

CWM TAF POPULATION ASSESSMENT

March 2017

WHAT IS A POPULATION ASSESSMENT?

This report forms part of the first Cwm Taf Population Assessment. The information in this document has been collected and explored with the help of the people who know our communities best - those who work in and use care and support services in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf (which is often called the Cwm Taf region).

In 2014, the Welsh Government published the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) (referred to in this document as 'the SSWB Act'). The Act brings together, for the first time, all parts of care and support services and the ways in which they are delivered. The Act puts a 'duty' on Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Merthyr Tydfil Council, Cwm Taf University Health Board and their partners (including the voluntary sector) to think about the overall 'well-being' of people who use care and support services and the carers who help them. The Act sets out the particular ways in which these organisations must go about delivering change.

As part of the Act, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Authorities and Cwm Taf University Health Board must jointly carry out an assessment of the care and support needs of our population and the needs of carers. The range and level of services required to meet those needs as well as the range and level of preventative services must also be assessed, including any actions necessary to provide services through the medium of Welsh.

Senior officers from the local public service organisations responsible for the Act come together in a group called the Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board. It is the responsibility of this Board to make sure that this Population Assessment is done and to follow up its findings with action to make any changes needed.

The purpose of this Assessment is to help public services and their partners understand more about care and support needs and services in Cwm Taf, what we have already, what we do well and what we need to improve. It will help us to make better decisions as well as plan and deliver services more effectively together in the future. We will need to develop a plan (called a Local Area Plan), which sets out the areas of work we intend to carry out in the future and services we need to develop to help us meet the care and support needs of the people in Cwm Taf. The Area Plan will need to consider how we might need to reorganise our systems and processes,

what types of services we need and where they need to be, who should provide them, how to create/change services and how to spend money effectively to have the best impact/outcomes for service users and carers The Local Area Plan will be published by April 2018.

In order to know what the priorities are when it comes to improving people's well-being in Cwm Taf and meeting their care and support needs (by designing and delivering services in the best way), we must first know:

- What level of care and support is needed;
- Where the gaps are and how to fill them; and
- How services need to change to make sure that they are providing that level of care and support and preventative services.

We also need to know what the people of Cwm Taf think 'good' well-being is and what good services look like to them.

This document contains an overview of the 'headline' information relating to specific care and support categories. The categories of the Population Assessment are: carers, children and young people, learning disability, mental health, older people, physical disability, sensory impairment and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

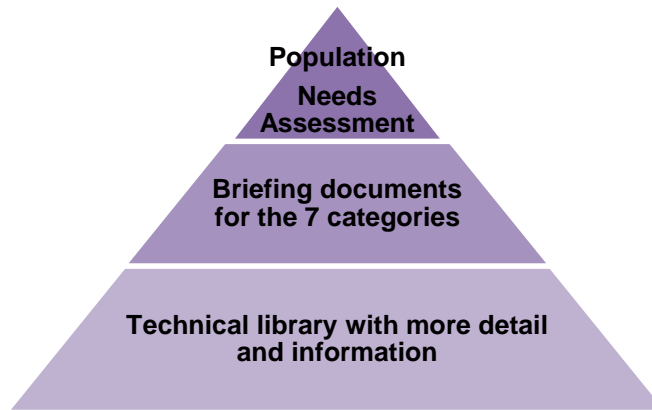
The headline information is based on what we have found out through the [Understanding Our Communities](#) project, in which we spoke to people who live and work in Cwm Taf, people who use public services, people who work in public services, community groups and anyone else who wanted to have their say. This information was analysed for common things that people thought were important or wanted to talk about. We have also used data, statistics and research information to help us build a picture of care and support needs for people in Cwm Taf.

In addition to the findings for the separate categories, this Assessment also identifies 'overarching themes.' These overarching themes are the things which are common to more than one category and will have an impact on how public services should meet the care and support needs of people in Cwm Taf in the future.

We can use what we have learned in this Assessment to think about the ways in which we provide care and support services and, more importantly, how we can work better together to make sure that our services are doing the best for individuals and our communities.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This report contains the headline information of the Cwm Taf Population Assessment.



The triangle shows the different parts of our work which taken together make up Cwm Taf's Assessment Report. Each level of this Assessment is supported by a more detailed level of data and information. This is held in a [technical library](#) which you might like to browse through. You can also click on the links in this document ([the words underlined and in blue](#)), which will take you to other related documents or websites. The Assessment Report has been put together like this so that each reader can explore the information we have collected and analysed in as much or as little detail as they would like and can follow up any particular areas of interest.

This document gives people an overview and flavour of what we have found and signposts to other more detailed components of our assessment. It contains the headline information, but a fuller understanding can be built using the different parts.

If you are interested in learning more about the headline information in this document, you can follow the links to the individual briefing documents:

- [Carers](#)
- [Children and Young People](#)
- [Learning Disability](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Older People](#)
- [Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment](#)
- [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence](#)

The briefing documents look at the information the headlines are based on more closely, including statistics and views from people who have taken part in the conversation. All the information that has been used to inform the content of this Assessment can be found in the briefing documents and library.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT THE SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT?

The SSWB Act sets out how public services and their partners need to change their approach to caring for and supporting people. The Act is based on four principles. If public service organisations take these into account when working, we will be able to carry out our duty:

- The Act supports people who have care and support needs to achieve **well-being**
- **People** are at the heart of the new system by giving them an equal say in the support they receive
- **Partnership** and co-operation drives service delivery
- Services will promote the **prevention** of escalating need and the right help is available at the right time

Many changes are already being made in Cwm Taf to respond to the SSWB Act. Both the requirements of the Act and the results of this Assessment mostly reinforce a lot of what our public services have already been thinking about and work we have started to do together. This includes identifying where some of the gaps are, or what we may need to do next, using the resources we have better.

The Act is '*transformational*.' This means that it will change the way in which care and support services are designed and delivered in the future. The difference will mean that services will concentrate on making the lives of the people that use them better, by giving those people more control over how they use services and making sure that services are organised to support the things that already work well for people.

Public services will also work more closely together, in better ways to make sure the resources they have go further and to make sure people are able to get care and support when they need it, where they need it and how they need it. The Act also says that public services must try and prevent problems from occurring and deal with care and support needs earlier.

For the purposes of the SSWB Act, the Welsh Government has spoken to people who use and work in care and support services about well-being and have written a [Well-being Statement](#), which describes some of the things which affect our well-being:

Making sure you have your rights

Being physically, mentally and emotionally happy

You are protected from abuse, harm and neglect

Having education, training, sports and play

Positive relationships with family and friends

Being part of the community

Having a social life and enough money to live a healthy life

Having a good home

The Welsh Government has provided some ways to measure these aspects of well-being. These are called [well-being indicators](#) and the idea is that if people agree with the statements about the way they live and feel, their well-being can be considered to be 'good.' Well-being is a difficult thing to actually measure and so it is really important that we look at the things which make up well-being (who we are, how we feel, where we live, where we go and what we do or want to be able to do or achieve) for every individual person we work with in helping to understand their need for services.

The four sections below describe important aspects of the SSWB Act that we have taken account of as we have developed our Assessment and as we have drawn together our findings and analysis:

Well-being

We have already talked about well-being as one of the principles of the SSWB Act, but well-being is also the focus of another important Welsh Government law, called the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBFG Act) is about improving the well-being of the people and communities of Wales, now and in the future. It puts a duty on public services to contribute locally to seven national well-being goals:



The five particular ways in which public services must work to do this are:

- Think about the long term;
- Look to prevent problems;
- Look to contribute towards the Act's seven Well-being Goals and the goals of their own and other organisations;
- Work better with each other; and
- Work better with people and communities.

As part of the WBFG Act, public services have completed a [Well-being Assessment](#) which looks at the four themes of social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being. This has helped us to understand what makes up well-being in Cwm Taf. The things that are important to *everyone* about their well-being are also often things that matter to people with care and support needs. It is important to remember that well-being means different things to different people at different times in their lives.

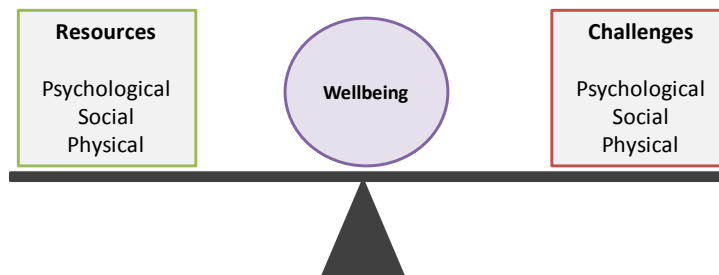
What we have, then, is two very important pieces of legislation in Wales, both focussed on well-being in different ways but which need to be looked at together and not as completely separate, unrelated things. In Cwm Taf, these two important

pieces of work have been carried out by the same group of officers. We have been looking at data and information and speaking to people, to gather information and views. This will help to make sure that the headlines of both assessments, together, create a *full* picture to help us plan what to do next. Lots of other national and local policies and strategies have also been taken into account when writing both Assessments, including the views of the independent Commissioners for Wales. This work is ongoing and the Assessments provide us with a starting point to set priorities and plan for the future of our services.

People have tried to define wellbeing in different ways, but it is complicated. Words such as ‘happiness,’ ‘life satisfaction,’ ‘positive relationships’ and ‘realising potential’ have all been used to describe some of the things that make up wellbeing. However, as our starting point for this Assessment we have used the following definition,¹ where wellbeing is:

“The balance point between an individual’s resource pool and the challenges they face.”

In life, we face challenges every day. Wellbeing is when people have the psychological, social and/or physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge. When people have more challenges than resources, the see-saw dips, along with their wellbeing.



This definition can be applied to all individuals, regardless of age, gender or culture. It allows for the idea that each individual has their own resource pool which affects how they personally cope with challenges and experience wellbeing. It is also optimistic and shows how people can use their resources to take control of their lives when their see-saw dips.

People

¹ Dodge R, Daly A, Huyton J & Saunders L. (2012) [The challenge of defining wellbeing, International Journal of Wellbeing](#), 2 (3), 22-235

Cwm Taf is made up of two local authority areas; Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. There are 295,865 people living in Cwm Taf; 20% of the population lives in Merthyr Tydfil and 80% lives in Rhondda Cynon Taf. More people live here than live in other places of the same size in Wales, but our population is not expected to rise as much as other areas in the next twenty years. By 2039 our population is predicted to rise to 304,543.

Table 1: Population Projection (2039)

	Estimated population 2014	Projected population in 2039 (based on 2014 estimate)	Estimated variance in projected population 2014 to 2039 (+/-)	Estimated percentage variance in projected population 2014 to 2039 (+/-)
Merthyr Tydfil	59,065	58,062	-1,003	-1.7
Rhondda Cynon Taf	236,888	246,481	+9,593	+4.0
Cwm Taf	295,865	304,543	+8,678	+2.9

Source: [Stats Wales](#)

By 2036 our population is predicted to rise to 297,000. By 2036 our total population aged 64 years and under will decrease but the numbers aged 65 years and over will grow significantly, with the biggest increase being in those aged 85 years and over. This will have significant implications for individuals, the communities they live in and the ways in which services are provided to meet their needs.

The SSWB Act is about changing the focus of care and support services, thinking what works well and really understanding what might need to change. The way that public services are required to work by the Act means that services focus on putting people at the heart of the new system and what we do.

By involving people and communities in their own care and support services, public services can make sure that the right services are provided at the right time in the right place, from the very beginning. This will mean a better chance of services being able to help the people using them achieve the outcomes and results they want. Being involved in their own care and support must include people having a say in

the decisions that affect their lives or being in charge of their own care and support arrangements.

The Act is about the people who already use services, but also about the people who may need to use services in the future. Lots of work has been started locally to ensure that anyone who wants to have their say about these services, can. The people we have talked to already represent many of the voices in our communities. Making sure that this continues is really important. We have talked to people of different genders, ages and nationalities, for example. As we continue with this work, we will need to make sure that we give *everyone* who wants it the opportunity to get involved in this conversation through a variety of different ways.

People who use care and support services are also part of our whole Cwm Taf population. We know that we need to involve the people using our services in how we deliver them, but lots of other people have a part to play, too. The people who use our care and support services are part of a community. A community can mean the place they live. Community can also mean family, social group or people with similar care and support needs.

We need to take what we have learned through this Assessment and apply it to different individuals and communities when planning and delivering future work. We will be able to use this Assessment to approach working in particular places with a good understanding of what is important to people with care and support needs and how we might improve services there. There is already work in Cwm Taf exploring the ways in which we could do this.

Partnerships

The Act requires Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, Merthyr Tydfil Council, Cwm Taf University Health Board and their partners (including the voluntary sector) to work together in a more 'joined up' way than they have in the past. By making sure that public service organisations in Cwm Taf work together, we can make better use of our resources, both in terms of the staff we employ and the money we use to buy services from other organisations. This is particularly important at times when we don't have as much money to spend as we may have in the past.

This is not a completely *new* way of working, but it can be done even more effectively by also working more closely with our service users and residents. Public services use terms like 'culture change' (meaning changing the way we do things), 'strength based working' (meaning using what we already have and know is good), 'coproduction' (meaning working and deciding things together including service

users, carers and the public), and ‘integration’ (meaning joining services together) when talking about this way of working. Although the things we are talking about are complex and can’t be achieved overnight, they can be thought of more simply as working better together to use what we have to make sure our services make a greater difference to the people who use them.

Prevention

Prevention means stopping problems before they start, or stopping problems from getting worse. The Act says that public services should arrange the right services in the right way to make prevention possible and effective. This will make a difference to how money is spent and how resources are targeted at particular people, places or problems. Public services need to make decisions together about services.

In the past, our services have reacted to problems once they have already started, or if they step in to help people in crisis. If we are able to act earlier and move quickly before things get worse, we can help people to lead better lives without problems, or without their problems hugely affecting their well-being.

Public services need to look at ways of supporting preventative services which they perhaps haven’t made the most of in the past, like using social enterprises (a business or community activity that puts the money it makes back into the community).

Once people begin using care and support services, it is important that they are supported not to become dependent on them. This is often called ‘reablement’ and it is about supporting people to take some control of their own care and support needs and allow services to take a step back. Good reablement services include not just services provided by the statutory sector but also a wide range of services provided in and by the community through voluntary and community groups.

CARE AND SUPPORT CATEGORIES

The SSWB Act asks us to look at the care and support needs of the following groups of people in particular:

- Carers;
- Children and young people;
- People with learning disabilities;
- People with mental health problems/illness;

- Older people;
- People with physical disabilities;
- People with sensory impairments; and
- People who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The services provided are usually organised around each category separately. The people in each category usually have a particular set of reasons why they need care and support. Because of this, it is sometimes assumed that the things which are important to people within a category are the same (and that their needs are different to the people in the other categories).

This is not always the case and generally, people's needs overlap; for example, an older person might suffer with dementia, in which case this person would be categorised as both a person with a mental health illness and an older person.

This Assessment shows that dividing people up into these categories does not always help us to understand the needs of people and their families and what care and support they may need. That said, this Assessment has been carried out in line with the requirements of the SSWB Act, which set out that care and support needs in Cwm Taf must be looked at under these categories.

A summary of each of the briefing documents follows. However, we found from talking to people in Cwm Taf and from our analysis of data that much of the important information about how we could or should work in the future is the same across categories. There were few things which people feel are important which related only to the specific needs they have. People reminded us to look at the whole person and not just one particular problem they might be facing. The things that are important to carers, for example, are broadly the same things that are important to older people, or people with a learning disability. Later on in this document we have therefore highlighted these common issues which we have called overarching themes.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

We are now going to look at the main headlines that have come out of this Population Assessment, in relation to each category.

Carers

You can read more about the care and support needs of carers in Cwm Taf in the [Carers Briefing Document](#), including the statistical data we have analysed, what carers have told us and some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

A carer is anyone, of any age, who helps someone else with their day to day life, for example, because they may be ill, frail, or have a disability but who is unpaid (except for carers related allowances). This includes children who care for a parent, parents who care for a disabled child and adults who care for other adults. This is often referred to as “informal caring” (to distinguish it from care provided by public services or private providers). Informal carers are really important in meeting the care and support needs of those they care for and they must be helped with their caring role so that their own health and well-being does not suffer and their own needs are not overlooked.

Nearly 13% of the population, nearly 40,000 people, are carers in Cwm Taf, but there are probably many more who don't call themselves a carer, as they just think of themselves as a parent, husband, wife, partner, child, friend or neighbour.

Because there are higher levels of poor physical health, disabilities and people who suffer with mental health problems in Cwm Taf than elsewhere in Wales, there is a greater need for help from informal carers, like family and friends. Our population is growing older and living longer and this also has an impact on the number of people who will need care and support of some kind.

Whilst it is good that more people are living longer in Cwm Taf, we need to make sure that the people getting older continue to have good well-being and are getting the right care and support. This is especially important for people who have caring responsibilities. There are more and more older people caring for even older people, or for more than one person (maybe caring for a partner and a parent). The majority of carers in Cwm Taf are over fifty and we know that the number of carers over the age of sixty-five is increasing more quickly than carers in other age groups.

We need to make sure that we think about each individual carer and what *they* need. The issues associated with caring will vary considerably depending on the individual circumstances of the carer and the needs of the person they are looking after. Our engagement and data analysis showed us that whilst carers have many common concerns, for example, wanting to be listened to or how to find information or support, the nature of their particular circumstances and those of the person they caring for means that “one size does not fit all.” How we respond to the needs of a young carer, who is supporting a parent and siblings at the same time as trying to

keep up with their education or just have time to go out and have some fun, will be very different from the support needed by an older person caring for their spouse or partner who is also elderly or suffering with dementia, or the needs of a parent carer of a child with disabilities.

If we are to meet their needs, we first have to identify carers of all ages, raising awareness amongst the public and with our staff about who carers are and what they do. For example, young carers told us that even though they carried a great responsibility, they also felt very proud of what they were doing and their closeness to their family members. However, they wanted more people in their schools and in their communities to understand what it was like for them on a day to day basis.

In Cwm Taf, public services have developed a new Carers' Strategy. The strategy was put together by the key services which support carers, based on what carers had to say. In particular, carers wanted to be recognised and valued for their caring role. They wanted to be listened to and have more choice and control over their lives. For this to happen they need the right information, advice and assistance, together with a range of services to help them carry out their caring role. This includes support to maintain their own health but is also about being able to take up education, training and employment opportunities as well as being able to enjoy activities outside caring. Young carers can face particular challenges coping with school life and maintaining relationships with their friends in their life outside caring. This can sometimes affect their aspirations and life chances.

Carers are a really important part of making sure that families and communities are able to support themselves, get the care they need to improve their well-being and take ownership of their own lives. However, carers must be supported just as much by preventative services and care and support services as the people they care for. We know that 32% of carers in Cwm Taf are providing a considerable amount of time (more than fifty hours a week) caring for somebody and often this can cause issues with their own health and well-being. 35% of carers in Cwm Taf reported in the 2011 census that their health was fair, bad or very bad. Caring for someone else should not take up so much of a carer's time and energy that they are not able to have a 'balanced' life, where their own well-being is affected negatively by their caring responsibilities and they cannot continue to connect with a life alongside their caring responsibilities. Having a break, or respite care, both planned and in an emergency situation, was a big issue for the carers we spoke to.

The strongest message to come out of the Assessment for carers however was that "what good looks like for carers is when we get it right for the person they are caring

for.” This really needs carers and service providers in Cwm Taf working together, taking advantage of the knowledge and experience the carer has, sharing information and expertise to join up services better, not just in health and social care but also in other areas like housing, leisure and transport.

Children and young people

You can read more about the care and support needs of children and young people in Cwm Taf in the [Children and Young People Briefing Document](#) including the statistical data we have analysed, what children and young people have told us and some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

There is evidence that the first one thousand days of life (this includes before the child is born, up until they are two years old) have a significant effect on the rest of the child’s life. As Cymru Well Wales has explained it; “these years have a long lasting impact on individuals and families. They shape the destiny for children as they grow up: their educational achievements, their ability to secure an income, their influences on their own children, and their health in older age.”² Public services need to recognise the specific things that help with giving those with care and support needs the best possible start in life and the best ways to help them to get it.

Public services should decide which facts and figures should be gathered and shared about children in their first two years of life. By improving how we do this, we will be better able to ensure that we work together to get the right assistance and support to families at a time when it matters most and can have greatest impact.

To help to prevent care and support needs for children developing in the early stages of life, we can focus on providing support and assistance with meeting the challenges of parenting. Activities held across Cwm Taf to try and do this are not always well attended. The people who work in our services think that this might be because attending these classes makes parents feel that they are not good parents and that if classes were made available to everyone, there would be less negativity associated with joining in. Public services also need to do some work around understanding exactly what works in terms of parent support. Other support that is – or is considered being – made available to everyone, not just families who are most vulnerable include support with self esteem, positive relationships and life skills.

² Cymru Well Wales, [First 1000 Days](#)

In Cwm Taf, we have a Children and Young People's Statement of Strategic Intent. This document sets out the ways in which all services that care for and support children should be working, to make sure that children and their families get what they need, in the ways they need it. This includes their education and health. The work carried out under this Statement of Strategic Intent means that there is a good opportunity to provide both early help and intensive support in ways that are consistent with a joined up approach to our interventions and the way we work with families.

There are certain 'groups' of children who are more likely to need care and support services in their lives. These include children from families where there are other care and support needs, children who have been separated from their families and children with disabilities. It is important to remember that all of the needs that adults may have, children may have too, including being a carer, having poor mental health or experiencing violence or abuse.

Some children go through physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or live in families where there is parental separation, substance misuse, domestic violence, or mental illness. These are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and 47% of adults in Wales have experienced at least one ACE during childhood. These experiences cause long lasting health harms which continue into adulthood and older age.

One example of the impact of ACEs relates to children in need. A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is: unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or who is disabled.

In Cwm Taf, rates of children in need are declining, although they remain the highest in Wales. A 2015 report found that abuse or neglect accounted for 60% of referrals to social services in Cwm Taf. Domestic abuse, parental mental illness and parental substance /alcohol misuse are the most frequently recorded ACEs relating to children in need.

If we want to build strong, resilient children we can have the greatest impact if we focus on stopping these things from happening and protecting children and their families from the impact of ACEs during the first 1000 days of life (from conception to age two).

Evidence tells us that investing in programmes that support children's well-being is good value, as early years programmes are often less expensive than the services needed to deal with the problems caused by poor child development.

As with all the other people we are talking about, this is about more than just the children who 'officially' use our services. By making sure that children are supported to take control of their own lives and well-being, we can help them to live their best possible lives. If we are talking about stopping problems before they start, or stopping problems getting worse, working with children and their parents to deal with these problems is the most obvious place to start. This means that we must provide clear and easily accessible information about how young people and their families can find out more about what early help is available in their area. Young people have told us that they do not know how to go about getting information like this - so we know that there is a requirement to work on this.

Children have really important and helpful things to say about their needs, how they are involved in designing and delivering services and being a part of their own communities. We need to make sure that we listen to what children have to say and really consider it in our work. We need to think about the language and information we use to communicate with children and young people (how it is presented, how it is shared). Services which work with children in all parts of their lives, including their homes, families, schools and communities, need to come together to support them in a joined up way.

Learning disability

You can read more about the care and support needs of people with learning disabilities in Cwm Taf in the [Learning Disabilities Briefing Document](#), including some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

People who have a learning disability usually find it hard to understand things or learn new skills. They can't always live their lives without the help and support of others. There are many different types of learning disabilities and this is another example of how the care and support we provide needs to be thought about for each individual person. We need to make sure that we fully understand the different learning disabilities that could affect people in Cwm Taf.

We have some great services to help people with learning disabilities. These services have worked together to write a Learning Disability Statement of Intent. At the

moment, we are consulting on this document with the people and their families who use these services to make sure that it is right.

Children and adults with mild to moderate learning disability mainly receive their health care from paediatricians, GPs and primary care services. Cwm Taf University Health Board provides high quality holistic health care to this client group.

Secondary care Learning Disability services for adults within the Cwm Taf region are currently provided by Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board (ABMU), as a network service with a close link to local mental health and primary care services. Currently, there are typically between 75 and 85 adult clients with moderate to severe learning disability living within a variety of small home placements managed by ABMU in Cwm Taf.

Over time, some people who use learning disability care and support services have come to expect these services to be delivered in a particular way. People with learning disabilities could be more independent of public services and more in control of their own lives. There is some work to be done to understand how this will affect the changes to some of the ways we work and how we continue to make sure that our services are right.

There are some people who will always have care and support needs, because of certain conditions that they have (like autistic spectrum disorders). This is unavoidable and the people who have learning disability care and support needs are more likely to need to use our 'specialist' services to be able to live their lives in the way they want.

Even though a joined up approach across many of our services is needed, there will always be those people who need a particular kind of care or support and it is important that we recognise this and provide where we need to.

The people who know best what they need from services are the people who use them, care for people who use them and work in them. It is really important that they have their say. Many people who have a learning disability want the same things as people who don't; to have independence, to be in control of their own lives and needs and to be a part of their community.

Mental health

You can read more about people who have care and support needs as a result of mental health problems/mental illness in Cwm Taf in the [Mental Health Briefing](#)

Document, including some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

Having good mental health is important for everyone as it is essential to physical health, relationships, education, training, work and achieving potential. We know that mental health problems are common and affect one in four people at some time in their lives.

Mental health problems such as stress and anxiety affect how we think, feel and behave, and cause difficulties in our everyday lives; these can be helped by different kinds of support.

Mental illness is a term used to describe more severe and long lasting conditions which may be diagnosed and need treatment from mental health services. This can include things like depression, schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder.

Together for Mental Health is the Welsh Government strategy which is about promoting good mental health for everyone, as well as providing the right services for people with mental illness. It covers all ages – children and young people, adults and older people.

Around 50% of lifetime mental illness starts by the age of 14. Children and young people who are at greater risk of mental health problems include those going through family breakdown; those in the Looked After System and those showing behavioural problems; children who have experienced trauma. These things are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and 47% of adults in Wales have experienced at least one ACE during childhood. These experiences cause long lasting health harms which continue into adulthood and older age.

It is important to identify children at risk of mental ill health as early as possible, and we should focus our efforts in preventing and/or protecting against the impact of ACEs for both parents and children, especially during the first 1000 days of life from conception to age two.

There are challenges in defining mental health conditions in children and young people due to differences in how cases are recognised, coded and recorded. Different agencies providing services to children and young people have different definitions of the words used in relation to mental health/illness and also in the meaning of terms such as ‘prevention’ and ‘early intervention’. As a result, data collection in this area is variable. This means that for conditions like Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) there isn’t enough data to assess the level of need. There has been a rise in referrals to

the specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and this has led to longer waiting times for assessment and treatment, but again the data is incomplete and so we don't have a reliable estimate of the level of need for these services.

Cwm Taf has the highest levels of mental illness and poor well-being amongst adults in Wales. Poor mental health in adults can be caused by lots of things in life, including money, not living a healthy life or certain life events and experiences. There are groups of people who are more likely to suffer mental health problems or mental illness, like people who have served in the military, people who have alcohol or drug problems, or people who experience other types of harm such as violence and abuse.

Often, adults with mental health problems also have other support needs. For example, housing problems are often given as a reason for a person being admitted or re-admitted to inpatient mental health care. Providing enough wider community support such as housing, debt/employment advice and social opportunities helps people manage their mental health problems and feel in control of their lives.

Our population aged over 65 is set to increase over the next 20 years, with the largest percentage increase predicted to be in those aged 85 and over. This will lead to an increase in chronic illnesses and will have a significant impact on individuals, carers and health and social care services. In particular, the number of people suffering from dementia will increase.

For older people with dementia who are admitted to hospital for a physical health problem, their dementia may cause them to stay longer in hospital than necessary because there may not be the right type of accommodation/social care available.

One third of our population aged over 65 live alone. This can make well-being worse due to social isolation.

As the population of older people increases in the future, a wider range of extra care housing options will be needed. This could include smaller, energy efficient homes, retirement complexes, sheltered accommodation, and care homes in order for older people to live independently in environments that support well-being. It is important that communities become more 'age-friendly', so that older people can feel included and live independently for as long as possible. The Alzheimer's Society has a recognition process for dementia-friendly communities. In our area, Maerdy, Mountain Ash and Pontypridd are signed up to this scheme.

Preventing mental illness has many benefits for individuals, services and wider society. For lots of reasons including stigma, people with mental illness may not present to services until their condition is causing them problems or even at crisis point. The cost of treating mental health problems is also very large compared with other health problems. Mental illness accounts for 20% of the total burden of disease, compared with 16.2% for cardiovascular disease and 15.6% for cancers.

As a first step, it is important to support well-being. Mental well-being is linked to conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. Mental ill-health is linked with unemployment, less education, low income as well as poor physical health and difficult life events. Action to promote well-being therefore needs to address the basic structures which affect our lives – education, employment, economy. This directly links with the themes of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Building confidence and resilience in individuals and communities improves well-being. People have told us that there is a strong community spirit in our area and they dislike the label 'deprived' that is often given to Cwm Taf. They feel that people should be made more aware of the positive things that are happening through the many voluntary sector groups and they value the beautiful outdoor environment. All these things promote positive mental well-being.

The language we use about mental health is often confusing and stigmatising. For example, the term 'mental health services' actually relates to services for those people who already have some degree of mental illness. There are differences in the definitions and terms such as 'prevention' and 'early intervention' used across services. This is confusing for service users and is a barrier to integrated working between agencies.

Service providers have different funding arrangements and eligibility criteria for people to be able to access their services. Where definitions and terminology vary between services, people with mental illness may not meet eligibility criteria but still have care and support needs that go unmet.

Good data and information is essential to assess the need for, and planning of, services. For clients with mental health problems/mental illness across all ages we have examples where data is limited, or poorly and inconsistently collected. This makes assessment of need and service planning very difficult.

This client group may be receiving care and support from health, social care or community services as their needs are complex. For example, patients with dementia

need familiarity, but have told us they are often ‘bounced’ from service to service, which is unsettling for them. A recent report³ has noted there are many causes of delayed transfers of care, including lack of integration between NHS and care services. Tackling this is a system problem which requires effective working between health, social care and other partners so that service users receive the right care.

Older people

You can read more about the care and support needs of older people in Cwm Taf in the [Older People Briefing Document](#), including some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

More people are living longer in Cwm Taf. This is good, but we need to make sure that the people getting older continue to enjoy their lives and do not have so many care and support needs.

In Cwm Taf, we have an Older People’s Statement of Intent which sets out how public services plan to design and deliver services for older people. The Statement of Intent tells us some key things which affect the health and well-being (the care and support needs) of older people. Older people contributed to this work and they are clear that they want public service organisations to arrange services to support their independence and help them stay in control of their own lives.

Lots of older people prefer to be able to do this with the support of family, friends and their community and to stay in their own home. Without these networks, older people often start to struggle, particularly as they get older (80 years old and beyond). It is important that public services get the support they give right, not just for the person with the needs, but also for the people who help them.

It goes without saying, but older people want to be treated with the same dignity and respect that they have been treated with all their lives, regardless of how they might get around, join in or communicate later on. Older people should be able to have as much of a say in their own lives and the services they use as anyone else.

Public services consider anyone over the age of fifty as an ‘older’ person. Many people at the age of fifty would argue that they are relatively young and would not personally define themselves as older, but it is at this age that people should consider planning for their old age pension, lifestyle, networks, etc. Public services

³ NHS Providers (2015) [Right place, right time, better transfers of care: a call to action](#)

and their partners are good at promoting healthy lifestyles, but we also need to make sure that people can get involved in and understand what is available in their communities (now and later when they might need it).

Older people, particularly those who are frail, often suffer with a combination of problems that have an impact on the way they connect with others. This could be because they have problems walking steadily, remembering things, or hearing and seeing well. All these things affect people's confidence and ability to get out and about and live their lives.

In carrying out this Assessment, people in Cwm Taf gave a clear message that feeling lonely or unconnected to friends can have a very negative effect on well-being and so we need to look at different ways of making sure that older people stay in touch with the things that matter to them and that there are opportunities for older people to stay active and connected.

Older people are more likely to suffer with illnesses or injuries that can stop them from being able to do as much for themselves. In the past, services have been put in place to do those things for them, but what we now know is that, with the right help, older people are able to regain the ability to do things for themselves and that this helps people feel better and more in control. In the future, public services and their partners will make sure that people have the opportunity to recover as much independence as they can, following a setback.

For some older people, their illness or frailty needs 'specialist' support. Public services in Cwm Taf agree that this support is best provided in the person's own home, as that is the place most people want to be. We will work with the person and their family to make sure the care and support is tailored to their situation and supports (not replaces) the help that they already get from others.

Sometimes though, if someone becomes very ill, or their care and support needs become very complicated, they may need to move to a nursing home (for example, people suffering from dementia). Public services need to make sure there are enough places available for people locally and that they are able to manage the care and support needs of this very vulnerable group of people. We also need to make sure that the family and connections people have are supported to continue wherever they live.

Physical disability and sensory impairment

You can read more about the care and support needs of people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments in Cwm Taf in the [Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Briefing Document](#) including some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

People who have physical disabilities may find it difficult to get around or carry out everyday tasks. 'Sensory impairment' means a problem with sight or hearing. People who have a physical disability do not necessarily have a sensory impairment, but some of the challenges they face can be similar.

For lots of people, the world around us can be a barrier to leading a full life. This is especially true for people with physical disabilities or sensory impairments. As public organisations, we need to make sure that people are able to get to use and communicate about the services they need in a way that suits them.

The care and support needs of children with physical disabilities or sensory impairments are very different to those of adults and can be complex and difficult to get right. The only way we can make sure is to involve children and their families in what we are planning to try and ask them whether or not services works.

As our population in Cwm Taf gets older, there is more time for people to develop the sorts of needs that require care and support services. By making sure that people and communities can easily get involved and help support themselves and each other, we need different ways in which people with physical disabilities or sensory impairments can get the care and support they need. People need to know what their options are and how to get involved.

There are some people who will always have care and support needs, because of certain conditions that they have (like Motor Neurone Disease). This is unavoidable and the people who have physical disability or sensory impairment care and support needs are more likely to require 'specialist' services to be able to live their lives in the way they want.

Even though a joined up approach across many of our services is needed, there will always be those people who need a particular kind of care or support and it is important that we recognise this and provide where we need to.

It is really important that people who use services, those who care for people using services and those who work in these services have their say. They are the people that know best what is needed to provide care and support services.

Many people who have a physical disability or sensory impairment want the same things as people who don't; to have independence, to be in control of their own lives and needs and to be a part of their community.

Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

You can read more about the care and support needs of people who have experienced violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence in Cwm Taf in the [Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Briefing Document](#), including some examples of the work that public services are currently doing in this area.

Historically, services which support people who have been victims of violence and abuse have been provided by the voluntary sector (i.e. charities) rather than the statutory sector (public services). However, this may change, as a new law has been passed which says that public services have to provide this type of care and support. Most of this work is paid for using funding from Welsh Government, the Police and Crime Commissioner and other grant funding organisations. This means that these services are not always as 'joined up' with other care and support services. This is odd, because evidence tells us that people who have been victims of these things are more likely to need other types of support. People who have experienced these things are more likely to misuse drugs or alcohol, or need mental health support.

In Cwm Taf, public services are writing a local strategy to guide the services we provide in this area and how we provide them. The local strategy is based on a national strategy and has three key themes; stopping these things from happening in the first place, stopping these things from happening again or getting worse and supporting people who have been affected by these things.

People who have had these things happen in their lives do not always feel confident in coming to services for help. We need to make sure that *anyone* who needs help feels that they can ask for it, not just the people that we know about through things like Police reports.

Violence and abuse is talked about a lot in services which focus on safety in our communities, but these terrible experiences can affect well-being in all parts of life and we need to make sure that the issues are being talked about in all the right places and that services are coming together in the right ways to help the best that they can.

Experiences of violence and abuse are complicated and not often talked about later on after the event. We need to look at how we ask the people we have helped what we did well and what we need to do differently. They are the only people who really know how our services should be providing care and support and we need to make it easy and comfortable for them to share their thoughts with us and be listened to.

We do not always think of these things happening to men, but they do and our services are not set up to offer care and support to men in the same way as women. We need to recognise that our communities are made up of different people and different relationships and think about how we can support everyone who has experienced violence or abuse.

Just as people who have suffered these things are more likely to have other care and support needs in the future, we can also think about the things that make it more likely for these things to happen in the first place. Children who see or experience violence and abuse are more likely to grow up to be violent or abusive themselves. We need to explore our understanding of *why* these things happen and use this to help us to avoid it, by helping victims, especially young victims, deal with it. To do this well, lots of services will need to come together to play their part in giving care and support.

SERVICES PROVIDED IN WELSH

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act says that public service organisations must take into account the care and support services they provide to people who speak Welsh. In 2016, the Welsh Language Commissioner (an independent role set up to advise, encourage and promote the use of the Welsh language) published a set of [Welsh Language Standards](#); a set of laws which public services must follow to make sure that people who prefer to use the Welsh language and people who prefer to use the English language are treated the same.

Just over 11% of people in Cwm Taf speak Welsh. Being able to speak Welsh has lots of benefits, including job possibilities, belonging to a community and making new connections with people who speak the same language. For some people, whose first language is Welsh, being able to receive the services they need through this medium can be really important to their well-being. For example, people suffering with dementia can return to using Welsh, as the language they used in childhood. It is important that these people are able to access services in the ways that suit them

best. It is because of these reasons that we need to get more people in Cwm Taf speaking Welsh in the future.

This will mean that public services need to be able to deliver services in Welsh. At the moment, public services work separately on the number of Welsh speakers who work in different services. If we are looking to join up lots of other parts of our services, it makes sense that we should explore together how we make sure that people who wish to speak to us or use our services in Welsh are able to do so.

At the moment, the information we have on things like the number of people speaking Welsh or the number of people learning Welsh in our services is not very good. The information we do have tells us that there are not enough Welsh speakers in our services to communicate with those with care and support needs in Welsh and we will continue to work together to address this.

THE OVERARCHING THEMES

This section of the Assessment explores in more detail the common themes which have come out of our conversations with the people who use and work in our services. These overarching themes have come up repeatedly as important to people across Cwm Taf. These fit with the things the SSWB Act requires public services and their partners to consider in designing and delivering services, which is reassuring. Partners in Cwm Taf have already started to look at many of the themes identified here but the findings from our Assessment work will help us to focus on what needs to change most.

Traditionally, services are provided to people based on whichever of the above categories they fall into when they first become known to public services, but these overarching themes show that services do not always need to be split in this way. If we can solve the more common problems, it will help people in all categories and provide a strong foundation on which to provide the more specific services they might also need because of their particular circumstances or condition.

The overarching themes are linked to each other, too. It is not a case of looking at each one individually, but rather looking at them all together. It is only by thinking about *all* of these things that we will be able to make the greatest difference to our service users.

Overarching theme: Using our Data more effectively

Data is any information that tells us about our services. This might be direct feedback from people who use our services, how the people who use our services

feel, or statistics, such as the number of people who have used them; it is basically any fact or figure about a service that can be ‘measured.’

Data about the care and support services we provide and the data we collect to give us evidence of how well we are doing is different in different public service organisations. Services do not measure the same things and are not always able to share the data they have with each other easily. This might be because of processes or systems in individual organisations, or to do with sensitive information.

Public services must ensure that we make the best use of our resources to avoid duplicating or wasting time and effort. What is available is often looked at by public service organisations separately, which is not always the best way. We could do this better; for example, we could collect data once and put it in one place. The time which would have been spent working on the *same* data in many places will be freed up to do other things, or to work on *different* data to add to the shared collection.

Public service organisations do not always or cannot always share data and do not always think they can share it with other services or the people and communities they help. This is getting in the way of services and communities being able to work well together. There is a very small amount of data that *can't* be shared for privacy reasons, but a lot more data which isn't shared could be. This would help services get a better understanding of the people and communities they work with and make it easier to join up solutions to problems.

There have been times when members of the same family, living in the same house, have been using different care and support services. If all organisations had access to the same data, they would be able to see, at a glance, which other services it is important that they link with.

The Welsh Community Care Information System is a data system which health and social care services across Wales will start to use and will have access to. This means that data will only need to be recorded in this system once and these services (in Councils and Health Boards) will all be able to see it. This is a positive first step towards efficient data sharing. In the future, we will also be able to make more use of information that now has to be collected routinely as part of the SSWB Act including feedback from individual service user assessment processes.

We also need to think about the data we are using to help us to make decisions about our services. Good data and information is essential to assess the need for, and planning of, services. We need to ensure that we are collecting the right and most helpful data.

As well as counting how many people have used a service, we need to collect data on what difference has been made by that service. If the things we set out to do are not working, or not having the impact we thought they would, we need the help of the people using our services to understand why. By sharing information better and finding more meaningful ways of measuring success, we are more likely to be able to work together to come up with services that meet people's needs.

Overarching theme: Information: Finding out more about support and services

Public services are doing lots of work around the information, advice and assistance they give and how people can find out easily and quickly what they want to know. This is anything that can help people or communities, like information on activities nearby, a suggestion of an organisation to contact for help or someone coming to their home to talk about how services can help in the future or to provide some assistance.

By focusing attention on giving this kind of information about what is available and how to be able to use it, it is expected that more people will be helped earlier on and may not go on to need 'specialist' services (services for the people with the most complicated needs), as they may have done in the past. It is too soon to tell whether or not this is true, but the early data suggests that working in this different way will have a positive effect. In future, the data collected around the information, advice and assistance we give can be used to help us think about the ways in which we deliver services and the services needed

If a person or community wants to do something, get involved in something or get help, one of the most obvious things that could stop them doing this is not knowing what is out there, or not knowing how to get involved in it. Some people might want to get involved in activities or services and they need to feel confident that they have the right information, or can get information easily. Both people who use services and people who work within public services and their partner organisations (including the voluntary sector) do not always know where to start when it comes to finding out about what is available to help.

There are more services, organisations, activities, clubs, groups, teams, classes and other things that can help people in our communities across Cwm Taf than we realise. What is available is always changing and public services find it difficult to keep track of it or always recognise the things that are most valuable to people.

There are lots of ways to search for and share information. In the last year, Cwm Taf public services and their partners including the voluntary sector have started making

as much information as possible available on the [Dewis Cymru](#) directory website. Merthyr Tydfil Council⁴, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council⁵ and [Cwm Taf University Health Board](#) also put information about what they offer on their own websites and in their public buildings (libraries, GP surgeries, etc.). There is, though, a lot still to be done and we have to work harder to collect and share information, views and ideas well.

We need to know what services are available, of course, but we also need to think about the *ways* in which knowledge is shared. The most obvious way to do this is through the people who know the areas and what is going on there. We need to work with people who use and work in our services and live in our communities to explore the best ways to keep information flowing and reaching the right people. This might be in ways that we haven't really used much in the past, like social media (Facebook, etc.).

People who are using care and support services will often be receiving different parts of their support from different organisations, including social services, voluntary sector organisations, private care companies and health services. People using care and support services are also often very unwell and the added complication of needing to coordinate their own care and repeat information many times can put an added strain on their well-being. Many of the organisations who play a part in the package of care and support have different information, equipment, activities and services to give and it is not always straightforward for the people receiving services to work out what they are entitled to, what is available and who they need to approach to get it.

People should also be able to give information back to public services. Public services call this the 'citizen voice' and it is about people being involved in the services they use and having their say in how those services could be made better.

If we want to involve people and communities fully in the information we have and get their opinions on it, we need to make sure that they understand it. Public services often use complicated language to describe things, which can mean that there is confusion between services, or between services and people, about what we are actually talking about. Language needs to be kept simple and clear, so that everyone understands what we are talking about.

Overarching theme: Connections

⁴ [Merthyr Tydfil Children's Services](#); [Merthyr Tydfil Adult's Services](#)

⁵ [Rhondda Cynon Taf Children's services](#); [Rhondda Cynon Taf Adults' services](#)

It's all well and good knowing what we want and how to get to it, but the next challenge is actually being *able* to get to it. People with care and support needs might not be able to get involved as easily as others. This might be because of the way they get around or the way they communicate.

We talk a lot about the layout of Cwm Taf (the roads, the transport, the countryside) and that it is not always easy to get to where you need to go, so we need to look at bringing our services to the people who need them in different ways. Connections could also be made by reaching out to each other in different ways, through social media or online communities. Finding ways to connect to each other better will particularly help people who might be feeling lonely or isolated.

We know that the links in our communities are good and we need to use these to help us to create stronger connections, which reach further and bring more people together. We also need to make sure that the links between communities and public services are strong and that our public services are helping in the right ways.

Interlink RCT and Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil (the key voluntary sector partner organisations in Cwm Taf) are leading work focusing on how we can support strong community networks set up and work well. Click [here](#) for the Building Community Capacity Report 2016.

There are people in our communities, who live or work there, who have a lot of knowledge about what is going on, who's who and where to go. We need to find out who these people are and support them to do what they do best; connect people to each other. Once these community links are set up and made strong, they will be able to last for many years. By coming together in this way, communities can make sure that they are a part of what is being done and how it is being done in their area. We need to harness the existing community assets that exist across Cwm Taf and develop more.

Public services call this 'community cohesion' and 'community resilience' (meaning bringing people together, people getting along together and able to cope more effectively with their challenges). It is the idea that lots of different people with different interests, different knowledge, skills and different opinions come together and work together in different ways and are better able to make much more of a difference than lots of smaller groups, or individuals, trying to make a difference alone.

Overarching theme: Working together

Public services and their partners, including voluntary sector organisations, need to work together to consider the headline information and overarching themes in this Assessment in the work they do going forward. In Cwm Taf, some of these links and working relationships are already good and people are getting used to working across the region. Links with others, particularly the people who use services are recognised as being very important and need to be strengthened. This will make sure that we are also involving the people and communities of Cwm Taf in our work.

Getting care and support services provided by different organisations working together is one of the principles of the SSWB Act. It is perhaps the most obvious thing that we can do as organisations to get better; it is certainly one of the most talked about. That is because, in many ways, it sounds very easy to do. Unfortunately, public services haven't always worked in a joined up way in the past and we need to change this if we want to deliver better care and support services. Sometimes we need to work harder to ensure common sense becomes common practice. Working together means opening up communication between people and includes sharing data, information, buildings, plans, money and people with each other. The more resources public service organisations are able to share, the better placed we will be to support people with care and support multiple needs under different categories, such as older people with dementia.

Working together also means *within* our organisations. Managers and people actually out working in our communities, as well as people using services, need to have the same understanding of what we need to do and how to do it.

Services which provide support to people with specific needs might focus on developing their own work, without really thinking about how it fits with the work of other, related services. This is known as 'working in silos' and it means that people working in a service might only consider what they do and how they do it, rather than really thinking about how they can be a part of the 'bigger picture' and make a *joined up* difference to the well-being of people and communities in Cwm Taf.

What we need to do, then, is plan and deliver care and support services in a joined up way, learning from the examples of those services in Cwm Taf which are more developed than others to do this. We can look closely at what works, where it works and how it works to help us design and deliver care and support to fill the 'gaps' in some services.

When we were carrying out this Population Assessment, lots of managers and staff from adults' and children's services in Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil Councils, as well as colleagues from many other organisations and the voluntary

sector, got involved and had their say. We talked to lots of people already using care and support services and met others who will need to have their say in the future. There are some really important services and organisations, like education services, housing associations and private sector companies, that we also need to make sure are part of the work we do as they have an important role to play in meeting care and support needs or providing preventative services.

One of the reasons we need to work differently together is to make best use of the resources we have between us, especially when funding is limited. It is not always an easy conversation to have amongst public service organisation leaders, but some real changes to the ways we spend our money together need to be made. Sometimes we will need to make the case to Welsh Government that the rules need to change on what we can (and can't) spend money on.

'Specialist' services are the most expensive. We need to look at putting our money together to pay for the more expensive things. This will not always be possible, but where it is, it will free up money to spend on other things, which can help more people.

Overarching theme: Stopping problems before they start, or get worse

This is the 'prevention' principle of the SSWB Act. The earlier we know what care and support needs someone has and help them to get the right help, the less likely it is that their needs will get worse.

Public services are often a last resort for people with care and support needs. Many people will be supported or cared for by their family, friends and communities, which usually allows them to keep their independence and stay at home for longer. We need to make sure that we support the people who are providing this early support within homes and communities and make sure that their well-being is protected too.

Where services are needed, we need to focus on getting it right early on. This can be done in many ways, like making sure children and families have the right care and support and making sure that people who have had a setback get help and encouragement to get themselves back on their feet (this is called 'reablement').

By using different approaches to providing services such as community initiatives, public services can make sure that 'specialist' services are not stretched by the work they have to do. This will put services in a better position to help in the right ways.

There will always be times when people need care and support and it is important that good quality services are available at those times of need. It is also important that when people need to use public services, that they stay in control of their own care and support. Public services should encourage support from family and friends to continue if possible and support this, so that the person is not totally dependent on one service.

There are known things that work if we want to stop problems, or stop problems getting worse. Making sure that people have safe, warm and clean houses could mean that they are able to stay there rather than go into hospital, or are able to come home from hospital sooner. People who have good support networks of family, friends and neighbours might be able to recognise their problems earlier, or have more help to get better, than people who are alone. There are lots of other examples of this and public services need to understand what they are, in order to build on what works.

Overarching theme: Making it personal; being listened to and understood

No two people with care and support needs are exactly the same. Each person who needs the help of public services should be treated as an individual, with their own issues, challenges and ways of dealing with them.

The people who use our services have needs, but that shouldn't stop them from living a good and happy life. This can come from feeling like you belong, knowing what is out there and getting involved. People want to be involved in their own care and support. The ways in which people do this will be very different and every person who needs our help should be cared for or supported in a way that works for them. People need to be made to feel that they can say when things are not working and encouraged to work with public services to decide what to try next.

Feedback from our engagement was that Public services need to 'see the person, not the problem.' Care and support needs are not the only things that matter about a person. Every person who uses care and support services has thoughts, views, preferences and ideas. People need to be supported to recognise how they can express these and improve their own well-being. This might mean the difference between needing or not needing care and support services. Generally, the more people have a part to play in managing their own lives, the better things work out.

ENGAGING PEOPLE IN THE POPULATION ASSESSMENT

Through the 'Understanding Our Communities' project, we spoke to people who live and work in Cwm Taf, people who use public services, people who work in public services, community groups and anyone else who wanted to have their say. This information was looked at for common things that people thought were important or wanted to talk about.



The work being done in Cwm Taf, particularly around engaging people and communities in the conversation earlier on and more openly is different from what we have done in the past and has been welcomed. As well as more traditional engagement using paper and online questionnaires, a range of innovative engagement activities have been undertaken. Examples of these include the following:

- Six 50+ forum events attended by nearly 150 local residents;
- Information from the RCT Viewpoint Survey undertaken by 5,567 young people aged 11 to 25;
- At Play schemes and Summer Events for children and families;
- Focus group engagement sessions with a variety of different groups, including service users with visual impairment or loss, carers, deaf club, young at heart group, homelessness forum, care home residents among others;
- Coffee and cake sessions for around 30 people in Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare to discuss issues around mental health;
- 54 people with learning difficulties were involved in forums with RCT People First; and
- The Older People's Listening Project, which involves 40 volunteer listeners including staff from 25 different organisations (from third sector, public health,

LAs) is a project where stories are collected on a one-to-one basis or as part of a group discussion.

We are proud of the new and exciting ways we have made sure that as many people as possible were able to have their say in this Population Assessment and have written about the work we have done and what people told us in more detail in a separate [report](#).

Even though we have made some really good progress in making sure that everyone who wants to have their say can, there have been some ‘gaps’ in who we have managed to talk to and who has made the effort to get involved, tell us what we need to know and help us to understand some of the information. This conversation will be ongoing as this work continues.

NEXT STEPS

There are a number of key next steps that public services in Cwm Taf will need to consider, both as we start to move into the planning stage of this work and beyond that; when working to implement and monitor planning and future services.

What do we need to understand better?

The most important thing to understand as we progress this work is the range and level of services required to meet the needs and fill the gaps this Assessment has identified.

There are many existing assets (buildings, spaces, activities and people) in Cwm Taf which public services can use and build on in order to improve care and support services. It is really important that we spend some time understanding the extent of these assets and how they can be used to change and improve future services.

Public services and their partners are already making connections with each other to work in new and better ways. It is impossible to explore *all* of the links or potential links between our services in this Assessment document, but the outcomes will open public services up to exploring some of them in more detail.

The Assessment highlighted that there are many cross cutting and common issues, not least because people “belong” to more than one category (or ‘theme’ as identified by the Act) and have a range of needs. In taking forward our plans, it will be important to explore these overlaps and ensure effective joined up approaches. For example:

- The Statement of Strategic Intent for Learning Disabilities will need to link with the Children’s Strategy;
- Support for Carers will need to be considered in the context of all the categories as carers look after people with a variety of needs as well as also having their own specific needs;
- Plans for older people and plans for mental health services will need to be developed together to support people with dementia effectively;
- There is significant overlap between mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse issues and the risk factors in relation to the needs of children and young people;
- There is a need for a range of preventative services, together with improved community capacity and resilience, which affects all groups and needs better understanding and a coordinated approach;
- Whilst there is significant focus on health and social care services, our findings have highlighted the importance of housing and accommodation issues as well as the links to other services such as education. We will need to review how these services are effectively involved in our detailed response to the Assessment findings; and
- The SSWB Act specifies a number of groups which are a priority for integrated services and these groups (Older people, Children and Young People, Carers and Learning Disability) have also been the focus of the work led by the SSWB Partnership Board to date. However, this does not include some of the areas covered by the Assessment such as Physical Disabilities, Sensory Impairment, Mental health and Violence against Women. We will need to understand what more we need to do to meet the care and support needs of these groups and how we work more collaboratively with other partnership groups already working in Cwm Taf on some of these issues e.g. the Together for Mental Health Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership.

The Act will help us to change the way people in public services work in the future. Some of these changes might mean taking ‘leaps,’ rather than ‘steps.’ We must be brave and confident to take the leaps we need to take.

Cwm Taf Local Area Plan

The next stage of the work is to write the Local Area Plan. The Plan will set out in detail what the Councils and the University Health Board will do to improve care and

support services, by looking at the findings of this Population Assessment and will be published by April 2018.

Under the WCFG Act, public services also need to develop and publish a Local Well-being Plan (also by April 2018). This plan will set out public services' planned response to the findings of the Well-being Assessment and the steps we intend to take to improve well-being now and for future generations. It is essential that the Local Area Plan links with the Local Well-being Plan and other relevant corporate plans and strategies.

It is important that what we plan to do is not just a 'to do list' of things to tick off. What we plan to do needs to have been decided together because it provides real opportunities for public services and the communities of Cwm Taf to improve the well-being and lives of the people who use care and support services and their carers.

What do we already know?

The Cwm Taf Social Services and Well-being Partnership Board is already leading some important pieces of work around the areas covered in this Assessment. For example, the following have been completed or are being finalised:

- Cwm Taf Joint Commissioning Statement for Older Peoples Services;
- Cwm Taf Carers Strategy;
- Cwm Taf Strategic Statement of Intent for Children, Young People & Adults with Learning Disabilities and their families; and
- Joint Commissioning Statement for Children and Young People.

Many of the findings from this Assessment built on previous engagement and gave us further insight and views which we have been able to take into account in finalising these pieces of work and as we implement the actions connected with them. However, there are other service areas, such as those for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairments, where the Assessment is a very important starting point as it has shown us that more work needs to be done locally to understand more fully the issues faced by different people in Cwm Taf using those services and how services need to be delivered differently.

Monitoring and review

This Assessment does not tell us everything we need to know and our understanding of the care and support needs in Cwm Taf will need to be kept under review and updated as we go along.

This Assessment is not like other public service assessments because it is not about a 'snapshot' picture; the work is ongoing and this Assessment will be updated (at least once every four years) to reflect the current state of care and support services and what needs to be done next. It has however given us an opportunity to find out about and reflect on the current position and in particular what matters to our service users and our residents. This will shape the actions we need to take in response to the Assessment.

As we continue with this work, we will need to make sure that we put in place robust means of monitoring and evaluating this work, so that we can react accordingly.