



Helping people live their own lives; building sustainable care and support in Monmouthshire



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Annual Report of the Director
of Social Services 2013

2012/13: Social Services in Numbers

96%
adults who are regular service users are happy with the services they receive




16 delayed transfers of care due to social care reasons - more than 20% less than 2011/12



The number of people aged over 18 who will be receiving community based services is predicted to nearly double by 2030

57%
of people were fully independent following reablement



2030

2,797



2012

1,746



100%

All children on the Child Protection Register have an allocated Social Worker



102



Looked After Children

55



on Child Protection Register

16%

Only 16% of all referrals to childrens services were re-referrals



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Introduction

Helping people live their own lives; building sustainable care and support systems in Monmouthshire

“We look not for independence and separateness, but for inter-dependency with those around us.” (Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action)

Social Services Departments are complex organisations. They are ringed by legislation, affected by social, political and demographic change and both influence and are influenced by the expectations of the public. Increasingly our destiny is linked with other partners as we seek outcomes such as community resilience and safety which we cannot deliver on our own. Add to this the most challenging fiscal climate in a generation and broader global and technological change and it is clear that our response cannot be “business as usual” or “more of the same”.

So how should my staff and I respond to this? I am reminded of John Lennon’s lyric *“Life is what happens to you while you are busy making other plans”*. This is a time for radical action, not detailed strategic action plans and in this report and sister documents such as the Single Integrated Plan and the People Strategy you will see an organisation seeking to focus on what matters to people and being fleet-footed in how we achieve it.

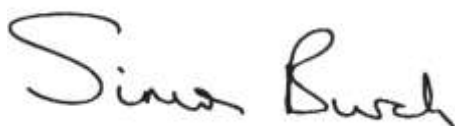


Our approach could be summed up as practice-led innovation; seeking to build the systems, relationships and resources to support people in their communities to live lives of meaning and dignity.

I also believe that the challenging context I describe is not just something that is “done to us” - it is something we can and must influence. It requires us to ask different questions, have new types of conversations and develop our leadership skills at all levels of the organisation.

This report has two purposes; to describe our direction and actions for the year ahead and to report on how we did last year. On page seven you will see our strategy summed up in a single picture and on page nine is my overview of last year. The final part of this report lays out my six strategic priorities and the actions that we shall be carrying out during 2013 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) for the *How well are we doing* section of this report and their work can be accessed [here](#). In these reports you will find the full range of actions that teams will be focusing on during 2013/14.

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

**Chief Officer
Social Care and Health**

Our Journey: what we're trying to achieve

We are operating in a climate of both fiscal and demographic challenges unseen since the 1940s. You can read more about the context in which we are working on our [website](#). As a complex organisation, we need real clarity on what we are trying to achieve and where we are heading. Over the past 18 months we have used an approach called [Systems Thinking](#) to help us ask the question “what matters to the people we work with?” That has included asking people directly and analysing case files and at times has led to a painful realisation that our services are not always focusing on what really matters. We learnt that:

- People can find it difficult to speak promptly to the person who can help them resolve their issue.
- Assessment processes tend to list people's deficits (what they can't do) and not pay enough attention to the assets of that person and their wider network.
- These same processes can restrict the creativity of staff and waste precious time which could be better spent supporting families directly.
- We may “over engineer” solutions, providing expensive and at times disempowering services when simpler options may have been available.
- We often get involved too late in a situation, which makes it much harder to find a good solution.

These factors apply equally to our work with young children and families, people with disabilities and older people.

Having looked unflinchingly at ourselves as an organisation we have been able to identify the key characteristics we need to adopt to move forward.

These can be summarised as:

- Focussing on people's strengths and assets, both as an individual and within their wider family and community.
- Having different conversations with individuals around “what matters to you” and “how can we work with you to find joint solutions?”
- Putting our expertise at the “front end”, so that people speak to someone who can help them there and then.
- Thinking about how we can intervene earlier on and who is the best person to do this.
- Building a culture which encourages creativity and innovation.
- Finding new ways to engage individuals and communities and to deliver services differently.

And in case this sounds aspirational or theoretical let me be clear that this is serious business. In the current financial and demographic context if we don't find ways to support people to find better solutions we will end up rationing services and only intervening in crisis situations. The human cost of failing to have the right conversations at the right time includes young people placed in institutional placements away from home and older people experiencing isolation and loneliness in their communities.

“We have taken a leap of fact!”

This work on systems, along with other analysis and reflection, has enabled us to clarify our purpose, principles and our three year strategy.

Our purpose

“Helping People Live Their Own Lives”

Given the particular pressures of working with families and vulnerable children we have expanded this purpose to:

“Enabling families and communities to keep children and young people safe and to reach their own potential”

Our 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 listen to and value what children and families tell us.
- The focus of our intervention will be to facilitate solutions.
- We will take responsibility for the 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.
- Safeguarding children is paramount; we will work with families and other agencies to manage risk and help children and young people flourish.
- 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.

Our approach

Identifying new principles is one thing, delivering them requires careful thought and clear ways (methods) of achieving this.

My fundamental belief is that the key relationship is that between our front line workers and our communities. My role and that of other managers is to hold true to the principles and purpose and provide the environment in which excellent practice can develop. It is at the front line that lives are changed and, incidentally, that most resources are committed.

We need to engage simultaneously at three levels;

Community level: Building resilient individuals, families and communities

Service level: Building flexible, empowering and responsive services

Individual practice: Helping people and their families to find solutions that build on their strengths, aspirations and networks

Different approaches are required to impact at all three levels and the next picture shows some of the elements we intend to use to deliver on our key theme of Changing Practice Changing Lives.



Definitions

Local Area Coordination; an approach that originated in Australia based on establishing local coordinators within communities who work with people who may otherwise require social services. By engaging early on, building on strengths and helping people to build local connections they help people find their own lasting solutions.

Micro-enterprise; new small businesses (from 1 to 5 people) which can provide support, generate employment and offer a more person-centred way of providing services to meet individual needs and aspirations.

Co-production; a term for working with citizens, which recognises that individuals and communities best understand their own needs and that by giving power to them better solutions can be found.

Asset Based Community Development; a set of techniques for strengthening communities by building mutual relationships and benefits. This links closely with the list above.

My Life; this is a strategic approach to redesigning learning disability services in Monmouthshire, using the other techniques on this list.

Transitions; Focussing on the needs, strengths and wishes of young people (14+) as they begin to plan for adulthood. This includes a specific project looking at developing a social cooperative (a user-led not for profit company to provide support).

Systems redesign; the process described in section 2 whereby we design services around what matters to people.

Working differently with families; this refers to a range of initiatives to support families by intervening earlier and/or working intensively with families with particular challenges.

What we are going to do?

In last year's report I introduced our three year strategy. We are now in the second year and the three themes and six priorities will again drive our actions for 2013/14.

The themes are described below; the way in which we will deliver the priorities during 2013/14 is laid out in section five on page 12.



Theme One: Changing practice, changing lives

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 professional values and practice which have been underused in recent years.

What this means in 2013/14? We will invest our time, energy and financial resources on;

- Building the capacity and resilience needed in our communities. (see daisy diagram)
- Supporting our staff to further develop asset based practice¹.
- Finding ways to measure the impact of this work.

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.

What this means in 2013/14? We will pay close attention to how well we and our partners safeguard people. As we now have regional safeguarding arrangements for children and adults we will focus on making sure that local and regional arrangements work well together.

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.

What this means in 2013/14? We will build on our strong integrated teams which are having such a positive impact on the lives of people requiring health and social care support. We will also concentrate on working in partnership around a range of children's issues and demonstrate concrete progress around the mental health integration agenda.

¹ Some current practices and recording systems tend to focus on what people can't do, listing their deficits and failing to identify that strengths and relationships which will be key to helping them build sustainable solutions.

How well are we doing?

This section is my view as statutory Director of Social Services on our performance over the past year. It is of necessity a high level perspective and much more detail is contained in the [heads of service reports](#).

My overview

My main reflection of the past year is a sense of movement and intense activity as we seek to innovate and improve whilst also delivering safe and high quality services. In many areas we have shown what a fleet of foot small authority can achieve; at other times we have spread ourselves too thinly and explored the edges of what can be done with limited resources. I have immense pride for what staff in the directorate have achieved over the past year and the way in which we have punched above our weight on the regional and national stage.

The main highlights and challenges for me are:

- The “systems” work in adults and children’s fields has had dramatic results. We have new assessment processes in both areas and there has been national interest in this work. Much remains in terms of embedding this but there is evidence of different practice and outcomes for people.
- The new Safeguarding Unit is in place, with a dedicated education specialist as part of the team. The team has tightened up processes around safeguarding and has played an important role in responding to the recent Estyn report.
- The integrated teams (adults) have continued to develop a powerful cross-agency approach including our reablement and frailty work. This year district nurses have joined the teams to great effect. Our progress has caused some growing pains with the regional frailty approach as we seek to balance local variation and regional consistency and we are working hard to ensure we have a properly resourced service fit for purpose which also aligns with partners’ expectations.
- The implementation of a new care home fees model, based on a thorough analysis of the actual cost of providing care, is a big achievement and was done in close collaboration with care home owners. This means we can be confident that we are paying a fair rate and are less likely to face legal challenges to the fees we pay.
- The Family Placement service (Fostering) has continued to improve. The latest CSSIW report acknowledges this and the proportion of internal placements has increased from 53% to 66%.
- Our redesign work has attracted interest from across Wales and the UK. We have shared our work with senior colleagues from Carmarthenshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff,

National Safeguarding Measures

	10-11	11-12	12-13
% CP Conferen-ces ontime	98.8	92.4	84.8
% Core Groups on time	98.2	88.9	34.0
% CP Reviews on time	100	99.1	90.5

Source: SCC/014; SCC/015; SCC/034

and Welsh Government and have spoken at national and regional events on systems leadership and our new model.

- We have designed and started to implement a new IT system to support our new practice, with the support of the SWIFT consortium.
- We have seen numbers of children on the child protection register drop significantly from 79 to 55 in the past twelve months.
- We have established key relationships across the UK with organisations such as Inclusive Neighbourhoods, Lives Through Friends, Nesta and Shared Lives Plus.
- As we have redesigned our front end children's services we have had some impressive results with the percentage of initial assessments completed on time sustaining a percentage of 77% and core assessments on time increasing from 73% to 81%. We have also had to be resilient in managing high demand and have experienced acute staff shortages in some areas of the service. During these testing times we have made use of agency staff to ensure adequate staff cover.
- There have been times when I must acknowledge that our service response dipped below what I consider acceptable. One example was where we had concerns regarding staff attitudes within one of our learning disability services. We responded immediately to this situation and have taken robust action where required. In children's services we commissioned independent review of a case where there appeared to have been unacceptable delays and we have been commended in court for our subsequent response to this situation.
- We have restructured our commissioning team and are introducing a new childcare structure as from April 2013.
- We have played an active part in the setting up of the regional safeguarding children's board.
- We have hosted a delegation of senior officials from Belarus and one of our social workers has flown out to share her expertise around autism.
- In line with other Welsh Authorities, we have struggled to deliver our services within budget and ended the year with a £869,000 deficit. We have been assisted by additional resources of around £1m from the council's reserves for 2013/14.

Gwent Frailty Measures

- 570 people have used the reablement element of frailty in the last year
- 65%[#] of people are fully independent following reablement
- The average size of care package is 10 hours

[#] provisional figure

What do others say?

We have recently received our feedback from our regulators CSSIW following a National Review of the Statutory Role of the Director of Social Services. Though the title suggests the focus was my role, in practice its judgement was based on a view of the whole service and how it was supported within the council.

It was a positive report which noted that:

“Overall the authority had systems and organisational features in place that support the statutory Director of Social Services and the advantages of the organisational structure of the fulfilment of the role were immediately apparent”.

“The Director of Social Services was seen as having the seniority to provide a strategic lead and promote ongoing change/partnership and modernisation on both a local authority and a Gwent-wide basis”.

This year Monmouthshire received an unsatisfactory judgment from Estyn regarding its education services. One element of this related to safeguarding within education and we took immediate action to ensure the necessary policy and support frameworks were in place to address the issues raised.

I am pleased that our latest fostering report has recognised the significant improvements that we have made to this service.

Comments from people who have used our services over the past year

“Over the moon with the service” (source; response to telephone survey)

“It would be nice to have the same person every week as I wouldn’t need to explain what needs to be done” (source; community care questionnaire)

“All the staff I have dealt with have been wonderful. All my children are comfortable and happy with the arrangements in place for them which is brilliant. With them being taken care of so well it has left me able to concentrate on getting better and back to a place where I am able to look after them myself again without help from childrens services” (source; children’s questionnaire)

“We would like to thank you all very sincerely for the care, kindness and friendship you showed to mum. She enjoyed it so much and we felt she was safe and happy with you” (source; thank you card to Severn View)

“As someone who has had no contact with you previously I found it difficult to find out who I actually needed to speak to. Things need to be simplified and clearer to people who are unfamiliar with the systems” (source; community care questionnaire)

“You have helped us with all your kindness and fantastic nature to overcome many obstacles recently. You’re one in a million!” (source; card received by the Youth Offending Service from a client and her mum)

“The lady that came to see me was wonderful; so helpful, caring, understanding and very clear in what I could be helped with and how to move forward to a better future for myself and children” (source; children’s questionnaire)

“It took a long time before a social worker visited” (source children’s questionnaire)

“We cannot fault our social worker, she has been tremendous” (source; community care questionnaire)

Progress on our priority actions from 2012/13

In last year's report I set us six sets of priority actions. In this section I comment on how well we have done. To make this clear for those who aren't familiar with the specifics of the work I also estimate our achievement of the priority actions in a rough marks out of 10 score.

1. *A focus on families 7/10*

- Joint Assessment of Families Framework launched in April 2013; some delays in reaching this point due to starting issues.
- Children's and Adults' disability/independent living teams are co-located in Chepstow Library and a new transition project has commenced.
- The restructuring of children's teams will support permanency planning. We have improved the flow through the court system and still have improvements to make.

2. *Doing what matters 9/10*

- Children's system review carried out and resulted in new processes and paperwork which has generated national interest.
- Adult System Review implemented – including new FISH (Finding Individual Solutions Here) service in place in Abergavenny and Chepstow.
- Systems reviews have improved our conversations with people; still work needed on improving advocacy services.

3. *Finding integrated solutions 7/10*

- Mental Health and Learning Disability strategies are progressing well but yet to be implemented on the ground.
- Frailty progressing across the county.
- Work with health to improve outcomes for children is still at an early stage.
- Significant progress on designing and implementing a bespoke adult IT system.

4. *Strengthening communities 6/10*

- Local Area Coordination initiative has started and forms a central element of the [Your County Your Way](#) work.
- The 18-24 employment/educational outcomes agenda has not moved forward significantly in the last year due to major changes within the educational service.
- Our "My Life" review of activities is underway; it has been delayed by operational challenges during the year.

5. *Building new safeguarding and protection systems 8/10*

- The South East Wales Safeguarding Children Board commenced in April 2013, chaired by Monmouthshire.
- A corporate parenting strategy is currently being finalised.
- A children's safeguarding and quality assurance unit, including an education specialist, was launched in September 2012. A dedicated quality assurance unit for adults has also been established as part of the commissioning reconfiguration.
- The Gwent Adult Safeguarding Board is functioning well.

6. *Developing our people 7/10*

- A number of key staff have been to the intrapreneurship school and are working on innovative projects.
- Performance management is improving, particularly the links between this report, the service improvement plans and individual objectives. There is further work required to ensure all staff have effective annual reviews.
- In adult services initiatives such as the monthly *Doing it Differently, Doing it Better* sessions are supporting staff to develop.

In summary, we have made progress in all six areas, with particular achievements in the areas of "Doing What Matters" and "Safeguarding".

Conclusion

I consider that we have made good progress over the last year and this is supported by the two reports from our regulators CSSIW (the fostering report and the inspection of the role of the Director of Social Services). As always the developmental agenda has to be balanced with maintaining effective services on the ground. The pace of change at a local and regional level described in this report is considerable.

As I look forward to the agenda for 2013/14 I must acknowledge the considerable financial challenge ahead, particularly if projected patterns of demand continue. The other issue is that of organisational capacity to deliver the fast paced agenda. Innovation is a key aspect of this - equally we must ensure robust HR, training and performance management systems are in place.

Finally, I enter the new financial year with optimism and excitement, alongside realism about the financial and organisational challenge ahead.

Our priority actions for 2013/14

Earlier I described the three year strategy, with its three themes and six priorities which will drive our work. Here are the priority actions for this year, grouped under the same six priorities. We will evaluate our progress against these and report back in next year's Director's report.

Priority	1. <i>A focus on families</i>
Outcome	That families are supported during key transitions or times of stress.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and evaluate the Joint Assessment of Families Framework • Engage with education and health re: children and young people with complex needs • Work with a small group of young people and their families to design a new model for transition

Priority	2. <i>Doing what matters</i>
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"> • Undertake systems reviews of fostering and children and adults with disabilities • Influence the design of all-Wales approaches for assessment, review and IT to ensure systems are fit for purpose • Take forward the <i>Changing Practice Changing Lives</i> Programme

Priority	3. <i>Finding integrated solutions</i>
Outcome	That services are built around the needs of the individual and deliver "what matters".
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an integrated locality management model across mental health • Evaluate our integrated community services model to evidence its impact and sustainability • Work with others to establish a joint childrens board with ABHB and other partners

Priority	4. <i>Strengthening communities</i>
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"> • Implement Local Area Coordination in two sites across Monmouthshire • Establish new services for people with learning disabilities within the “My Life” model • Develop restorative practice across Monmouthshire in collaboration with education, police and youth service

Priority	5. <i>Building new safeguarding and protection systems</i>
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"> • Implement the regional safeguarding approach locally and evaluate to ensure improved outcomes from children and young people • Lead safeguarding elements of the Estyn action plan to ensure robust processes and relationships in place • Influence the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act to ensure that new adult safeguarding powers are workable.

Priority	6. <i>Developing and supporting our people</i>
Outcome	That all our staff are trained and motivated to deliver excellent person-centred support
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop leadership skills, innovation capacity and resilience across all of our teams • Ensure all staff have agreed objectives and development plans which support the priorities of the Directorate • Focus on attracting and retaining the right people

Performance Measures

We have clear strategies to set the direction our services will be taking in the years ahead. We recognise that this is not easily measurable at the current time and and that we cannot take our eyes off the basics of service delivery. We include here some more traditional and comparable measures of our performance.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13 ¹
The number of adults who received a service during the year	2632	2547	2570
The number of children looked after at 31 March	78	106	102
The number of children on the child protection register on 31 March	62	79	55
The number (and rate per 10,000 population) of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons	40 (4.68)	21 (2.42)	16 (1.77)
The percentage of adult clients supported in the community during the year	New 2011/12	87.6%	86.85%
The number (and rate per 1000 population) of older people supported in residential settings	245 (13.59)	239 (12.90)	254 (13.21)
The percentage of carers of adults who were offered their own assessment or review	31.7%	25%	72.2%
The percentage of people who were fully independent following reablement	53%	52%	57%
The percentage of surveyed adult service users who were satisfied with the services they received	92%	93%	96%
The number of referrals to childrens services dealt with the same day	98.1%	96.7%	93.9%
The percentage of referrals to childrens services that were re-referrals	30.6%	20.2%	16.2%
The percentage of initial assessments completed within 7 working days	76.4%	77.0%	76.5%
The percentage of children looked after or on the child protection register with a social worker	100%	100%	100%
The percentage of reviews of looked after children carried out on time	100%	100%	100%
The percentage of reviews of children on the child protection register carried out on time	100%	99.1%	90.5%
Average education qualification points score of 16 year olds who have been looked after	141	139	269

For many of these measures comparable data for other areas will be available at infobasecymru.net

¹ This report is being published before our data for 2012/13 has been verified by Wales Audit Office. It is therefore subject to amendment.

What we Spend

