had to be savings. As I write this we do have overspends in both adults and children’s services. Though these are not significant when seen in a Welsh context they reinforce the need for our strategy based around changing practice, earlier intervention and engaging communities.
- Across the UK the number of children on the Child Protection Register and the numbers Looked After by local authorities have increased significantly and Monmouthshire has experienced similar patterns.

## Regional

- We have built stronger relationships with [Aneurin Bevan Health Board](#) (ABHB) particularly via the Frailty and Mental Health/Learning Disability Boards. As ABHB restructures its community services we must make sure our positive working is sustained.

- Increasingly we are working on a regional basis to develop collaborative services this includes work through the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative.
- The sustainability of the private and independent sector and how we build mature and effective commissioning relationships with them is key. [The collapse of Southern Cross residential homes](#) last year was particularly significant and challenges around care home fees continue. The setting up of regional commissioning hubs is a positive response to how we address these challenges.

## Local

- Monmouthshire is a large and varied county with rural areas and market towns which contrast with newer towns with good transport links in the south. This influences how we deliver services and requires us to be flexible about the way we meet needs.
- The protection of vulnerable people has been identified by the Council as one of three clear priorities along with education and the promotion of enterprise and job creation.
- Within my Directorate we now have an established leadership team with permanent team managers throughout Children's and Adults Services. This allows us to move forward on the agenda described in this report.
- Within Monmouthshire County Council we have rationalised our partnership planning structures and have our people strategy, [medium term financial plan](#) and equalities plan in place.
- There is a strong focus on creating a culture of innovation and creativity, with an [Intrapreneurship School](#) driving new ideas and agile working enabling staff to work more flexibly.

In summary, the local, regional and national picture aligns well with our strategy. The financial situation is a significant pressure here as elsewhere, with increased costs and demand at a time when budgets are essentially static. It is thus very important that the overall policy context is broadly supportive of the approaches we are taking and I believe that it is.

# How well are we doing?

As Statutory Director of Social Services I feel proud of the way in which we have negotiated the significant challenges of the last year and prepared ourselves for further improvement during next year.

## My Overview

There is an emerging culture in Monmouthshire based on innovation and empowering staff to use their creativity in finding solutions. In Social Services we have embraced this and are using systems approaches to develop new responses to people in need. Alongside this energizing environment we are aware that resources are tight and it can be hard to implement change whilst still maintaining quality services. This is why one of our priorities is developing our people and also why having recruited to all our key posts this year is so important.

The rest of this chapter is broken down into three areas:

- Children's Services
- Adults Services
- Organisational factors



Within each of these I give my view as Director of Social Services on how the service is performing and I also consider the 10 priorities for improvement that we set last year. These are marked with a 2011 priority badge. If you want more detail you can follow the corresponding hyperlink.

Before I do this I would like to share some of the general feedback that we have had from our regulators (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and Wales Audit Office) this year. Between November and January we had inspections of our children's services, adult services, fostering services and the joint adoption service. In their combined adult/children's inspection report they commented that:

- Corporately the local authority prioritises support to, and safeguarding of, vulnerable children and adults;
- Staff and managers at all levels consistently employ a person centred approach;
- There is good communication in the directorate with information being cascaded to staff by a range of methods. However we need to ensure that the growing use of technology and does not exclude staff who do not have ready access to electronically transmitted information;

- Agile working and new technology “*should make for effective use of resources*” and again senior management needs keep the changes under continuous review to ensure these changes continue to be managed effectively;
- Workers hold high caseloads and “*the excellent progress made on recruiting and retaining staff could be undermined if demand consistently outstrips supply*”.
- Most staff appreciate the supervision support they receive but recording and annual appraisals are applied inconsistently;
- There is uneven development of quality assurance;
- Social Services have numerous collaborative partnerships which would increase choice and encourage independence for people who use services and the families.

“Monmouthshire Social Services have **significant strengths in a number of areas**. They are realistic about the need to manage increasing demand from demographic pressures through early interventions, such as the frailty programme, citizen directed approaches and family support services. These approaches are in different stages of development and the challenge will be to continue to deliver better outcomes within constrained budgets.

“Nevertheless, this report has highlighted some aspects of service organisation which require more attention to bring them up to the standard of the rest. While plans are in place to achieve the necessary changes, the council will want to ensure that these are incorporated into actions for service improvement over the next 12 months. **The council’s track record so far leads us to believe that this will be achievable.**”  
(Summary, CSSIW Inspection Report, May 2012)

### **Children’s Services**

Since last year we have had significant change within the service. We have a new Head of Children’s Services in place and a number of other key appointments. We have also experienced an upsurge in referrals with a consequent impact on the numbers of looked after children<sup>1</sup>. Whilst managing these pressures we have also put the new [Joint Assessment Framework \(JAF\)](#) arrangements in place and worked hard at a regional level around safeguarding and adoption.



## Our achievements in the last year:

Priority  
2011

- We have ensured that our children and young people are safe and that as far as possible their needs are met within their families and carers. We have agreed the framework for a single collaborative children's safeguarding and protection board for Gwent;

Priority  
2011

- We have improved our foster service and recruited more foster carers, and now have 43 approved carers. We now need to implement the recommendations from the latest annual inspection;

Priority  
2011

- We have set up a joint adoption service with Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent and have just received a positive inspection report.

- We have reduced the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system through the use of preventative initiatives and restorative justice approaches within the Youth Offending Service.<sup>2</sup>

Priority  
2011

- We have improved the timeliness of core assessments<sup>3</sup>. Now that we have a permanent workforce in place we will be looking at points of access for the service;
- We are at the point of setting up our early intervention [Joint Assessment Framework](#) process.
- In 2011 we won national awards for innovative social work practice, our [Yammer foster care network](#) and our use of [You Tube](#) in recruiting the Head of Service<sup>4</sup>.

## Our areas for improvement

Priority  
2011

- We need to respond to the findings of the inspection reports.
- We need to act promptly so that where appropriate children who are looked after are adopted or subject to special guardianship orders without delay.
- The preparatory work around the Joint Assessment Framework has been positive and we now need to deliver this. Alongside this we looking at how we simplify process so that social workers can spend more time supporting families.
- We need to review our service structure and staff accommodation.
- Work with our partners at Crossroads to ensure that the service provided to young carers are appropriately focused on outcomes.

## My judgement; how well are we doing?

We have managed to sustain a safe and effective service during a period of considerable challenge. We are now experiencing the

increase in demand that some of our neighbouring authorities have already reported and at the same time we have had significant internal changes, particularly around changes in management. It is to the credit of all our staff that we have maintained a quality service and that this has been confirmed by the inspectorate. We now have a stable, permanent workforce in place and this gives me confidence for the year ahead.



The fostering service has been of concern over the past year but we are now seeing real progress under the leadership of the new team manager. We are recruiting more foster carers and are working hard to ensure they feel equal partners in this enterprise. Being able to offer high quality local

placements is crucial for children and young people and also is much more cost-effective.

Amongst the things we need to focus our energy on in the year ahead are partnership working with other agencies (exemplified through the new JAF work) and ensuring that the local and regional safeguarding arrangements work well for Monmouthshire. I am confident that we have the right leadership and developing relationships to deliver both of these projects.

In summary, I consider the service is performing well in most aspects and it is clear where improvement is required. With a refreshed leadership team and committed staff I am confident that we will continue to improve the service.

## **Adult Services**

Over the past year there have been some significant improvements to services. Implementation of Frailty was a key objective and staff have worked extremely hard to deliver the new integrated approach. We have also established an Independent Living Team for people with a physical disability and reconfigured our commissioning arrangements. On top of these, we have embarked on a radical systems review of how we work with people which will influence all aspects of our work. This has been achieved because we have a stable and highly motivated group of staff, with “leaders” at all levels of the organisation.

## **Our achievements in the last year:**

- We have delivered integrated health and social care services. Good progress has been made and more than 1500 people have benefitted from the Frailty Model since it was launched last year. 54% of people were helped back to independence through our reablement programme<sup>5</sup>.





- We have established an Independent Living Team and a virtual Aspergers team;
- We have increased the number of people getting Direct Payments from 82 to 179<sup>6</sup> this gives more people greater choice and control over their own lives;



- We have led on the setting up of a regional Shared Lives service and have seconded a staff member to the new regional commissioning hub;
- We have played a lead role in the Gwent wide Learning Disability and Mental Health strategies; The strategies are now agreed and the plans for implementing the mental health measure are well advanced;



- We have implemented the carer measure with Aneurin Bevan Health Board and developed of a Facebook page for the Monmouthshire Carers project to provide a space where carers can access information, share experiences and support each other;



- We have jointly set up the Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board and implemented the interim All Wales Procedures;
- We have retendered for independent sector domiciliary care to deliver greater quality and consistency and managed the transition of people to the new service;
- We have developed a new respite opportunities service for people with learning disabilities. This replaced an unsustainable residential model and was co-designed with service users and their families.
- We have reconfigured our commissioning team, including supporting people functions.

### **Our areas for improvement**

- We need to respond to the findings of the inspection report;
- We need to develop evidence and measures that demonstrate “what difference we are making”;
- We have recently picked up some concerns about the purpose and focus of our social enterprises and need to review these to ensure they are fit for purpose;
- We need to develop commissioning strategies for older people, people with physical disabilities and people with learning disabilities.

### **My Judgement; how well are we doing?**

This has been a year defined by innovation and change in adult services. The implementation of Frailty and the domiciliary care re-

tender were huge pieces of work which have been delivered well. The decision to establish the Independent Living Team has been important in addressing an area which had lacked clear identity and leadership. In Mental Health and in Learning Disability services there has been considerable partnership working around strategic development and commissioning; we now need to see this translating into changes on the ground. An inspiring area where this has happened is in the respite changes based at Budden Crescent. Elected Members and staff were deeply moved by short film of service users talking about the new experiences they have had.

Staff commitment to these developmental agendas has been exceptional. Whilst we will continue to have high expectations of our staff and ourselves we do need to heed CSSIW's warning about ensuring realistic workloads.

In summary, I consider that the service is delivering good services in most areas and has a clear improvement agenda.

### **Organisational Factors**

In Monmouthshire the political leadership has adopted services for vulnerable people as one of its three key priorities. Social Services is thus at the heart of the organisation and is driving the improvement agenda. We have ambitious plans to make sure the council is relevant to the people and communities it services and the Wales Audit Office has recognised this.

“At a senior level there is an appetite for changing and modernising the way the council organises itself, delivers services and engages with citizens”.  
(Wales Audit Office, January 2012)

### **Our achievements in the last year:**

- We have led on new collaborative services e.g. Shared Lives and Adoption;
- We are actively engaged in discussions about implementing Sustainable Social Services at a local, national and regional level (priority 10);
- We have reconfigured our commissioning arrangements. Supporting People services now sit within the team and our care home fees work is progressing well (priority 7);
- We have expanded our senior management team to include finance, workforce and performance expertise;
- We have a well-established medium term financial planning process;

- We have successfully recruited to all management posts across the service;
- We have introduced outcome based approaches across our performance management framework.

### **Our areas for improvement**

- We need to commission or develop ICT solutions in line with our systems reviews;
- We need to ensure that newly elected members receive the support and information to fulfil their duties in their scrutiny and corporate parenting roles.
- We need to continue to focus on managing increasing demand within budget constraints;
- We need to develop our local and regional commissioning arrangements so that we understand needs and procure effectively;
- We need to implement effective individual performance management processes across the Directorate.
- We must improve quality assurance and contract management arrangements.

### **My Judgement; how well placed are we to sustain and improve services**

My view is that the political leadership, the culture of innovation and the focus on outcomes gives a good framework within which to improve services. Within the directorate we are concentrating on commissioning arrangements, performance management and developing systems and measures to support our new ways of working. Our challenge for the next year is to continue to build a culture in which creative leadership is key at all levels of the organisation and people feel empowered to innovate and risk take within a values driven environment.



# Priorities for 2012/13

Earlier in the report I gave a broad outline of some of the activities we will be involved in over the next three years to deliver our six priorities. In this section I look in more details at the specific actions we will be taking over the next twelve months.

Priority	1. A focus on Families
Outcome	That families are supported during key transitions or times of stress.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish the multi-professional Joint Assessment Framework and Team Around the Family model</li> <li>• Co-locate adults and Childrens disability/ independent living teams to improve transition and joint working</li> <li>• Improve our “permanency planning” for children who require adoption or guardianship</li> </ul>

Priority	2. Doing what matters
Outcome	That people are supported to “live their own life” i.e. take more control over life they live.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake a systems review of childrens referral and assessment functions</li> <li>• Implement the systems review in adults</li> <li>• Improve how we listen to people, including advocacy arrangements</li> </ul>

Priority	Finding Integrated Solutions
Outcome	That services are built around the needs of the individual and deliver “what matters”.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the Mental Health and Learning Disability strategies</li> <li>• Working with health(including Children and Adolescent Mental health Services) to improve outcomes for children</li> <li>• Working with partners to design integrated IT systems</li> </ul>

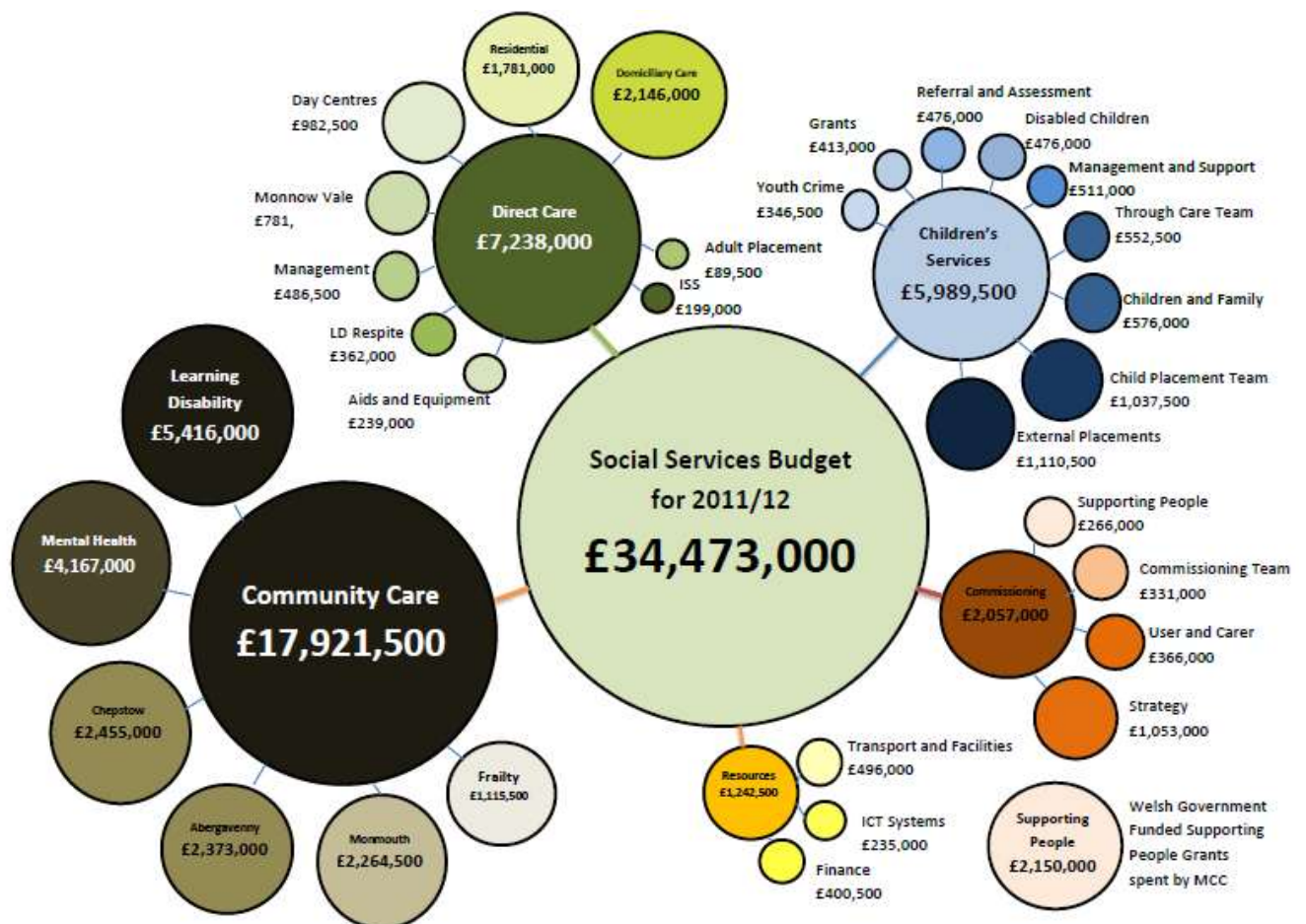
Priority	Strengthening Communities
Outcome	That people are engaged in, and supported by the communities and not dependant purely on statutory services.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take forward area based working approaches</li> <li>• Work with partners to improve employment and educational outcomes for 18-24 year olds</li> <li>• Review our “social enterprise”/ day activities services to increase community engagement and undertake community mapping to increase opportunities for people needing support.</li> </ul>

Priority	Building new safeguarding and protection systems
Outcome	That people are protected and that this is achieved in ways which will empower the individual to sustain/regain control of their life.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence the transition to a Gwent Safeguarding and Protection Board</li> <li>• Deliver a corporate parenting strategy</li> <li>• Establish a local safeguarding and quality assurance unit (children)</li> <li>• Consolidate the Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board</li> </ul>

Priority	Developing our people
Outcome	That all our staff are trained and motivated to deliver excellent person-centred support.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rolling out “intrapreneurship” ideas across the service</li> <li>• Responding to inspection reports including ensuring consistent performance management and communication with all staff</li> <li>• Supporting staff as they move to more integrated ways of working</li> </ul>

# Our 2011/12 Spending

The illustration below gives an idea of how our budget of over £34 million was used in 2011-12.



## **References**

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- <sup>1</sup> The number of children looked after has increased by more than a third from 78 to 107 over the twelve months to March 2012 (PM1 Return)
- <sup>2</sup> The FTE rate for Monmouthshire fell from 75 in 2010/11 to 53 in 2011/12
- <sup>3</sup> The rate of Core Assessments completed within 35 working days has increased from 58.1% to 72.7% during 2011/12 (SCC/043a)
- <sup>4</sup> Winner, Best Use of YouTube at the SomeComms Awards, [www.somecommsawards.com/categories.htm](http://www.somecommsawards.com/categories.htm)
- <sup>5</sup> Monmouthshire County Council Report to Adult Select Committee, March 2012 <http://tinyurl.com/7f9yanh>
- <sup>6</sup> Monmouthshire County Council, Personal Social Services PM2 data Return.